



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



MINUTES
Wednesday, October 7, 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	absent
Ron Luneau	Present	Dr. Joshua Stuart	present

NVCOG Staff John DiCarlo was present.
Dr. Conway, Derby Public Schools and Dr. DiBacco, Ansonia Public Schools were present.

Public Session

Mr. Gildea asked three times if any member of the public wished to speak. There being none, he declared the public session closed.

Approval of Minutes – September 28, 2020

No minutes presented.

Treasurer’s Report

There have been no expenditures or invoices since the last meeting.

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

Rich Bshara
Barbara DeGennaro
Tara Hyder

Ronald Luneau,
Chris Phipps
Joshua Stuart

TRSSC CDE Progress Report

Mr. Gildea reported that the TRSSC CDE Progress Report will be submitted to the State, the Mayors, the Boards of Aldermen by week's end.

Program of Study – Discussion / Possible Action

DMG had given the Committee the programs of study and they were discussed over several meetings. If the Committee votes to regionalize, and if the towns vote to regionalize, there will be a regionalized school system. These programs of study satisfy the requirement in State Statute, could potentially be offered in a regionalized school system, and are not binding. Mr. Gildea feels that with the caveat that these are programs that could potentially be offered, he feels the Committee is close to closure on this item.

Dr. Adamowski MOVED to approve these programs of study as a list of programs that could potentially be offered, pending any potential enhancements that may be possible given savings in administration and facilities; SECONDED by Mr. Jaumann.

In answer to a question by Ms. DeGennaro, Dr. Adamowski explained that his motion covers the high school, middle school and elementary school programs of study.

Dr. Shuart further clarified, this is truly non-binding; it is approving the spirit of the Committee's discussions; that we like the way they're going. We could improve on them, but we agree with the general course of those three plans. Mr. Gildea agreed, stating this would not bind a future regionalized school system as they, statutorily, are the ones that would be setting the future curriculum.

Mr. Jaumann stated, looking at Section 10-43, these plans meet the statutory criteria, and this Committee can adjust the plans if something other than K-12 is ultimately agreed upon.

Motion carried unanimously.

Equalization amongst towns – Discussion / Possible Action

Mr. Gildea explained that DMG has responded in the affirmative to the question at the last meeting regarding the ability of the Pre-K students filtering into the elementary schools, but it's in the four elementary school model. Some amount of money would need to be added to the three elementary school option to accommodate a Pre-K class if that option were chosen.

[Mr. Bshara arrives at this point, 7:15 pm]

In addition, they responded that the alternative educational programs (Raise, Pace) do have enough space at Ansonia High School, but additional space is needed for the equipment for the Advanced Manufacturing Center. They will be following back up with Silver-Petrucelli and Dr. Conway to get a cost estimate to house the equipment in the Advanced Manufacturing Center. That is a cost, if this Committee recommends housing those in the proposed 9-12 high school, that we have to layer in. All of the other costs right now should be factored in.

Mr. Gildea feels that based upon the Committee's discussions, it makes sense for the Raise Academy Program and the Advanced Manufacturing to be in whatever that 9-12 high school is, eliminating the need for Derby High School. He believes they're going to re-examine the space – there may be additional space added for the movement of the Advanced Manufacturing program. Looking at the operational costs necessary for Derby High School and the code work that would have to be done, it does not remain a viable option.

The Committee discussed the Advanced Manufacturing Program and the space it requires. Dr. Adamowski asked Dr. Conway about the number of students that could be served, per period, in the interest of moving the program to the regional high school and expanding it to a reasonable number of students. He felt that having an increased number of students in the program would justify the move of the equipment and the modification of the building. Dr. Conway noted that 15 is usually the cutoff, for safety reasons. Four different classes could be held, multiple times per day. Upward of 60 students could participate if there were interest. The secondary part is the youth during the day, but also access for adults in the evening for that same program; use of the same equipment.

Mr. Gildea summarized the regionalization options and recalled that the 9-12 option does not take care of the educational program for both schools. It did not address the 6-12 option in the middle school. It also saves the least amount of money. He asked if the Committee is ready to eliminate the 9-12 option and narrow in on the other three.

Mr. Jaumann MOVED to remove the 9-12 regionalized option and continue considering the 6-12 regionalized, Pre-K-12 (3 elementary) regionalized and Pre-K-12 (4 elementary) regionalized options; SECONDED by Dr. Shuart. Motion carried unanimously.

[Mr. Kurtyka arrived at this point, 7:35 pm]

TRSSC Next Steps – Discussion / Possible Action

Mr. Gildea summarized that the Committee has done considerable work tonight, adopting the programs of study and narrowing the scope of regionalization. We'll go back to DMG to get more information to finalize costs. The Committee will continue its work discussing the costs associated with the 6-12, PK-12 (3) and PK-12 (4) models at its next meeting.

The next step has to be understanding and digging into the numbers, discussing whether the buildings are contributed or leased, understanding that difference, understanding the cost to the communities, balancing that with the savings. We can send the equalization document out and focus on this solely at our next meeting.

Mr. Jaumann discussed Appendix E, which is a financial analysis that should provide more information for us before our next meeting. He feels it is important to look at the utilization rate, how much of each facility we'll be utilizing and what the costs are, as well as the total student population and where we'll be decreasing and at what level. It may be prudent for every Committee member to go back and read those specific sections to gear up for that discussion. Finance and equalization mesh together.

Mr. Gildea agreed that each option saves money, some save more than others. Each person will have to decide if some of those cost savings are as important; it is definitely a cost savings versus what it costs to get there. It's a hand-in-hand discussion. It will be helpful to look at the appendix – we can send that out and highlight the financial piece, the utilization rates, the cost savings for the different options.

Mr. Bshara noted that looking at the normal operating costs for both Ansonia and Derby on their own, if we were to go regional on a K-12 variation, the amount of money expended in a regional would approximately be the same amount of money as what both of the towns are currently spending. Looking at this Appendix E, there's not a huge savings. Looking at Appendix E for 2021, Derby would spend about \$56 million and their regional variation is about \$56 million. Basically, there will be more coursework or more eligibility – benefits may come from the course load, but the amount of money that's being expended is similar. He asked if that is correct.

Mr. Gildea replied that when he looks at Appendix E, there's some different variations in savings. I think there's \$2.3 million in savings from the PK-12 (3) option, but there's \$10- to \$15 million in costs to get there. It's savings over the long haul.

Mr. Bshara stated, so the \$10 million is more in the transition, not an annual operating savings. The \$2.3 million is more of an operational/ongoing type of savings.

Mr. Gildea noted that the Committee has made some progress, eliminated an option, buttoned up the programs of study. The next focus is on the finance, savings, different options still on the table, utilization rates, cost savings, capital funding to get there. That will be the main thrust of the next meeting and he'll send the documents in plenty of time for people to review them before the meeting on October 26th.

Point of Good Order

Mr. Gildea stated, we've done a lot of heavy lifting and have done some good work tonight.

Public Session

Mr. Gildea asked three times if any member of the public wished to speak. There being none, he declared the public session closed.

Adjournment

At 7:50 p.m., Mr. Kurtyka MOVED to adjourn; SECONDED by Dr. Shuart. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Trish Bruder

Patricia M. Bruder
Secretary