



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



MINUTES
Wednesday, February 3, 2021 – 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

Others participating:

NVCOG Staff John DiCarlo, Derby Superintendent of Schools Dr. Conway, Ansonia Superintendent of Schools Dr. DiBacco

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 – January 6, 2020

Mr. Jaumann MOVED to approve the minutes of January 6, 2020; SECONDED by Dr. Stuart. Motion carried unanimously.

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 Stuart

Treasurer's Report – Discussion/Possible Action

Dr. Adamowski reported that he approved the invoice for the minutes of the January 25, 2021 meeting.

DMG Invoicing Phase 2.2 and Phase 2.3 – Discussion / Possible Action

The invoice for Phase 2.2 was originally \$36,000. The Committee made two payments, one of \$18,000 and another of \$9,000, leaving a balance of \$9,000 remaining. DMG is seeking full payment for Phase 2.2. The Co-Chairs are comfortable making this payment.

DMG has agreed to update the equalization savings document after we complete the financial piece and talk about the 3 schools v. 4 schools, and the superintendents come back regarding the staffing. They have agreed to update the final report to include the equalization document, and they agree that they will attend two additional workshops.

Mr. Kurtyka MOVED to pay the remaining \$9,000 balance on the invoice for Phase 2.2; SECONDED by Mr. Phipps. Motion carried unanimously.

There is an invoice for Phase 2.3 for \$24,000. This was to facilitate workshops to set the feasibility for regionalization. DMG is seeking ½ payment for Phase 2.3 of \$12,000.

DMG supplied information, attended 10 different meetings, and we have narrowed our focus down to PK-12. They feel they have done a significant body of work but agree that there is more work to do. They recognize they are responsible for the final Task 1 report, the equalization document and any change in the savings resulting from any staffing changes from Dr. Conway and Dr. DiBacco's work. They have agreed to do all that and we would be holding back \$12,000 until this is completed.

Dr. Shuart MOVED to pay \$12,000 on the invoice for Phase 2.3; SECONDED by Mr. Phipps. Motion carried unanimously.

Review and Discuss Section 6 of Task 1 Report: Governance and Administration – Discussion / Possible Action

Mr. Gildea reviewed the discussion from the last meeting. The initial regional school board would be selected by the legislative bodies of both towns within the 30 days of the establishment of the regional district by referendum. The new regional board of ed would establish the election for future members, ensuring they have staggered, four-year terms. There is a two-year transition period during which the regional board of ed would not have a budget – they would have to go to the local boards of education if they wanted to spend money.

The successors to the initial board are nominated and elected in their respective towns in accordance with State Statutes and in the same manner current members are elected. The regional board of education would assume control within two years and the local boards of education will be disbanded. Chapter 170 of the Connecticut General Statutes governs the

Board of Education and tells you exactly what they're responsible for – building, maintenance, upkeep, program, hiring staff.

There are three different governance models to choose from. On some school boards in Connecticut there is an equal number of board members, there are at-large elections, and there is crossover voting.

The members discussed the potential number of regional school board members from each town and how each member's vote could be weighed. They talked about a board of 10 members with 5 from each town, or 8 members with 4 and 4 with weighted votes. They talked about an at large election of 9 members but cautioned that in this scenario all 9 members could end up being from one town. While one member felt the crossover vote critical, another was completely against the crossover vote.

There was a wide contrast of opinion and a lengthy, sometimes contentious discussion about what kind of representation would be fair to both cities, with Ansonia having 64 percent of the student population and Derby 36 percent. It was stressed that 64/36 does not equal 50/50. One member felt that if Ansonia has more votes then Derby would never win a decision. Another member reminded the Committee that it's not about budgets, it is about voices for kids. Another spoke of every member of the regional board having the responsibility of representing all of the children in the district, not just those from the city in which they live.

The guidance from the State is clear – Board of Education representation is based upon enrollment, as is the financial piece – the town with the greater enrollment pays the greater bill. The majority of the members felt that they could be in favor of a board consisting of an equal number of board members with weighted voting.

Mr. Gildea summarized, the thought was we would go through each step, leasing v. contributions, we still have to revisit that. There are things we have to revisit with the staffing. We have to create the sum of all the parts and then ultimately, that's what we're going to vote on. There are really three preferred methods of having a board of ed with imbalanced enrollment. One is the at-large, one is the 6-3 weighted, one is an equal board and weighted, and then there are things you can do to protect like the crossover vote. The one that appears to have the most support is the equal number of board members, weighted. These are all building blocks to be considered; the Committee needs more time to reflect on this item.

Review and Discuss Finance Open Issues – Discussion / Possible Action

Dr. Conway explained that he and Dr. DiBacco have to find the time to get together to go through that document again, putting back things that were previously taken out with our conservative look on it.

Mr. Gildea has nothing new to report as far as working with the Legislators on the finance piece and the proposed resolution. Mr. Bshara expressed concerns about realizing any actual savings if the State plans to send us less funding. Mr. Jaumann reiterated that it is not a raised bill, but a concept that was sent to be developed and is yet to be seen. We share the same concern about the savings piece. Mr. Gildea stated that when they met with the Legislators,

the hope was that somehow the reimbursement rate will be affected, having more direct impact on us. We agree that the savings piece is not going to be substantial.

TRSSC Next Steps – Discussion / Possible Action

The Committee will anticipate an update on the staffing piece at the February 24th meeting.

Mr. Gildea will analyze the 19 regional school districts, look at their enrollment levels, look at how they're split out, look at whether or not they use a crossover vote, and bring the info back on February 24th.

Point of Good Order

Mr. Gildea thanked the Committee for their polite, respectful and courteous honesty.

Mr. Bshara suggested that this Committee of 10 people could be the new regional board - we all have the kids at heart. He is hopeful the regional board will act in concert and not as individual town members, but as a regional board and that it won't take long to get there when and if this comes to fruition. Mr. Gildea agreed, and thanked everyone for their positivity.

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

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

The meeting adjourned at approximately 8:36 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Trish Bruder

Patricia M. Bruder
Secretary