

HEART Committee Minutes of 3/20/2019

Members attending: Julia Blyth, Alan Genovese, Cheryl George, Michele Giarusso, Bob Keir, Tony Matteo, Sue O'Reilly-McRae, Jean Page, Shalee Pratt, Tom Wyatt

Note: Chair Giarusso arrived late due to scheduling conflict

Members absent: Jess Marshall, Ginger Robinson

Others present: MARS consultant Steve Hemmans, one concerned citizen

Meeting called to order by Julia Blyth at 6:35 p.m.

Steve Hemmans presented a review of current happenings regarding the district agreement and the status of the MARS obligations. At the recent school committee (3/14/19), Steve explained to the SC the info about the ongoing workings of the Gill-Montague regionalization group. His presentation had been curtailed due to the committee having gone into executive session thus decreasing his available time. He also explained that the MARS contract is with HEART, not the SC. Steve wanted it known that the district agreement remains a work in progress because of the town reimbursement component (DESE had expressed concerns).

Regarding school choice (one of four categories which MARS agreed to address), approximately 80 Choice Out surveys were mailed, and approximately 20 were completed and returned. Steve handed out samples of the Choice In surveys which will be mailed out. We reviewed these, with one minor correction on the PK-6 version, changing , in 1A., the word "currently" to "previously". These surveys' data will need to be compiled once they've been completed and returned.

Steve advises against dissolution of HEART Committee until at least August, because that will conclude the time frame of which a report must be made to the Dept. of Revenue to define how the grant money was utilized. He also emphasized that DESE should approve the district agreement prior to its review by the various attorneys. We are also reminded that the vote at town meetings for the district agreement is a majority only. Three of the four district towns must approve it for it to become a reality (i.e., $\frac{3}{4}$ of the towns).

Mr. Hemmans departed the meeting at 7:30 p.m., and the committee expressed sincere thanks for all of his and his associates' fine work.

Chair Michele Giarusso reported on a meeting she had recently attended, a shared services summit at the Franklin Regional Council of Governments (aka , FRCOG). An Efficiency and Regionalization grant is being applied for, and Supt. Michael Buoniconti (Mohawk district) is contacting the state legislature regarding Chapter 70. The Rural Aid granted last year is not a sure thing for this year. Transportation and SPED issues are a priority, as is the possible merging of IT services amongst towns.

Next steps: four members volunteered to form a subcommittee to compose the required report for the department of revenue. Those members are Alan, Julia, Bob, and Michele.

Motion to accept minutes of 3/6/19, made by Bob, seconded by Julia. Motion passed.

Next HEART Committee meeting 5/15/19.

Motion to adjourn made by Bob, seconded by Jean. Motion passed. Mtg adjourned 8:35p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Jean Page