

Strategic Organization Planning Committee (SOPC)

Thursday, February 16, 2023

5:30 PM

SAU Boardroom

Minutes

COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Alan Edelkind
Elizabeth Swan
Richard Dunning
Thomas Burgess
Douglas Sutherland

Present: Alan Edelkind, Liz Swan, Dick Dunning, Tom Burgess, Doug Sutherland, Dr. Kimberly Saunders

Alan Edelkind called the meeting to order at 5:32 p.m.

1. Approval of January 26, 2023 minutes.

Dick Dunning moved to approve the minutes of January 26, 2023. Liz Swan seconded. Unanimous.

2. Approval of February 2, 2023 minutes.

Dick Dunning moved to approve the minutes of February 2, 2023. Liz Swan seconded. Unanimous.

3. Discussion on types of members on committee. Voting vs. non-voting.

Alan Edelkind shared some thoughts on this agenda item. The structure of the committee with 18-22 on the committee; School Board members (6), administration (1), union rep (2), Selectmen's Advisory Committee (4-6), and community members. Alternates were discussed as well.

This is a lot of people who vote and have a consensus.

Should there be voting vs. non-voting members? If that is done, why would they participate in the committee?

Thoughts of the committee:

Dick Dunning said that 18 people is too many. We are looking for representation of the community, the board members represent those towns. For those towns that don't have representation, one would be sought.

Kimberly Saunders said that she can never vote and if the other staff member is not a member of one of the towns they should not either. Thought about the six board members needs consideration. It would appear that the committee was stacked. Exchange board members for community members.

Liz Swan said that by that logic, we would only need one Peterborough representative on the committee.

Alan Edelkind said that he does not agree with having fewer school board members on the committee. We represent the communities.

Doug Sutherland said that if we change the word “stacking”, and say that when a vote occurs, almost half of the board agrees. You would already have those votes. Why not have four board members?

Alan said that he brings this up and if the group feels strongly about a specific number of board members he is fine. We previously agreed on six school board members. If it is seen as too much, he is fine with that. It is a group decision.

Doug said that he thought that Alan was voicing his opinion. Alan Edelkind agreed that he was. Doug said that he wants to understand.

Tom Burgess said that other board committees do not have the same structure for committee make up. He did not understand why we have it here. Community members are an important part of the process.

There are several processes for the community to come up with a recommendation, one of is the two-thirds vote required for change.

Liz Swan said that she does not think that the smaller communities will give us their blessing to change or close schools without committee representation. This is all about being transparent and having community involvement.

Dick Dunning said that we are assuming that we are going to close schools. The goal is to have a neutral recommendation come forward for consideration. The dialogue would take place about a recommendation. Who would make the final decision? We want representatives from the communities. A decision about a recommendation cannot be made until all of the information is in. We want the community to ask the questions.

Tom Burgess said that he does not assume consolidation. If the recommendation is that the status quo is the best that we can do, it's done.

How can one grab the community trust; they may have a preconceived idea of the outcome.

Liz Swan said that school board members know a little bit more about what is going on and don't always look at things objectively. We need engaged community members.

Alan Edelkind said that what he is hearing is fewer board members and more community members.

Liz Swan said that she sees the problem with a large committee. In the smaller towns, it would go a long way for townspeople to be a part of the process.

Dick said that the purpose is to gain information to have the rationale to sell the recommendation either way.

Alan Edelkind said that this is different from most committees. Learning how things progress toward the charge of the committee is a focus.

Discussion took place about how the Strategic Plan Committee was structured.

Dick said that this group needs to hire someone to do this work and decide the best way to function. He would rather focus on looking at the candidates to do this work and getting them in here.

Tom Burgess agreed that we are picking someone that will gather all of this information.

Dick said that this committee has to look at the RFI's and select. Whoever is selected will look at how best to address the organization.

Dick Dunning moved that this committee take a look at the RFI's and select companies to interview so that one can be chosen to get this task done.

Kimberly Saunders asked if that is not in the initial charge.

Alan Edelkind said that a charge of this committee is to look at the RFI's and in turn move toward an RFP.

Table the motion until a company is selected and informs this committee about how it should look like.

Doug asked if the charge of this committee identifies the need for the Strategic Organization Committee (SOC).

Alan said that the SOC was voted on. The SOC will be formed when the new board comes on after the vote.

Dick said that there was a charge to look at the organization. A group of people would develop an RFI and then select companies to send proposals, interview them, come up with a cost, and then select one.

From that group, a committee will form.

The group that we hire will direct the committee.

4. Review process for RFI.

Alan Edelkind said that the RFI's should be evaluated and then one to five companies will be selected to interview.

Alan estimated that the RFI's should take no more than one week to go through. The RFP can be started alongside this work. If everyone agrees to the evaluation matrix. If more than a week is needed, let Alan know.

There are many templates for an RFP. Alan said that he preferred simplicity. Those that are structured for education don't look at consolidation. These are commercial templates. A template can be selected that serves the purpose. The work on the RFP will take several weeks. It will need to go to the full board.

The RFP should be run through legal review.

5. Activation and members for SOC.

Tabled.

Tom Burgess said that the Community Forums are a great model for the transparency that we want to meet.

Kimberly Saunders said that when considering the vote, Antrim has historically had a deep investment in their schools. Towns and groups will be targeted to bring along information. How do we communicate that? Is it an additional charge? We want people to enter with an open mind and the ability to be objective. When we take all of the input in and look at the impact that it has on everything, the right way forward will be apparent. Communication is important to get a legitimate vote.

Alan Edelkind said that this committee will meet next on Wednesday at 5:30.

6. Schedule for RFI.

Discussion embedded in agenda item 4.

7. Start of review of RFI.

Discussion embedded in agenda item 4.

8. Adjourn

Dick Dunning motioned to adjourn at 6:24 p.m. Liz Swan seconded. Unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda Marschok