

Voluntary Regional Education District Study Committee

August 7, 2012

Leland & Gray Library

7:00 - 9:00 PM

APPROVED MINUTES

Bruce Parlman, – Jamaica; April Chase-Townshend; Lee Anne Parker – Brookline; Emily Long, Bucky Pelsue, Cory Stark, Ken McFadden-Newfane; Board Members: LeeAnne Parker, Alecia O'Donnell, Lisa Harris- NewBrook Joint Board; John Everitt – subcontractor to VSBA; Frank Rucker, CFO WCSU, Samantha Bovat WCSU- Minute Taker.

Members of the public, David Parker Jr- Brookline (NewBrook Teacher); Dominic Poli-Reporter from the Reformer; Beverly Carmichael, Mary Boyer, Nancy & Jerry Dyke, Ernest & Sheila Friedli and Daniel Reilly-Windham; Suzanne Grannis- Jamaica.

7:00 Emily- Called to order 7:05

1. Review Agenda - No changes

2. Comments from the public-

Nancy Dyke- If and how and when to disseminate info to the communities.... Time is overripe for public information. Concerns about the process. Windham says not interested in participating....problematic because decision was made without community input. Community doesn't have enough information. Disappointed that no reps from Windham are here at the meeting. Things have gotten out of order. No one except board members have had input and that is what is bothering us. Feeling like shut out of the process

Propose- One informational meeting sponsored by this committee for the three towns.

Emily L. - Explains how we got here in the first place. Until we worked through the options- we hadn't made any decisions about talking to the community. In January- new school idea was introduced... Decided to craft articles of agreement so we could see how this would impact our children. 5 Boards were invited to last meeting to decide if we were going to move forward. It was at that point that Windham said they were out.

Ernest Friedli- Has there been any further discussion with Windham? I was disturbed by the article in the Reformer. Why had a decision been made when it wasn't brought to the town?

April- There were discussions at Town Meetings to discuss the RED....to begin the awareness.

Nancy- Not a lot of discussion at Windham's town meeting.

Suzanne- there was discussion at Jamaica's town meeting and excitement. I am interested, but have not followed yet.

Mary- What is the relationship between this committee and the school board in each town?

Emily- 5 towns are represented on committee. Every town has a school board member and townsperson. Make up is similar to Leland and Gray Board. Reiterates-we have not made any significant votes. Those were coming up.

Cory- Windham has sent more non-committee members to meetings than other folks. Windham Principal was also here quite a bit. People from Windham were usually here and well represented.

Beverly- Only heard about this today. Not a lot of communication.

3. Review and Approve Minutes - July 25, 2012 Bucky made a motion to approve minutes as is, LeeAnne Seconded- all in favor, motion passes.

4. Options for proceeding (John Everitt)- Review Slides VRESCD-OPTIONS (Slides are available on the WCSU RED web page)

LeeAnne- Are you suggesting that we wait until legislature fixes the law to move in this direction. What is Newfane and Brookline were to become a Union District before then?

April- if Windham comes back and wants to rejoin....can they do so and we can move forward with a RED?

Answer- yes, but would delay the process.

Cory- Could one option be to keep NewBrook and do a similar thing with Jamaica and Townshend? - John - yes that can happen.

LeeAnne- interested in incentives and taxes. John- all but Windham would benefit from incentives - 4 year tax incentives beats one shot deal.

Emily- Tax relief vs lump sum....

If Windham was no longer a member of the L&G Union - we could do #6 and form a RED. Windham has been up front saying that they want to remain part of the Union

John- Flexibility among teacher opportunities are greater in a K-12....

LeeAnne- Windham, Jamaica & Townshend- could they form a district and new school?

Bucky- Carolyn and school board were speaking for themselves and not necessarily representing the townspeople.

Suzanna- Who makes decision in the end?

Emily- Windham Board said that they were out.

Mary- Has asked Carolyn to have a town meeting in September and understands that an article will be published about the RED.

Nancy- Concerns about fair representations if Windham has a town meeting

LeeAnne- Thinks maybe Brookline could be feeling the same way. Perhaps if Windham does have a meeting and it is well advertised....perhaps more people will attend.

Bucky- Reminds that this committee is not to advocate for or against, but to provide the information to the community.

Bruce- I heard that they weren't interested in a new school. This committee wasn't originally interested in a new school, simply the RED governance model.

Emily- Windham was still concerned that no matter which decision was made -that the school would be closed.

Bucky- Another option-Disband the RED committee.

Emily- we would go back to the school boards and tell them we have nothing further to discuss....

Frank- If committee is considering anything other than the RED- then you are talking about disbanding.

- Modified Unified Union School District
- Unified Elementary District

5. Committee discussion on next steps and timeline

Emily- if this committee decides they don't want to move forward, we are going to have to start looking again in other areas. We need to do something due to complications in this governance model.

LeeAnne- If Windham is having a conversation in Sept with the town, would it be reasonable to wait and see what the outcomes are of that? We need to go back to the boards and see what they say. I think there is hope that we will be back in Oct/Nov.

Mary- I think the community has strong feelings.

Suzanne- If you disbanded that would be confusing to community members in all the towns.

Ken- Reiterated that when we put two towns together...we had to do a lot of work to inform and have lots of meetings, etc.

Beverly- Our school board dropped out prior to any decision. (Emily- we were at the point where we were deciding whether or not to bring it to the boards and then the townspeople. That's when Windham said - no.)

Ken- Suggests we go back to our boards and ask if we stay as a RED or other structured committee. There are now other possibilities on the table.

LeeAnne- agrees with Ken - all 5 towns need to vote for it. Not a good track record for that in VT at this time. State is going to come in at some point....

Frank- incentives for collaboration is significant for building a school. Money isn't going to be there forever.

Mary- Is there a broader way to conceptualize this governance model to reengage Windham?

Frank- Leg. has created a conflict in incentives, cost containment and student outcomes. Small schools grant causes Windham not to benefit from closing school because they are immune from the pain of \$\$\$\$\$. They have been fortunate in administration that understands how it works. This is an economic benefit and it does not raise taxes for towns people.... Not political, but financial.

Nancy- Subject is contentious, but not a reason not to discuss these issues. Community input is critical.

Daniel- Issues- No exposure to sports in Windham. Small schools- good learning. Not size of class, but quality of teacher. Windham's issue is Taxes more than anything else. So, if building a new school would increase taxes in Windham- that could be a big problem. Carolyn is on School board and in Legislature lobbying for small schools- would like to know where this is going.

LeeAnne- Suggests that we go back to the boards and have another meeting in October to bring back to table what boards are saying. Should we continue to investigate governance structures...

Emily- Are we in agreement that we want to continue the discussion?

Emily- reiterates that our focus was about learning opportunities.

Mary- We appreciate all the work that has been put into this.

John will work with Steven and Frank to create some talking points, language for next steps As RED committee members..Is the elementary union of interest without the high school? K-6 instead of K-12?

April- would like to see the K-12 as a better opportunity for education

Bucky- critical for curriculum development k-12

LeeAnne-K-12

Ken- K-12

Emily- K-12

Cory- K-12

Bruce- K-12

LeeAnne makes motion to adjourn- Bruce Seconds- all in favor.

Ground Rules

Next Meetings

- Work positively through the process October 3
- Capture pro's and con's
- Maintain open minds and listen
- All ideas are good ideas
- Stay focused on students
- Methodical and deliberate decisions
- Transparency to community and boards