



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



MINUTES

Tuesday, March 23, 2021 – 7:30 p.m.  
ZOOM virtual conferencing platform via the Internet

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m. by Co-Chair Jim Gildea. All those present recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call:

<b>Derby members:</b>		<b>Ansonia members:</b>	
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 Shuart	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 25, 2021**

Dr. Shuart MOVED to approve the minutes of January 25, 2021; SECONDED by Mr. Kurtyka. 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 Shuart

## **Approval of Minutes – February 3, 2021**

Mr. Phipps MOVED to approve the minutes of February 3, 2021; SECONDED by Mr. Kurtyka. Motion carried unanimously.

## **Meeting Dates and Times**

Mr. Bshara MOVED to change the meeting schedule to 7:30 p.m. the 1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday and 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of each month; SECONDED by Mr. Phipps. Motion carried unanimously.

## **Treasurer's Report – Discussion/Possible Action**

Dr. Adamowski reported that the clerical was paid and there were no other expenditures since the last meeting.

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

Mr. Gildea provided a brief review of what the Committee had discussed at the last meeting.

In looking to provide the one person-one vote rule there were several different ways DMG proposed. One was weighted voting either through appropriating and weighting Board of Education members per town, or by having equal members but weighting the votes. They talked about an at-large election filling the board by a collective election of the two towns. A crossover vote would require all approvals to have at least one affirmative vote from each city. While only 2 of the 19 towns employ the crossover vote – 4 or 5 had the crossover vote for at least five years.

Proposed board configurations included:

- 6 board members from Ansonia, 3 from Derby, each with equal voting rights
- 5 board members elected from each city with Ansonia's vote counting at a greater weight – (Ansonia's vote counting for 12.8, Derby's 7.2 – the smaller the board, the greater disparity between the weighted votes; the higher the closer)
- 9 at-large board members

The Committee viewed the Norfolk/Colebrook Regionalization Model regarding Governance. The Norfolk/Colebrook Region consists of two different sized cities.

Then the discussion turned to the size of the proposed regional board. The Committee felt the gap of weighted voted would be smaller with a larger, 10-member board. The consensus was an equal number of board members, 5 from each city.

The discussion turned to crossover voting, and whether it be restrictive or focused.

The Derby members favored a crossover vote to retain some level of “local voice.”

The Ansonia members could be in favor of crossover vote that would be in place for a limited duration, adopting the Norfolk/Colebrook rules, putting in place the major issues that would appear before a board including budget, hiring, capital improvement, adopting by-laws and things like that. This would preserve the minority community’s ability to have a strong say in the beginning and would dissipate over time as the board begins to act as a regional board as opposed to members from different communities opposing one another. The Committee could narrow down the subject matter of what it believes a crossover vote would be needed on, and then limit it in terms of number of years it should be in place for.

Another point was that the extensive use of crossover voting could bring a regional district to a standstill by any one community. The important areas such as the selection of a superintendent or by-laws are where it should be permitted for a time. Ultimately, the belief and structural means should be in place that this will be a board that represents all the children of the new district as opposed to their cities. This is about the children in the regional district – to maintain a crossover vote says that no matter what, we’re not going to ever trust each other and be able to get along, we’ll always be looking at each other as separate communities. This Committee is forming a regional board, not two separate boards forced to be together for a monthly meeting. Lastly, the annual budget is going to be allocated more to Ansonia than it is to Derby. If an unlimited crossover vote is implemented, Derby would be able to veto every decision, big or small.

The Derby members favored having a crossover vote with no time limit and no limit on subject matter. Their reasons include, the benefit may be to improve the sale ability to the Derby community. Every issue that comes before the regional board is important, one shouldn’t have priority over another – there are usually not disagreements over a proposed budget; the Board of Education usually pushes the proposed budgets forward. The hiring of the classroom teachers are the ones that impact kids day-to-day and face-to-face. The smaller items are usually the ones with the greater debate. With Derby having the lesser weight of votes, it will never win a vote. Derby will not have a voice. The Derby members represent the Derby kids and Derby interests. Derby and Ansonia are two separate communities, and it may not be realistic to think the two could agree on everything. Derby does not want to relinquish its voting power to Ansonia – the crossover vote would be an equalizer.

Mr. Gildea stated, we’ve gotten to the crossover language and there is consensus on the crossover. There is not consensus on whether it’s restrictive or focused. It would appear there is a split between those. What is the downside of having a non-restricted crossover vote with no phaseout? Why alienate 12,000 voters in the town that we need their votes on it; why make 12,000 voters feel like they’ve lost some level of local control where now they have 100 percent local control.

Mr. Jaumann stated, the Ansonia members are open to a crossover vote, with restrictions. Derby is open to a crossover vote with no restrictions of any kind. Is Derby open to any sort of limitations on the crossover vote? This is where there is an impasse. Once all the major decisions are in place, what is the crossover vote needed for? The very large downside is that

the crossover vote allows Derby to control anything and everything that the Board does on any vote. If the Derby membership decides not to vote for a single provision, it doesn't matter if the majority of the weighted vote thinks a certain way, Derby can veto that, and that's a lot of power for a minority community to have.

Each group could not understand the reasoning of the other – Derby wishing to understand why the restrictions are a good thing, and Ansonia wishing to understand why the unrestricted crossover is necessary for the minority community.

Ms. Hyder MOVED to have the Ansonia-Derby Regional Board consist of 10 persons – 5 from each city - with a full crossover vote with no phaseout date from Derby; SECONDED by Mr. Kurtyka. A roll call vote was taken as follows:

<b>Derby members:</b>		<b>Ansonia members:</b>	
Jim Gildea, Co-Chair	Yes	Joe Jaumann, Co-Chair	no
Barbara DeGennaro	Yes	Dr. Steve Adamowski	no
Tara Hyder	Yes	Rich Bshara	no
George Kurtyka	Yes	Christopher Phipps	no
Ron Luneau	Yes	Dr. Joshua Stuart	no

The MOTION FAILED by a vote of 5 yes, 5 no.

Mr. Gildea suggested that the Committee is at an impasse and he would reach out to counsel to see what happens in this case.

**Review and Discuss Finance Open Issues – Discussion / Possible Action**

Mr. Gildea and Mr. Jaumann have received and reviewed the amended costs associated with regionalization. The numbers show the savings reflected at both 85 percent and 95 percent. They will review them for accuracy and provide them to full Committee.

Doctor Conway and Doctor DiBacco have completed their assessment, and forwarded to DMG, how they feel the optimum central office make up looks. DMG has a body of work to do there.

Matt Venhorst sent an email clarifying and amplifying the cost per district and how that could be amended a little bit depending upon the governance decision.

There are three finance discussions the Committee has to have in the upcoming meetings.

Mr. Bshara asked if the State has given any indication as to the revenue side, particularly regarding the Alliance and Priority School District money. Mr. Jaumann believes the Committee is still waiting on that information, but his understanding is that in the first year it is cumulative and after that it readjusts for the regional board.

**TRSSC Next Steps – Discussion / Possible Action**

Mr. Gildea and Mr. Jaumann will follow up on tonight's governance discussion with Matt Venhorst.

**Point of Good Order**

Go UCONN! Mr. Gildea wished the Committee members a good night and acknowledged their hard work, patience and good manners in these tough discussions. The group was wished a Happy Easter and Passover.

**The next meeting is 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, April 7, 2021.**

**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. Kurtyka MOVED to adjourn; SECONDED by Ms. DeGennaro. Motion carried unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 8:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*Trish Bruder*

Patricia M. Bruder  
Secretary