

HEART COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES: for the meeting of December 18, 2017

Committee Members Present:

Michele Giarusso

Cheryl George

Tony Matteo

Tracy Rogers

Bob Keir

Sue O'Reilly McRae

Committee Members Absent:

Joe Arsenault, Alan Genovese, Richard Fontaine, Ginger Robinson, Bill Wahlstrom

Others Present

Debbie Lynangagle, facilitator

Called to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:34 p.m.

Minutes

Bob made a motion to approve the minutes from the December 6, 2017 meeting as written. Sue seconded the motion and it was carried by a unanimous vote.

Announcements

Bob reported that the Bernardston Selectboard is expected to appoint a new member to the Committee on Wednesday. He'll reach out to the new member once s/he's appointed.

District Agreement

The Committee reviewed Bob's edits to the District Agreement and had the following comments:

1. State law says we have to vote on members from all towns; we can't just vote on the representatives from our own towns. (Section I(C)(1))
2. Regarding the ability to close schools, Bob though changing the word "intended" to "anticipated" in Section III(B) may give us more flexibility. Should the principal be consulted when a family wants to attend a school other than their town's school? What language did the BEST Committee use to allow them to close a school and on what basis did they make the decision to close it?
3. Do we actually have advisory committees? Have they been replaced by school councils? (Section V)
4. Warwick Elementary School should be called Warwick Community School and perhaps street numbers for all schools should be included. (Section V(A))
5. There should be a hard and fast definition of capital costs versus maintenance. (Section VI(B))
6. Who's supposed to be responsible for grounds maintenance? It seems like it would be an operating cost, but some or all of the towns are paying directly for it. (Section VI(B))
7. Bob had suggested changing the number of towns necessary to approve an amendment to the Agreement from "a majority" to "three-quarters." Other members prefer to keep the current language given the discussions about merging districts and/or adding towns to the Pioneer District. (Section VII(A)(2))
8. How is certification of the budget transmittal supposed to happen and how is it currently happening? (Section VII(C))

9. The law says the budget has to be certified by the School Committee treasurer by 4/30, but the Agreement says 3/15. Was that intentional? (Section VII(C))
10. Is the budget supposed to be approved by a majority vote or 2/3 vote at each town meeting? (Section VII(D))
11. We may need to look at the transportation clause. (Amendment approved 1999-2000)
12. We should add an appendix with MGLs that are referred to and/or hyperlinks.
13. The Agreement should include a mandate to review it every 3-5 years and state who should review it.
14. Should the Agreement state that the annual audit be submitted to towns?
15. Should the history of the schools regionalizing be an intro within the agreement?

Request for Proposals for Research Firm

The Committee made a couple of edits to the RFP and agreed to issue it. Suggestions for whom to solicit included: the Donahue Institute, the Collins Center, and the Collaborative for Educational Services. Proposals will be due back the end of January and the Committee will aim to interview candidates in early February.

Outreach

Cheryl presented some logo sketches. She will create Facebook page once we have a logo.

Sue read Ginger's talking points aloud and the group agreed they sounded good.

The Committee agreed that it's not ready to conduct outreach until we have a research firm hired and more work completed on the District Agreement.

Homework

- Sue will update Pat Shearer on the status of our review of the Agreement and ask Pat how we should proceed.
- Sue will also ask someone at the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education if they can help us review the Agreement as well.
- HEART members will update selectboards on the status of the review of the Agreement.
- Tracy will forward the edited version of the RFP to members and ask the Northfield town administrator to issue it.
- Cheryl will bring feedback on the logo sketches back to the artist and send new sketches out via email.
- Bob will send out what outreach he submitted to the Bernardston newsletter. Cheryl will put it in the Northfield newsletter as well.

Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 8:17 p.m.

NEXT MEETING: Wednesday, January 3, 2018 6:30 p.m. at the Northfield Town Hall, 2nd floor.

Respectfully submitted,



Tracy Rogers