

RPC
Meeting Minutes

Public Meeting held at PCMS 8/4/08 6:00 p.m.

Members Present:

The following persons were present: Charles Woodmancy, Rodney Farrar, William Digby, Tom Goulette, Cynthia Hall, Paul Bridge, Michelle Ward, Ella Munday, Steve Gudroe, John Parola, Peter Cooley, Onie Lougee, Donna Olsen, George Nuite, Julie Willcott, Ralph Huff, Paul Stearns, Kevin Jordan, Gil Reynolds.

20 members of the public attended the meeting.

Paul Bridge started the meeting by explaining that we would be taking input from the public and then reviewing the proposed plan.

A question was asked by the public regarding the fact that since we will not be joining high schools how with the RSU save money with two superintendents? Paul Bridge responded that the RSU committee could not find any savings.

Another question asked by the public was what the penalty was for not voting for the RSU. Paul Stearns responded that if during the vote in November, SAD 4 voted no the penalty would be approximately \$133,000. The State would increase the local mill expectation by two percent. The SAD 46 penalty would be approximately \$161,685.

Another question asked by the public was what the penalty for not submitting a plan was. Paul Stearns advised that he was not sure of the answer to that, but he believed that state subsidy could be withheld.

Would the penalty be a one-time penalty? Paul Stearns answered that one way to look at the penalty was that in ten years time the District was giving up \$1 million dollars. Another way to look at it would be to budget the loss and if everything stays static, the District would move forward without it.

Question was asked by the public if the RSU committee had found any increases in costs. Paul Bridge responded yes, for example, the employee contracts would cause an increase. John Parola responded that over the months the RSU has spent on this plan they were asking where and how to save money. The committee decided that was not their task, it was their task to do the plan and present that to the public, the new RSU board would need to determine the savings, if any. Paul Bridge responded that the Districts are already collaborating and have agreements in place.

A member of the public stated that if the RSU saw no savings and they have no answer to what expenses the Towns would incur, then how could the people vote for the plan. There is nothing solid in the plan to vote on. He stated it was a lousy set up and no one will vote on it. The plan is State driven.

Charles Woodmancy responded that the RSU board members continuously asked questions while working on the plan and that the RSU members would either receive no answer or different answers to the same questions asked, which made it very difficult to move forward with their work.

A member of the public asked what the difference was between reorganizing and keeping things the way they are right now, especially if there is no savings. Paul Bridge responded that the Governor needed to do a budget and he needed money. This proposal to reorganize went through and was passed by the Legislature.

A member of the public stated she was confused because she was under the understanding that there would only be one superintendent when the new RSU was formed but she doesn't understand why both superintendents are staying on. Paul Stearns responded that it is because the law also required that all superintendent contracts be honored, which means that the two superintendents, even if not chosen to be the superintendent for the new RSU, could stay on in some capacity until their contracts expire.

The public asked a question whether or not the Governor could change this plan. Paul Bridge responded that this could be changed by the Legislature at any time.

A member of the public stated that he wanted to thank the RSU committee for all of the hours they had put in and the job they had done to get the plan ready for submission.

Charles Woodmancy asked the question: "If this is the law and the new RSU goes forward, is there any turning back?" Doug Smith responded that there was no exit, once the new RSU is formed there is no turning back.

The public meeting was adjourned at 7:15 p.m.

The RSU Committee members met after the public meeting.

Ella Munday announced that the Dexter public meeting date has been changed to October 9th. Willimantic will be holding their public meeting October 22nd at 6:30 at their Town hall. It was discussed and decided that the individual members of the RSU committee will attend their own public meetings and that the full committee is not needed at all of the four meetings.

Gil Reynolds asked for clarification that the individual school boards would only be voting to submit the plan and not to make changes to the plan. He was correct.

John Parola asked for clarification that the minutes of the public meeting for tonight would be attached to the plan. He was correct.

Paul Stearns clarified that only one plan would be sent in to the commissioner. The plan will be sent on August 22nd.

Discussion was had regarding compensation of committee members. It was suggested that the committee members be reimbursed by attendance count. It was also discussed that this would be the last RSU Committee Meeting if all of the school boards vote to submit the plan to the Commissioner. Michelle Ward will go through the minutes of the meetings to tally up the attendance records for committee members. Peter Cooley made a motion to accept the recommendation to compensate committee members based on attendance, Ella Munday seconded the motion. Motion carried with one member opposed.

Tom Goulette asked if there were any administrative costs outstanding. Michelle has already been compensated and there may be some final costs attributed to tonight's meeting.

Paul Bridge made the motion to adjourn. Tom Goulette seconded the motion. Meeting adjourned at 7:33 p.m.