

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS
106 Hancock Road,
Peterborough, NH 03458

CONTOOCOOK VALLEY SCHOOL BOARD

Strategic Organization Committee (SOC)

Thursday, February 15, 2024
7:00 PM
SAU – Board Room

Minutes

COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Alan Edelkind
Elizabeth Swan
Richard Dunning
Thomas Burgess
Dan Harper

Present: Alan Edelkind, Tom Burgess, Dan Harper, Janine Lesser

1. Call Meeting to Order

Alan Edelkind called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

2. Accept January 4, 2024 Minutes

Dan Harper moved to accept the minutes of January 4, 2024. Janine Lesser seconded. Unanimous.

3. Non-Public Session (If needed)

None.

4. Strategic Organization Committee activities going forward

Alan Edelkind said that we are faced with having a vote. We cannot sit and do nothing until the vote. There is so much activity going on with social media platforms.

Some of it is reactive.

Janine Lesser said that the Monadnock Ledger Transcript is interested in getting good information on the topic of consolidation/reconfiguration. The forums have been very good but the questions from the community are all over the place. The sense of questions that have been brought up surround charter schools.

Other questions asked belong to the School Board to respond.

Janine Lesser suggested a larger discussion about putting information out in the public. The board needs to answer questions and address the fears.

Alan Edelkind said that we have answered questions. The board has given this committee the authority to do this work. We have to become more proactive with responses.

The next communication should be a general one.

Dan Harper said that people have questions. There is a campaign starting in Frankestown with signs that say "no change in taxes and no plan....vote no".

Alan Edelkind said that the issue is giving children the best education possible and less about taxes.

Dan Harper said that the focus is on taxes and no plan to get people to vote "no".

Janine Lesser said that we have to continue to share what we want to do and why. We have not done a good job about hearing fears and concerns.

Dan said that he thought that we did a good job hearing concerns.

Janine said that when people say that they are afraid of charter schools taking the schools it needs to be addressed.

Janine said that we need to explain why we can't give people a complete answer. Finding a better way of being in a community and hearing concerns.

Tom Burgess said that he looked at the estimated savings of between 4% and 7% savings per year.

Let's say we win 53% of the vote, we can build off of that. If we get less than 50%, we need to step back and discuss strategy. Tom said that he sees these as the two paths forward.

Alan Edelkind said that he wants to focus on what we need to do up to the vote. He said that we have to put down all of the issues on paper and separate those into those that the board has answers on and those that they do not.

Tom Burgess said that some don't care about the quality of education and only care about the cost.

Alan said that we have to have cost information included in relation to other important items. Janine suggested working with the Monadnock Ledger Transcript on some type of marketing plan.

Dan Harper said that it would be slanted if it is an editorial piece.

Discussion took place about marketing.

Tina Kriebel said that the focus is on the loudest people right now. We have 15 people from communities shouting about what is happening and getting the focus.

She cannot get people to put in the dispatch that there is a vote. Part of what is an uncapitalized group of people are those that don't know that there is a vote on March 12th. People don't read the local paper. One approach might be to reach people that don't know this is happening.

Alan Edelkind referred to the mailings that have gone to every single home.

Tina Kriebel asked if PTO's have been met with. Dan Harper said that he met with Hancock's PTO.

Tina said that Greg Kriebel reached out to the President of the PES PTO and shared that he would like to answer questions. There is a lot of conjecture and fear. People are afraid of what could be. A list on what will take place in the next 12 months should be developed.

List all that you know that the plan will cover. A thorough thought process should be shared. This should take place before the vote.

Signs stating something like "Strengthen education, vote on March 12th" might be posted.

Janine addressed communicating the fear of Charter Schools taking over the schools.

Tina Kriebel said that we need to look around our communities and figure out who the people are that will be asked questions.

The option for a Charter School to take the school is only an option if they are put on the market.

Janine Lesser said that the board can have the discussion that Tom Burgess mentioned about steps forward with respect to the vote outcome.

Alan Edelkind suggested not discussing what happens if it doesn't pass within specific margins. The focus on what happens if this passes should take place.

What do we do before the vote and after the vote? What is the message?

Dan Harper said that is tough because the School Board Rep in Frankestown is against consolidation.

Discussion took place about meeting with as many PTO's as possible.

What will the message be before the vote? Give them all of the information.

Dan Harper said that when he met with the PTO he went over every single Warrant Article.

Tina Kriebel said that this problem has been a long time in coming. This is the first time it has gone on a ballot. There is a lot of misinformation going around and the board is ready to answer and provide facts in discussion format.

The reason that this is being placed on the ballot is for educational reasons and staff success and so many other reasons.

A one page handout with information could be shared.

Tina said that tonight is ConVal's open house.....a table could have been developed to present to answer questions. Other opportunities might be sought.

Alan Edelkind said that the message needs to get out. Getting messages out to entire towns is needed. Connecting with the influencers in the towns is needed.

Dan Harper said that the forums were limited between answering questions and moderating.

Tina Kriebel suggested going through the forums and pulling all of the questions and listing them with answers. This would help get information out.

Discussion took place about Peterborough promoting the vote.

Discussion took place about the potential of a mailer.

Focus on the educational strength more than the cost.

Janine shared Heather McKernan's perspective on what ConVal is asking of voters.

A one page list of Q&A with a QR code for additional information was suggested.

A mailer will be used.

Discussion took place.

5. Adjourn

Alan Edelkind adjourned the meeting at 8:26 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda Marschok