

# OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

106 Hancock Road  
Peterborough, New Hampshire

## CONTOOCOOK VALLEY SCHOOL BOARD

### Selectmen's Advisory Committee

Thursday, February 22, 2024

SAU Office Board Room  
7:00 p.m.

### Minutes

**Present:** William Kennedy, George Willard, Jeff Brown, Bob Edwards, Chris Raymond, Susan Peters, Bethany Craig, Dr. Kimberly Saunders, Richard Dunning, Alan Edelkind, Katherine Heck

#### 1. Call to Order

William Kennedy called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

#### 2. Approval of January 25, 2024 minutes

Bob Edwards moved to approve the minutes of January 25, 2024. Seconded.

Chris Raymond abstained. Jeff Brown is listed as Jeff Allgood. The minutes will be amended to correct. Motion carried.

#### 3. Review of District voting schedule

March 12th is District voting in all of the towns with the exception of Peterborough who holds their town meeting in May.

The proposed ConVal budget is going up 4.04% which is a major result of the guaranteed maximum rate of 25% for health insurance. Part of it is usage and part is that money was given back previously as a result of having more than the amount that can be held.

Katherine Heck explained that 68% of counties use HealthTrust. Greenfield has an increase of 18%. Dublin and Peterborough also experienced rate increases.

#### 4. Highlights from Deliberative Session

Bob Edwards said that the consolidation warrant article brought many opinions. Amendments were proposed three times; all failed resulting in the article remaining the same. Secret ballots were used to vote.

Bob said that it resulted in either voting for or against at the polls.

There was no discussion on the proposed budget at Deliberative Session nor discussion about the proposed teachers contract.

Dick Dunning said that the conversation was civil, polite, and respectable.

#### 5. Status of the Consolidation effort

Alan Edelkind said that the board is putting together the last article on consolidation. That article cannot come out from the school district. Another vehicle to get the information out is the newspaper.

Bill Kennedy asked if it prevents the board from being present at the polls and sharing support for the consolidation efforts.

Alan Edelkind said that it is interesting that a group has formed in Dublin to look at withdrawing from the School District.

Chris Raymond said that the committee is charged with better understanding the current situation and trying to come up with a recommendation on how to move forward.

A petitioned warrant article is on the ballot to conduct a feasibility study to withdraw from the district.

Chris further said that the direction is not to consider consolidation in this group's discussion. The group will look at alternative options.

Kimberly asked if it is a petitioned article or is it advisory. To remove yourself from a Co-Op it starts with an article to the previous district to direct the current district to conduct a feasibility study.

Kimberly said that if it is a petitioned article. She shared her concern because it triples the work of the SAU overnight.

Kimberly said that if this passes, the SAU has to do a feasibility study.

Chris read the wording of the Dublin Warrant Article "to see if the.....to initiate a feasibility study...."

Chris said that the RSA makes everything clear. He asked if other towns have similar petitioned articles.

Kimberly responded that it had not. Discussion took place about towns.

RSA:95 prescribed language was referred to.

Jeff Brown asked what happens if a town leaves.

Kimberly Saunders said that a feasibility study on how Dublin stands on their own and what happens to the rest of the district comes forward. It is about money and numbers.

Bill Kennedy said that discussion about test scores is under discussion. Implications of this should be considered.

Kimberly Saunders said that one thing that needs to be kept in mind is that based on the number of students in a grade or school, can go way up or down in any given year and impact test results.

We have come back from COVID much more quickly than many other districts.

Dick Dunning shared caution when looking at test scores, one student can make a difference either way.

Dick asked about the cost of a feasibility study that has to be picked up by the nine towns and not just the one requesting the study.

Susan Peters reminded that Dublin pays more per student than any other school.

Kimberly said that special education costs are absorbed into the district budget and not in the town.

Susan said that it is more about how much the town pays; Dublin pays \$5M.

Kimberly Saunders said that in any given year there are years when some towns pay less or more than others.

What really needs to be thought about is that as long as the State makes Dublin argue with Peterborough or any other town, they have won. NH is 47th in its contribution toward education. Every community is in this boat. The Legislature is benefiting from everyone arguing.

Chris Raymond said that any town could submit a similar article and the district would have to foot the bill.

Katherine Heck broke down the RSA as of most recently.

Chris Raymond asked that Dublin be kept in the loop with any information coming forward.

## **6. Other**

TIF - Tax Incremental Funding districts and the impact on towns.

Bob Edwards said that Antrim was a TIF District at one time. In a cooperative school district, if we are freezing our assessed values at the base amount and we build a \$7M building in a TIF District where ConVal is based 50%/50%, it sounds like the impact would be shared on other towns in the district.

He asked if anyone could share information.

Katherine Heck said that a specific RSA forms a TIF District. It promotes economic development and defers taxes.

Bob said that if it is voted, a year will be taken to study. Then we go back to town meetings and let the legislative body approve or not.

Katherine said that when bonding, the extra capital earned goes back to pay off the bond.

The RSA requires that you have to talk to the school district and county delegation and disclose financial plans and the school district would have the opportunity to publicly comment.

Generally, while there is some lost tax revenue, it is made up for with economic gain. Jobs might be created, housing opportunities etc.

Bob Edwards said that if the captured assessed value is not all needed to support the plan, the school district could ask for a portion.

Peterborough has three TIF's; one is sunsetting next year.

Discussion took place further about how a TIF plays out in terms of valuation and the offset by economic gain.

The law contemplates having the school district at the table.

## **7. Adjourn**

**Bob Edwards motioned to adjourn at 7:45 p.m. Bill Kennedy seconded. Unanimous.**

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda Marschok