

1 **RED Study Committee**
2 **Essex High School Library – Essex Junction, VT**
3 **May 19, 2015**
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6 **Attendees:** Brendan Kinney (ET), Heidi Coppola (Westford), Jill Tarule (ET), Adam Sollace
7 (EJ), Tom James (ET), Samantha Gilliam (ET), Brian Donahue (EJ), Amy Chess (EJ), Gary
8 Kling (ET), Kim Kedzierski (ET), Martha Heath (Westford), Linda Costello (EJ), Marla
9 Durham (EJ), Wes McClellan (EJ), Keeley Schell (EJ), Tom Thompson (ET), Bob Bouthillier
10 (EJ), Kim Gleason (ET), and Mitchell Stern (ET)

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12 **Absent:** Cathy Printon (ET)

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14 **Facilitator:** Brian O'Regan

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16 **Others:** Mark Andrews (Essex Town Superintendent), Judith DeNova (CCSU
17 Superintendent), Ben Dickie (CCSU – Minutes), Al Bombardier, Jess Wisloski (Essex
18 Reporter), Liz Subin, Diane Clemons, and Chris Leopold

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20 Brendan Kinney called the meeting to order at 6:33 p.m.

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22 **Approval of Minutes from May 5, 2015**

23 *Martha Heath motioned to approve the minutes from May 5, 2015, Brian Donahue*
24 *seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*

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26 **Straw Poll**

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- 28 • Prior to taking a straw poll, the committee came up with a list of questions that
29 they have going forward, which are attached at the end of the minutes
 - 30 • The committee took part in a straw poll based on the information that they have
31 received to date
 - 32 ○ The committee was unanimously in favor of moving forward
 - 33 • There was discussion on how this committee would help the new RED Board if it
34 gets to that point
- 35

36 **Community Engagement Discussion**

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- 38 • Brendan Kinney asked what committee members would like to work with
39 Communications Task Team made up of local school board members
 - 40 ○ Kim Kedzierski, Cathy Printon, Keeley Schell and Brendan Kinney will
41 represent the Study Committee
 - 42 • One of the first tasks will be to develop a survey for the public
 - 43 • The committee looked at the positives and negatives of a public forum vs. a
survey at this point in the process

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45 **Legal Issues**

46 • Chris Leopold was available to answer legal questions that the committee had

47 • **Transportation**

48 ○ Looked at the requirements under state law

49 ○ Chris mentioned that transportation needs will be the responsibility of
50 the new RED School Board, but he did think that the Study Committee
51 should adopt an article considering transportation

52 ■ Have to evaluate student needs and what they need to get to
53 school

54 ○ An issue that could come up is do you provide choice for what schools
55 within the new RED that students can attend?

56 ○ The current transportation situation was explained

57

58 • **School Choice**

59 ○ The school consolidation law that the legislature passed last week
60 doesn't impact school choice as it would relate to the town of Westford
61 nor does it impact school choice for the three communities forming a
62 RED or unified district

63 ○ If Westford decided not to join the RED, while Essex Town and Essex
64 Junction did, at that point Westford would stand alone and temporarily
65 be an isolated district

66 ○ Recent legislation that was just passed says that if you don't merge, then
67 by 2019 you may be subject to an involuntary merger

68 ○ Chris believes that the new board would have the flexibility to
69 grandfather in students who had school choice, to continue that
70 (Westford)

71 ○ The committee talked about mandated articles vs. discretionary articles
72 ■ The new RED School Board would have the ability to change any
73 of the discretionary articles after the vote at a warned meeting

74

75 • **EJRP**

76 ○ Essex Junction Recreation and Parks and the Prudential Committee (PC)
77 are part of a separate arrangement that started off with a three-year
78 agreement and now has annual one-year extensions

79 ■ This committee doesn't have the ability to make a determination
80 on the continued responsibilities, that's between the PC and
81 Village

82 ○ EJRP wouldn't just automatically transfer to another organization if a RED
83 was formed

84 ■ An agreement with the Village that says EJRP could be assigned to
85 the new RED is a possibility

86 ○ The bond, shared employees, and Park Street School are a few of the
87 issues that would have to be discussed as this process moves forward

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Articles of Agreement

- Brian provided handouts with data from the last three years of spending for both CCSU and Essex Town, as well as a template for the articles of agreement
- There is a simplicity in the language of the articles due to the fact that the new school board would be digging into the details
- Brian suggested that everyone review the articles to look at further at the next meeting
 - He will provide a glossary for the acronyms

Next Meeting Date and Topic

- Tuesday, June 2, 6:30 p.m.

The meeting adjourned at 9:02 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Ben Dickie

Questions/Concerns of the RED Study Committee Going Forward (05.19.15)

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- School choice
 - Grandfather school choice for Westford
 - Analysis of how many students EHS allows to choose each year
- School boundaries/allocations
 - Choice at the K-8 level
 - Moving from one town to another within new RED
- Does Essex Junction have to provide transportation/costs
 - Psychology
- Essex Junction Recreation and Parks
- Estimates of how much money could be saved with tax incentives
 - Or how much would be missed out on if a RED is not formed
 - Start from the top down in potential savings (superintendent offices)
 - Ability to show savings without tax breaks
 - Where/how would savings that could be seen, be used
 - Fear of only short term savings
 - Analysis of per pupil expenditures look like with declining enrollment for Westford
- How are we going to sell this to the voters
- CTE/Skating Facility
- Clear and concise talking points for the benefits of our learners
- Westford representation on new board
 - Feeling of comfort with the current board structure (Westford)
- Would this committee be willing to say that Westford would not close with a positive vote
- Reach out to the community go gauge their feelings/questions ... further educate/engage the public
- Clear list of 'pros' and 'cons'
- What could happen, that isn't happening right now, in our schools
- Additional info on how system would be held accountable to the kids/families/community
- Look at potential governance structures for the new board if a RED is formed
- Evidence on where we could do better for children