

Voluntary Regional Education District Study Committee

Meeting Date: October 5, 2011

APPROVED

Place: Leland and Gray High School

Attending

Jamaica	Y/N	Brookline	Y/N	Townshend	Y/N
Bruce Parlman	y	Lee Anne Parker	n	David Dezendorf	y
Drew Hazelton	y			Joe Winrich	y
		Newfane			
Windham		Cory Stark	y	Administration	
Antje Ruppert	y	Neil Bucky Pelsue	y (late)	Steven John	y
		Emily Long	y	John Doty	y
Consultant		Pam Meihak	y		
John Everitt					
Community Somara Zwick (Brookline), Beth McDonald Nancy & Jerry Dyke (windham)					

Meeting called to order at 7:02_ by Chair Emily Long.

Brief introduction. Greetings & admin stuff.

Administrative – checking on committee members receiving email. Need to move over to new email addresses. Question re. where & how docs are being sent – as google docs or email attachments? Further discussion re. docs, format, etc. (John Everitt will send all documents used so far as email attachments to RED committee members.)

Agenda reviewed

7:10 Motion to approve by Joe W., David D 2nd. Changed to minutes: insert “ commitment to the state board of education” after John Everitt will explore. 2nd change = name change; both approved unanimously.

7:15 Steven reported on Wardsboro: Board will not participate, as per their earlier decision. Wardsboro Chair will send formal response.

7:20 Consideration of article related to school closure. Discussion: big concern. J Everitt says law requires a town to vote to close a school for a minimum of 4 yrs. Lawyers disagree whether articles can restrict forever RED authority to close schools requiring towns to decide instead of RED. Probably will be decided in technical corrections in legislature. Legal clarification of second bullet point in agenda is paramount in this RED study. Emily reported that this issue is being pushing with legislators.

Discussed the definition of closing a school. Discussion included removing students, but using building for other purposes; returning a building to a town; changing grade levels served; building code requirements to reopen a closed school.

Discussed needs for building repair and maintenance, including costs with or without a RED.

Discussion about constraints on RED including town authority versus RED authority. Discussed concept of requiring unanimous approval by RED for some town sensitive issues to protect town. If no unanimous vote, then the town would be required to vote. John E will draft 2 articles – one strictly requiring a town vote and one requiring unanimous agreement of RED board.

Emily expressed the paramount importance of voter representation on a RED board and how it is impossible to make everyone happy. Board members have to represent students & taxpayer to best of their ability.

7:50 (Agenda item 7:45)

Discussed how votes on SU Board would change if structure remained the same. Currently school districts that run schools have three votes and those that do not 1 vote. The RED would combine 6 boards into one thus reducing 18 votes to three. The RED would move into minority position. This is an important issue that needs to be addressed with either the State Board or the Legislature. John Everitt will research the issue and the committee can decide how to proceed.

Discussion about number of votes on a RED Board and how they would be allocated, including the possibility of weighted votes.

8:10 – Other major issues for committee consideration topic opened:

John Everitt reported concerns voiced by principals:

- fear of losing community connection to school without a local school board
- need to define equity - does it mean everything is the same or can individual schools retain their own initiatives and uniqueness

Discussed different ways boards operate if they are responsible for multiple schools versus one school.

Discussed next steps:

- invite members of previous or current RED committees to share their experiences to help in our decision making (try for this in November - John Everitt to set up. Committee members to work on questions.)
- invite board members with multiple schools. (John Everitt will search possibilities for December meeting.)

Discussed equity – does it mean homogeneous schools? Or do schools retain their character? Would like to ensure we retain our schools character. Within SU there already is a budget for shared services, title one, etc. Equity in this case based on need. Would like to see this articulated – made this recommendation – in the articles of agreement.

Discussed the need to articulate the benefits to students of a RED governance system. (John Everitt will consolidate what other RED study committees have put together as a basis for discussion.)

Discussed the comparison of this RED study with others. Distance is an issue; culture is an issue though this district has more in common than some other RED study districts. Need to prepare questions. Look to December meeting to do this.

Discussed interest in seeing financial data, including tax rates and financial liabilities. (John Everitt will have some of this for November meeting.)

Discussed how an outline of potential articles of major subjects would be useful. (John Everitt will generate a list the committee can consider/add/remove. Some articles may go to voters (some are required) and others would be recommendations to the RED Board if established.

Further ideas for committee consideration can be sent to John Everitt (John.everitt.vt@gmail.com) with a cc: to Emily Long (elong@windhamcentralboard.org)

8:54 – review of meeting process

- like getting prepped ahead of time. Agenda requested 2-3 days ahead. Minutes have to go out by law.
- use of sub-committees possible
- access to projector so we don't have to keep making copies
- need to be sure community has access to same materials as board members. Needs to be posted.
- next meeting dates confirmed as printed on the agenda. Nov 2, at L&G 7pm

Motion to adjourn made by Buck, 2nd Cory – unanimously adjourned at 9:00 pm.
Respectfully submitted by Somara Zwick