

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS
106 Hancock Road
Peterborough, New Hampshire

CONTOOCCOOK VALLEY SCHOOL BOARD

Selectmen's Advisory Committee

Thursday, September 24, 2015
7:00 p.m.
SAU #1

Agenda

1. Accept Minutes – June 25, 2015
2. Goals
3. Capital Plan
4. Student Population Changes, Additional Teachers
5. Broadband Development
6. Health Insurance
7. State Budget and Downshifting
8. Other

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Thursday, June 25, 2015
7:00 p.m.
SAU #1

Minutes

Present: John Jordan, Scott Carbee, John Robertson, Gail Cromwell, Steven Osienski, Walter Snitko,
Dr. Brendan Minnihan, Marian Alese, Richard Dunning, Myron Steere

John Jordan called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

1. Accept Minutes – May 21, 2015

Scott Carbee moved to accept the minutes of May 21, 2015 as read. Gail Cromwell second. Unanimous.

2. ADM and District Assessments

Gail Cromwell shared a handout titled "Problem with 2014-15 ConVal Payment Schedule for Towns". The handout stated information, in part, which read that in 2010, the Articles of Agreement were changed to require the use of the "most recent figures" for (from the Department of Education (DOE)) and for Total Equalized Valuation (from the Department of Revenue Administration (DRA)) in calculating the apportionment of ConVal expenses. The rationale was to allocate expenses according to what was actually happening in our towns on a more current basis. The ability to pay (EQV) should be matched to enrollment. Adequacy Aid is based on ADM data. When the payment schedule was created for 14/15, the most recent EQV data was for April 2013 and the most recent ADM data was 2013/14.

Gail Cromwell said that a correction to the payment schedule is needed.

Myron Steere said that what was used was the most recent data. Gail disagreed.

Marian Alese said that the information available is "preliminary data" so the question is whether to use preliminary data or wait for actual data.

Gail Cromwell said that we have been receiving a preliminary schedule in June for the coming year.

Gail walked the committee through the handouts further which explained the calculation of 2014/2015 District Payment Schedule calculations. She said that the goal is to get the adequacy on the same year.

The concern was trying to make everything more current and in the same year.

Changes in adequacy aid are very variable.

Gail Cromwell proposed that the Articles be followed and use the most current data. The philosophy needs consideration.

Myron Steere said that when town budgets are set, they look at what is happening with the schools. Towns set their budget carefully based on that. Changing the formula creates winners and losers. Myron cited an

example of what would happen if a significant business was lost in a town. In Peterborough, for example, it could mean a significant loss of students.

John Jordan said that with a smaller town, the jumps seem to be greater. A contemporary set of figures is sought.

Marian Alese shared the positives with the proposed change and the challenges:

Pros include the use of most recent data even if it is not final. It would be more closely aligned with Adequacy payments for each town.

Challenges include not having the previous year's data in time for new schedules to go out for July; what will be used for preliminary schedules? Typically, the unreserved fund balance is used to reduce taxes. Significant changes that might occur after the tax rates are set could take place.

In the case of Peterborough, they overpaid approximately \$5,000 as a result of adequacy. Therefore, when they submitted payment, they paid \$5,000 less because of adequacy. Marian asked what would happen if it went the other way.

John Robertson asked what sort of conflict is created with the DRA if we decide to go Gail's route.

Marian Alese said that the DRA does not believe it is a good way to go.

Marian said that Gail is suggesting that we use preliminary data and Marian has used the most recent final data.

Myron Steere said that the State says that the March figures are the official figures.

Marian Alese read an email from the DRA.

Myron said that it would be nice to do what Gail is saying but we need to do what the State says otherwise, when they change legislature or law, it will mess us up.

Marian said that she was indifferent as to which figures are used but we need to answer what would happen in certain situations.

Dr. Brendan Minnihan said that this was brought to Budget & Property, to SAC tonight, and to the Board next. We have always used two year old figures; those that are certified. What changed was that we were able to get more recent EQV figures. Legislature mandated that figures be developed sooner.

Marian Alese said that they were not available in May.

Dr. Minnihan asked John Jordan if this group wants to pursue changing the equation. If so, Marian's concerns need to be addressed.

John Jordan said that he thought that we were more up to date than we are.

Gail Cromwell proposed adjusting for the year we just finished paying and to go forward on the proposed basis.

John Jordan said that we either continue with the system that we have with a year off in the ADM's.

Walter Snitko said that one year's data is too small a sample size. He would be interested in knowing what happened over the past years. Mr. Snitko said that it is clear there is ambiguity; the definition of which figures; firm or preliminary needs to be decided.

Gail Cromwell moved to use preliminary figures for the most recent year and that they are adjusted if necessary if a more recent figures comes forward in November.

John Jordan said that a clear motion is needed

Ms. Cromwell said that the motion is to use adequacy aid and average daily membership figures for the given year. Scott Carbee second.

In favor: Gail Cromwell

Opposed: Steve Osienski, Scott Carbee, Walter Snitko, John Robertson

Motion failed.

Marian Alese said that the suggestion to refine the Articles of Agreement might be considered.

3. Strategic Plan Update

Dr. Minnihan provided an update on the Strategic Plan. He reported that thirteen focus group sessions took place. Over 800 physical surveys were returned. Four major areas have come forward as a result of the surveys and focus sessions. Looking at the ConVal School District as one community was discussed. Goal statements will evolve. Public input will be sought again and return to the School Board again.

4. Other

John Jordan spoke about the 2016 costs to towns as a result of the State's downshifting. Mr. Jordan shared data on the impact for each of the ConVal towns. It will hurt our taxpayers significantly. The downshifting of costs from the State range from an increase of \$8,802 to \$639,075 for towns.

John Jordan said that when cuts take place they shift down to the towns; they aren't actual cuts. Revenue streams need consideration. Unfunded mandates are hurting us.

Dick Dunning said that most people are not aware of what is happening to them. Selectmen are aware and people trust Selectmen. A voice from the Selectmen to the public to share what is happening is valuable. Mr. Dunning further said that towns don't want to consolidate schools. There must be savings in consolidation with staffing. It is time for the towns to come together again. Towns can't have it both ways. It is an emotional issue and not an intellectual one. If two towns piloted and consolidated with others we would know more.

Gail Cromwell motioned to adjourn at 8:10 p.m. Scott Carbee second. Unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda Marschok