



**TEMPORARY REGIONAL SCHOOL STUDY COMMITTEE
OF
THE CITY OF ANSONIA
AND
THE CITY OF DERBY**



MINUTES

Wednesday, May 13, 2020 – 7 p.m.

ZOOM virtual conferencing platform via the Internet

The meeting was called to order at 7 p.m. by Co-Chair Jim Gildea. All those present recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call:

Derby members:		Ansonia members:	
Jim Gildea, Co-Chair	Present	Joe Jaumann, Co-Chair	present
Barbara DeGennaro	Present	Dr. Steve Adamowski	present
Tara Hyder	Present	Rich Bshara	present
George Kurtyka	Present	Christopher Phipps	present
Ron Luneau	Present	Dr. Joshua Stuart	present

NVCOG Staff Rick Dunne and John DiCarlo were present.

Dr. Conway, Derby Public Schools and Dr. DiBacco, Ansonia Public Schools were present.

Public Session

No members of the public addressed the Committee this evening.

Approval of Minutes – March 4, 2020

Mr. Jaumann MOVED to approve the minutes of March 4, 2020; SECONDED by Mr. Kurtyka. Motion carried unanimously.

Approval of Minutes – April 27, 2020

Mr. Kurtyka MOVED to approve the minutes of April 27, 2020; SECONDED by Dr. Shuart. Motion carried unanimously with Ms. DeGennaro abstaining.

Jim Gildea, Co-Chair
Joe Jaumann, Co-Chair
Dr. Steven Adamowski, Treasurer
George Kurtyka, Secretary

Rich Bshara
Barbara DeGennaro
Tara Hyder

Ronald Luneau, Jr.
Chris Phipps
Joshua Shuart

Update on Discussions with DMG

Mr. Gildea provided an overview of several conference calls with DMG that focused on equalization, program of studies, and defining the savings in the shared scenario. DMG owned the fact that they have more work to do in those areas. They have taken out the attendance piece as it pertains to those three areas and are finishing up the report. They have acknowledged that they will do the heavy lifting in those areas and believe they have done enough data pull during their meetings here that they won't need to use the educational leaders as a resource. They will facilitate discussions, document decisions, and have taken away the attendance in those areas. They are ready to move forward.

Mr. Jaumann agreed with Mr. Gildea's summary of the conference calls.

Mr. Dunne explained, this clarification of the contract indicates how DMG will deliver what they were originally supposed to deliver through Task 2.2. They are committing to appearing at two more meetings with the Committee through that section. Then, in Task 2.3 where they have to take the Committee through a feasibility analysis for the decisions it is gravitating toward, there will be two more workshops that they will facilitate. Two meetings to finish the work they've already tried to deliver and an additional two meetings, for a total of four, when you include Task 2.3.

Mr. Gildea stated, we were very clear that this work plan in no way is completely separate and distinct from Task 2.3 which will facilitate workshops. His impression was that they will meet as often as need to finish out Phase 1, the educational plan and the equalization. He believed that if three meetings were needed, they would do them. That was separate and distinct from 2.3.

Mr. Jaumann agreed that he felt DMG would do what was necessary to complete Phase 1 in terms of meeting with district staff, getting information, facilitating the information, getting it into the report. They would meet with the group, and then the two workshops were separate and distinct when we get to that point in 2.3.

Mr. DiCarlo noted that there is an e-mail chain that verifies this.

Mr. Gildea called for questions from the Committee members.

Dr. Shuart thanked the Committee Co-Chairs and NVCOG for their work. He feels confident that they fought for the Committee and is optimistic they will get where they need to be.

Treasurer's Report including payment of DMG invoices

Mr. Gildea explained, to date, when Task 1 was completed payment of \$77,000 would be due. To date we have paid them \$53,900 leaving a balance of \$23,100. The two parts of Phase 2 which are 2.2 the shared services study, and 2.3 the workshops, with separate payments.

Task 2 in its entirety is \$60,000; \$36,000 for the shared services report and another \$24,000 for the workshops that haven't yet begun.

The open invoices are the \$23,100 for Task 1 and \$36,000 for Task 2.2. He asked the Committee to consider paying half of the \$23,100 and half of the \$36,000. This leaves approximately \$30,000 on the table, plus the \$24,000 for the workshops.

Dr. Adamowski MOVED to authorize payment of \$29,550 to DMG; SECONDED by Dr. Shuart. Motion carried unanimously.

TRSSC Next Steps

Mr. Gildea discussed a fuller overview of the Task 2.3 workshop section of the agreement. In the contract, after the report was completed, DMG proposed to help the districts make decisions. They would work and meet to apply feasibility impact framework to assess the potential scenarios. Much of the next step focuses on the Committee having a series of workshops using the feasibility impact framework, meeting with DMG to help steer us and transition us.

Mr. Kurtyka asked what the expected timeline to completion is.

Mr. Jaumann replied, they were a little bit closer on equalization; they wanted to talk amongst themselves regarding the timeframe they need with regard to the education plans. They felt confident that they were close on equalization and will provide a timeframe for us pretty soon. No specific timeframe was laid out, but he feels it will be a 45- to 60-day timeframe.

Dr. Adamowski asked, what is the understanding in general of what would be presented at the workshops?

Mr. Gildea noted that his understanding was they would analyze and discuss the different grade levels and those things that would have the most impact. At that point we will have the full report and sit collectively as a group with a facilitator and mediator to guide us to transition to the next steps.

Dr. Adamowski asked if public comment will be involved in those workshops, or will it be just a Committee activity?

Mr. Gildea explained that the contract says that DMG will facilitate two workshops with the TRSSC and other stakeholders.

Mr. Jaumann added that he took those workshops as bookends – one was an opening, seeing if we have a consensus among us, getting feedback during public session, allowing the public to comment, and then basically setting us on a course to do a body of work to make some decisions, getting to that second meeting where we make some of the tougher decisions after we've had time to study the report, get more feedback, consider some of the opinions of the public and then have the facilitation meeting.

Mr. Dunne explained, the first thing you're going to get is the equalization report. Then they're going to have facilitated meetings about the educational programs. They will also be delivering an entire spreadsheet of those conclusions that resulted in a 10 percent projection of savings. When you get to the workshops in a final phase, you will have already arrived at a new district proposal. They are going to apply this feasibility framework to assess three scenarios – status quo, new regional school district, and separate districts with shared services. They're going to facilitate that discussion.

He continued, while I think you can extend stakeholders to mean anyone you want, it's not a public hearing and you're not necessarily entertaining public testimony. They haven't promised to facilitate a public hearing. It is a facilitated meeting that will walk through the

three options in two meetings, so that the public has enough information to then go to referendum.

Dr. Adamowski discussed the work between the two sessions will look at the administrative overhead projected savings, and the other savings which is variable depending upon decisions on the buildings. He feels the Committee would need to make decisions on the buildings in the context of these scenarios. That will give the Committee a projection of the amount saved. The 10 percent seems to be the maximum amount that would be saved if there is the fullest building consolidation and closure of some buildings, along with the administrative savings.

He continued, our work in terms of being able to say to the public, “this proposal would improve the educational program and save a certain amount of money or defer a certain amount of costs to taxpayers.” That would involve taking some of the savings and investing it in program – he believes that this is an essential part of the Committee’s work. He feels the Committee needs to identify the reasons the public would be interested in this – cost savings, enhancement of program. We need to be able to identify both of those areas somehow between the process of the two workshops.

Mr. Jaumann agreed, stating, that is the concept. One meeting to open it and introduce the possible three scenarios, have the stakeholders be able to ask questions and make their points on the three issues, and the second meeting to wrap it up and have this Committee make a final decision.

Ms. Hyder stated, in terms of Dr. Adamowski’s note that there’s cost savings in human resources, central office specifically, that is assuming that we would be in agreement with their scenario and suggestions for the reduction in force. In that scenario where there is supposedly cost savings, there’s also a reduction of a curriculum department and social workers. It is cost savings on paper, but it’s also a loss and is not something our group has discussed yet and would necessarily agree with in a structure to assume that it would definitively be a cost savings. It might not definitely be a cost savings because it might not be a structure that works for kids.

Mr. Dunne explained, in response to a question from Ms. DeGennaro, that the stakeholders that were subjects of a focus group at the beginning are not necessarily the stakeholders mentioned for the final workshops. You can decide as a Committee who you want – the universe of stakeholders who might want to have the benefit of walking through the three options at the end of the process.

The consensus of the Committee is to attempt to wait 30-45 days and get the final report and move into Task 2.3 at that point.

The Committee will meet on June 3rd to have an equalization discussion, and the Co-Chairs with NVCOG will communicate with DMG about having the other piece of it done by June 22nd.

Point of Good Order

Mr. Dunne asked the Committee to approve the recording services invoices for the meeting of April 27th and for tonight’s meeting.

Dr. Adamowski MOVED to approve the recording services invoices for April 27 and May 13, 2020; SECONDED by Dr. Shuart. Motion carried unanimously.

Public Session

No members of the public wished to speak.

Adjournment

Mr. Kurtyka MOVED to adjourn; SECONDED by Dr. Shuart. Motion carried unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 7:36 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Trish Bruder

Patricia M. Bruder
Secretary