



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



MINUTES – Regular Meeting  
Tuesday, August 4, 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	absent	Christopher Phipps	present
Ron Luneau	present	Dr. Joshua Stuart	present

Others participating:

Matt Venhorst, State Department of Education  
NVCOG Staff John DiCarlo  
Derby Superintendent of Schools Dr. Conway  
Ansonia Superintendent of Schools Dr. DiBacco.

Mr. Gildea stated, tonight we'll talk about head count, then 4-elementary v. 3-elementary, and governance. It is our hope that in the meetings in August, September and October we'll have all the discussions we need to have. We have done some really good, substantial and difficult work over the course of three years. We have numbers that we feel are good – not just guessing. We've pushed hard and have pushed our consultants hard. We're on target to finish this in October.

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

Mr. Jaumann stated, the timeframe is what it is. I agree that we've put a lot of work in and have good, solid numbers and are working toward the goal of determining feasibility. He asked a question of Mr. Venhorst, say we get a positive vote, we get it to the State Board of Education for determination. If at that point in time our time lapses – we're up in February of 2022 – is there any prohibition in any way, shape or form from either Board of Aldermen re-enabling the Committee once again – us taking a second vote on the same report asking the State Board of Education to consider it again? We are working in good faith and trying to meet that deadline.

Mr. Venhorst explained, first, I think the Committee is doing a fantastic job. I realize it is very hard work and I commend the Committee for its work. Timelines are something we need to be aware of. If you pass that February 2022 timeline, it's unclear what happens. To set the background, the Statute does set a four-year timeline. We're not there yet, but I know everyone is aware of that and are working in good faith. We know and appreciate that. We can talk more when it gets closer. We will absolutely do everything in our power to get it through. We want the issue with the time to be on peoples' radar.

Mr. Gildea summarized the work of the Committee thus far, and projects completion of a report in October.

### **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**

None presented at this time.

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

There have been no expenditures since the last meeting.

### **Review and Discuss DMG Report "Summary of Savings Pre-K – 12 Regionalization" – Discussion/Possible Action**

Mr. Gildea stated, regarding headcount, there were three scenarios. The first was to take advantage of economy of scale, that was the full recommendation from DMG of a 34-person administrative head count. They had proposed 19 positions. Remembering the 4 versus the 3 elementary schools. DMG recommended a reduction of 15 positions. In the 4-elementary school option, there is a fair amount of savings; most of it realized by Derby. In the 3-elementary school option, similar savings – both Derby and Ansonia save more – a big part of that was the elimination of a school and the costs associated with that.

The second scenario was maximizing resources where they came up with a 32-person central office. They layered in a fair amount of positions. In that scenario Ansonia does not save money; the district does. Most of that savings is Derby's in both the 4- and 3-elementary scenarios.

In all options, Ansonia does better in the 3-school option when it comes to savings due to reimbursement rates on some of the work.

Scenario 3 is what came from the superintendents – in the perfect world, the headcount would be 38. In addition to all the high school programs that would already be bolstered, there would be STEM programs, early intervention programs, and that was all in the spreadsheet.

Mr. Gildea feels that 15 cuts it too much, and 38 may add back too much. Mr. Jaumann agreed, saying the answer is somewhere between 19-38. Under any scenario, we're making a recommendation to the future Regional Board of Education; our decision is not binding. Our suggestion is for the purposes of feasibility.

Mr. Phipps added, we shouldn't bog ourselves down with the minutia of job titles and positions, anything can change with the next board. We want to do it right - I don't think it's good to cut 15 positions – and don't try to find savings here; we want it to be a better district. Thirty-eight is too many. Ms. DeGennaro agreed.

Mr. Gildea stated, we have an obligation in that report to lay out a five-year view and we have to have a target. We think 38 is too high, maybe we want to recommend 32 – we have to make sure the report has that number in there, recognizing that it is not binding.

Ms. Hyder explained that she would rather give them enough people than to cut it so tightly and risk that they may be unsuccessful, also keeping in mind that the final, functioning regionalized school system would not be in place until a few years from now. Derby is losing really good teachers because the salaries are not competitive enough – she would like the new regionalized district to be a place where people want to come and work for a competitive salary, and therefore she wants to see the entire district well and properly funded.

Dr. Adamowski would prefer to lead with program, because then you have to address both the administrators and the teachers and other staff who will be carrying out the program. He feels the Committee is making the assumption that by adding to central office, program will improve in some unspecified way, and that there would be enough teachers available to repurpose to do that. He noted that he agrees with Ms. Hyder's point about teacher salaries, and that both communities will benefit from having salaries that are more competitive than what each is able to offer now. He would like to discuss total budget and what will be presented to the community on this – favoring some savings to taxpayers and some program improvement over what either district is currently offering.

Mr. Gildea stated, when you look at the headcount of positions, he assumes that based upon the fact that we're combining populations, believing that you will have some savings in teachers, by creating a STEM division you'll have the teachers to go along with that. The headcounts the Committee has layered in do add programs and improvements, and the staff efficiencies will go along with it.

Mr. Jaumann noted, the development of programming will be left for the regional board and the superintendent. He does support giving them the headcount to enable them to support those program developments. Determining salary is not in the purview of this Committee either, as the contracts will have to be renegotiated by the new board and the unions.

Mr. Bshara has always felt that, looking at it globally, the current overall budget would be the regional overall budget, so that the savings were getting rolled back to the program. He is not sure that two underperforming districts that merge would be able to bring their scores up unless we were able to put more into the program.

[Zoom fail at this point – 8:10 pm; meeting resumes at approximately 8:20 pm]

The Committee members came to a consensus of 34 as a headcount of central office, which is two more than the Superintendents' initial request, and the total would be \$2,740,609.

**Mr. Phipps MOVED to use a projected Central Office staffing head count of 34 to drive an overall budget figure to the final report; SECONDED by Mr. Jaumann. Motion carried unanimously.**

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

At the next meeting, the Committee will delve into the enrollment numbers and the 4-elementary v. 3-elementary models.

Mr. Gildea and Mr. Jaumann will ask the Superintendents to update the enrollment figures for this year and compare them to what Milone & MacBroom said that they would be. They will send those number out to the Committee.

#### **Point of Good Order**

Mr. Gildea noted that it was nice to see everybody at tonight's meeting. The next meeting is scheduled for 7:30 pm Tuesday, August 24<sup>th</sup>.

#### **Public Session**

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

**Adjournment**

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

The meeting adjourned at approximately 8:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*Trish Bruder*

Patricia M. Bruder  
Secretary