

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

106 Hancock Road
Peterborough, New Hampshire

CONTOOCOOK VALLEY SCHOOL BOARD

Selectmen's Advisory Committee

Thursday, August 23, 2018

7:00 p.m.

SAU #1

Minutes

Present: John Jordan, Ed Juengst, Karen Hatcher, Carl Newton, John Robertson, Dale Gabel, Gail Cromwell, Janine Lesser, Bernd Foecking, Myron Steere, Pierce Rigrod, Kimberly Saunders, Abby Meyer

1. Accept Minutes of June 28, 2018

Gail Cromwell moved to accept the minutes of June 28, 2018. John Robertson second. Unanimous.

2. Education Funding Letter

Karen Hatcher referenced a letter to the State on the topic of public education funding. She asked how many Select board members are authorized to sign. Carl Newton reported that he will bring it to the town on September 4th.

Karen said that the plan is to send it out right after September 11, 2018.

In addition, she would like the entire letter to be published in the local newspapers.

This dovetails nicely with what is going on elsewhere in the State. Candidates are talking about this. The templated letter will be sent out for others to make it their own.

Kimberly Saunders said that if the nine towns are interested, a joint public meeting can be scheduled with John Tobin. The high school was cited as a good location for such a meeting.

Discussion took place about property taxes funding education.

3. Strategic Plan Option 3

The school board took a vote on Tuesday to move forward with the four school consolidation model; 2 primary elementary schools (@ GBS and PES), 1 upper elementary school grades 4-6 @ SMS, and one middle high school at CVHS. The board voted to move it forward to a vote by the public. The board did not take a vote of support.

It is too early to determine exact savings per year. An implementation plan will come forward. This model was favored in part, because of the extensive remodeling that would be required with other models.

The current education model with our current configuration is difficult and not the best for education. It's not just about money, it has more to do with education.

These models are educationally sound.

The current model makes it difficult to deliver education and collaboration is difficult for teachers. We have a school funding issue with the state, we have a declining enrollment problem, and we have a public perception problem – people are in love with their small schools. We have to get past that the only thing

that can hold a community together is a school. Thought needs to go into how else these schools can be used.

John Jordan reported that the Hancock Select board voted to start a Charter School Study Committee. The Hancock ground lease reads that the school comes to the town with no restrictions. Hancock would not be asking to leave the district; they would use the school for a Charter.

Kimberly said that this is all premature. The board voted; more than one town has asked the district to carefully examine what has been brought before us. The board has been clear that they have every intention of letting the public make this decision.

Pierce Rigrod said that the primary mission of the district is to educate kids. This work that has been going on for over a decade is taking away from the mission. Should this fail, it was agreed to delay further work on this topic for a period of years.

Discussion took place about the impact of the recent vote on the teacher's contract that resulted in a \$1.7M increase in the budget.

Ed Juengst asked if this model is good enough to warrant support with additional information. Confirmed.

Carl Newton asked if this comes to a vote in favor; how do you determine which schools get closed. It would be 2/3's of the district vote.

Karen Hatcher said that what is most important is that once the School Board puts this implementation forward, is the public information campaign. People need to get accurate information; the quality of education is front and center. Janine Lesser spoke about the School Board Communication Committee's role in this.

Discussion took place about what to do with the school buildings.

Gail Cromwell said that there was a push toward one middle school, it was cited as a long commute for people that live north of Antrim.

Pierce Rigrod said that the implementation plan will be done in November. This is about education and the structure of our district. Having resources in every school is important. In the end, this will be decided by the people that come to vote. Feedback on which model would be better is welcome. Delivering resources to multiple classrooms of size 7 or 8 across the district is not efficient or effective.

Janine said that there is pressure in terms of property taxes against people not wanting their school to close.

Bernd Foecking said that he looks forward to putting a viable alternative model on the ballot to what we do now.

4. Auditor's Report Recommendations

Gail Cromwell highlighted several components of the Auditor's Report. She said that Food Service is a problem from one year to the next. Kimberly noted that our Business Administrator was not available to allow this not to be a repeat comment.

Gail noted problems in the area of student activity accounts. Additional areas in need of improvement were noted.

Carl Newton asked why this report was being reviewed at a SAC meeting and exited at 7:53 p.m.

Gail asked about encumbrances. Kimberly Saunders confirmed that the number of encumbrances is not okay. From time to time, funds need to be encumbered for unanticipated expenses.

Gail Cromwell said that the towns are making payments with the assumption that \$200,000 will be sent back to the towns. Temple wants to make an appropriate payment without paying more. Is the amount returned \$200K or \$700K?

Kimberly reported that a final number will be available after the auditor's do their work. The anticipated \$250K was a solid estimate. She did not anticipate the level of savings from healthcare that occurred.

Bernd invited Gail Cromwell to a public meeting where the auditor's share their report. Ed Juengst commented that the absence of Marian as Business Administrator is a large one.

John Robertson said that this is the responsibility of the School Board. The district is doing the best that they can, given the circumstances.

5. Other

Myron Steere reported a balance of unpaid meals from students. We have a policy to feed every student. The outstanding balance is over \$50,000 over a period of three years.

Creating a place for people to donate \$5 toward a meal on our websites has been discussed. Creating a special revenue account would be needed if a certain amount was exceeded.

Pierce Rigrod said that before these models, modifying the funding formula was discussed. Voluntary school closure was also discussed with associated incentives. It would be a tax reduction and education enhancement.

Funding Formula - It was determined that the funding formula allows for the most equity with the current configuration.

Kimberly Saunders reported that a relationship with Nashua Community College (NCC) has been underway. Afterschool, ConVal High School will become a campus for NCC. Final decisions on which programs will be offered will be determined.

Dale Gabel moved to adjourn at 8:14 p.m. Karen Hatcher second. Unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda Marschok

