

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

CONTOOCOOK VALLEY SCHOOL BOARD

Selectmen's Advisory Committee

Thursday, August 17, 2023

**SAU Office Board Room
7:00 p.m.**

Minutes

Present: Bob Edwards (Antrim), Mike Borden (Greenfield), William Kennedy (Peterborough), Diane Callahan (Sharon), George Willard (Temple), Dick Dunning, Alan Edelkind, Tom Kirlin, Katherine Heck, Janine Lesser, Tatia Prieto (Prismatic Services)

1. Call to Order

William Kennedy called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

2. Elect Committee Chair

**George Willard motioned to elect Bill Kennedy as SAC Chair.
Bob Edwards seconded. Unanimous.**

**Mike Borden self-nominated himself to serve as Vice-Chair.
Bill Kennedy seconded. Unanimous.**

3. Approve Minutes of May 25, 2023

**Bob Edwards moved to approve the minutes of May 25, 2023. Katherine Heck seconded.
Bill Kennedy abstained. All others in favor. Motion carried.**

4. Meet with Prismatic Services

a. School District Reconfiguration/Consolidation Study Presentation

Bill Kennedy introduced Tatia Prieto, President of Prismatic Services.

Dr. Prieto said that this is a reconfiguration study, consolidation, unsure where this will lead.

The objectives are:

- Evaluate the consolidation of district goals
- Consider educational, safety, financial.....and all other factors
- Neutrality (objectivity) - Prismatic does not have a dog in the fight.
- Community Involvement
- Specific Recommendations
- Viable conclusion to the question, "What is Best for the ConVal Students and Taxpayers".

Tasks include:

- Data collection, town meetings, site visits, recommendations, online surveys, online forum, etc.

Tatia Prieto reported being onsite all week and meeting with individuals. Onsite visits included taking pictures of the interior and exterior of the schools. They have driven down many of the roads in all of the nine towns. The same will take place for all other aspects e.g. food service, regular education, special education. Surveys will be taken; the questions will vary for different groups. An online forum will take place late in October.

Focus groups with middle school students will take place in September. The survey will launch prior to Prismatic Services returning in September.

The timeline reflects work having started in July with a map leading toward January. A data party will be a sharing of all of the information that was found with the School Board. A final presentation in December, with a final report just prior is the plan.

The Prismatic Services team includes members with expertise in the areas of education. Tatia Prieto said that she has been doing work in this field for near 30 years as a consultant.

Other areas of expertise include teachers, principals, and administration experience. In addition, school counseling and superintendent experience exists among the team, food service director experience, financial expertise, school performance experience, transportation director, architect consulting experience, analysts, and technical experience.

Engagement dates include:

- Survey launch - September 12th
- Middle school focus groups – to be determined
- Elementary school observations - to be determined
- Town meetings - September 18 thru October 5th
- Online Forum – October - to be determined
- Data Party - November 15th

Tatia Prieto asked “What concerns do you have at this time about this project?”

- We’ve been going through this process for ten years and there is a sense of urgency in the towns relative to the impact of taxes in their lives. Reducing the tax bill or one that stays flat is hoped.
- Voters vote from their pocketbook. Towns are faced with infrastructure repairs. The public wants to make sure that the analysis is thorough and want to know how it benefits their children and families. We have seen reluctance when closing schools has been discussed in the past.
- 30% of taxes go to local infrastructure and they are not in great condition. 60% of taxes goes to school. Much has to do with inequitable funding from the State. People cannot afford to stay in their homes in retirement.
- The Board is approaching this project from the perspective that the current configuration is not the best for our students educationally. When we talk about taxes, it is important to recognize the lack of funding from the state. The board is very interested in education while making best use of resources.
- Kids would do much better in a more consolidated environment. It is not easy to serve kids when they are all spread out.
- The experience was shared when Temple kids were sent to Peterborough Elementary and the fear that surrounded that. It turned out to be the best thing ever for their children.
- NESDEC enrollment projections indicate no great upturn in student enrollment.

- Is there anything to indicate that there will be upturns? A new apartment complex is planned for Peterborough. Things may change in Peterborough over the next five years. Deaths in NH exceed births by 20%.
- Housing prices are in the \$500K and \$600K range.....unsure that people can afford that.
- What does data say about the presence of a school vs. no school in property values? Tatia Prieto said that the ConVal School District is the first in all of her years that presents that the presence of a school impacts property taxes.
- Building permits range from 3 to 5 new building permits per year.

Town Meetings - one per town, 1.5 hours. Meetings will consist of input from people in the community through participation. Stations will be set up to gather input. Kid friendly.

Tatia asked Selectmen to help get the word out. Dates, times, and places were asked within the next week. Holding these in the elementary schools was suggested.

First meeting might take place in town elementary schools; Town Hall for Sharon.

A boiler plate letter was shared. Alan Edelkind asked Selectmen to determine two possible dates; one will be selected. The letter is being asked to go out to each person in the towns. The letter should go out as soon as possible. Giving community members multiple opportunities to communicate in the way they are most comfortable is the goal.

Will virtual attendance be offered? Not for the station-based meeting since it is interactive. The forum will be virtual.

Alan Edelkind asked that dates be shared with him and also Brenda Marschok.

Bill Kennedy asked about the funding for postage.

Dick Dunning asked that Selectmen use every opportunity that they normally do to communicate these meetings. This should be viewed as a Selectboard issue as well as a school issue; a joint effort.

Let Alan Edelkind know by Friday.

September 18th to October 5th are the date range.

Dick Dunning said that ConVal High School enrollment at one time was 1,200 and is projected at 550 in next year. We are trying to find solutions.

5. ConVal Lawsuit Update

Dick Dunning said that the lawsuit is in hands of the judge with an anticipated response to it in September.

6. Adjourn

Mike Borden motioned to adjourn at 8:13 p.m. Seconded. Unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda Marschok