

HEART Committee Minutes 2/6/2019

Members present: Julia Blyth, Alan Genovese, Michele Giarusso, Jess Marshall, Tony Matteo, Sue O'Reilly-McRae, Jean Page, Shalee Pratt, Ginger Robinson, Tom Wyatt

Members not present: Cheryl George, Bob Keir

Others in attendance: consultants Mac Reid and Stephen Hemmans, Recorder reporter Max Marcus

Meeting to order by Chair Giarusso at 6:40 p.m.

Minutes of 1/15/19, motion to accept made by Shalee, seconded by Tony, motion passed. Consultant Reid led the ongoing discussion of revisions of/additions to the district agreement. It was brought up that it is feasible that elementary grades could be PK through grade 5 OR grade 6 and that the secondary school could be grade 5 or 6 or 7 through 12 . Therefore, the DA language shall reflect this (vs. the traditional PK-6, and 7-12).

Section III A. is modified to read "Students who reside in the member towns (not "Residents") . Added on is the sentence , "Assignment and grade level will depend upon school committee policy."

Section III B is eliminated and the previous III B.1 becomes III B.

Section III B 2 is eliminated , but keeping in place the last sentence, " A school will not be closed permanently without going through the process outlined in Section IV C.

Section IV C, Process to close a school: Move C2 to become C1, as this pertains to the time frame and voting requirement to initiate a study prior to closing a school. Section C1 then becomes C2 and outlines the timeline in more detail and specifies the study as a five-year projected feasibility study.

Section C 2 e triggered discussion as to the composition of the ad hoc committee which would be formed if a school closing is being considered. The committee felt it important to ensure that it be inclusive of not only civic officials but also concerned citizens. Verbiage arrived at stated it would be composed of a school committee member from each town, a selectboard member or their designee from each town, and a third citizen of each town.

Section IV C 6 requires further consideration. This relates to compensation / reimbursement given to a town whose school is closed. Our initial working figure of \$15,000 was met with dissatisfaction as voiced at a recent meeting of the district's civic officials. The Warwick finance committee presented to us a letter with its proposal for compensation. It outlined several categories of financial support which would be necessitated by the closure of the school. We agreed that this needs further consideration. Alan suggested that by utilizing the categories, plus other factors (possibly % of reimbursement of costs to the town, and length of time of reimbursement....e.g., three years?) an equitable formula could be established.

Regarding section V B., Steve clarified that the proposed budget requires a simple majority at town meeting, as stated in MGL.

Mac will continue work on the revisions, and the review process will continue at our next meeting, which will be 2/13/19 due to members having plans for the week following. Sue suggested that the HEART committee meet with the School committee to review the district agreement when it is completed so that any concerns/ changes can be addressed prior to

presenting the document at upcoming forum(s) and , of course, spring Town Meetings. Throughout this process, DESE and legal authorities continue to review the agreement prior to its becoming the finished product.

Motion to adjourn made by Ginger, seconded by Shalee, adjournment at 8:40 p.m.

Next HEART mtg 2/13/19 at Northfield Town Hall in Selectboard meeting room.

Respectfully submitted, Jean Page