

- 43 • Martha Heath asked about towns purchasing the land back for \$1.00 and that's
- 44 how it is stated if the committee decided on forming a RED, but what about if
- 45 the committee decided to form under Act 46?
- 46 ○ The committee would have to clarify this topic in the articles if they
- 47 decided to follow the Act 46 route
- 48 • Looked at the differences of the audited fund balances
- 49 • CCSU has its audits performed at a different time of the year compared to ETSD,
- 50 so the numbers don't exactly line up
- 51 ○ The audits for CCSU don't come in until after the next budget has already
- 52 been developed
- 53 • Individual fund balances that result from operations of the separate districts in
- 54 FY'16 will offset taxes in the first year's consolidated budget if the merger is
- 55 approved and takes effect in FY'18
- 56 • There was a question on what would happen to the reserve funds if a RED is
- 57 formed since they are probably designated to specific projects?
- 58 ○ This won't be a significant number, but the aid that we receive would still
- 59 need to be used for the projects/districts that they were designated
- 60 • Grant and Roger looked at FY'16-FY'19 capital plans for each district
- 61 ○ Grant highlighted a few projects that are not fully captured in the capital
- 62 plan
- 63 • There was a question about the possibility of taking some of the tax incentive
- 64 savings and if the new board could set some of those savings aside for capital
- 65 projects and then try and offer a more sustainable tax rate?
- 66 ○ Grant added that it could be managed over the long haul, which could
- 67 help build a larger capital reserve, but again that would be a decision for
- 68 the new RED School Board

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70 **Cost/Benefit Analysis**

- 71 • ETSD Superintendent Mark Andrews looked at some of the [potential costs and](#)
- 72 [benefits](#) of merging
- 73 • Mark highlighted three overarching themes and gave examples for each
- 74 • Strong and Vibrant Communities
- 75 ○ What are our beliefs and core values?
- 76 • Student Learning Opportunities and Outcomes
- 77 ○ We need to make sure the curriculum is viable, available and guaranteed
- 78 for all children
- 79 ○ He talked about how CCSU just invested in a new math program and
- 80 ETSD is going to have to do the same thing next year
- 81 ■ If the two were combined, they could have moved over to the
- 82 new program at the same time and also saved money on
- 83 training/set up
- 84 ■ This is a prime example of the duplication of work that is taking
- 85 place and how it could be eliminated

- 86 ○ He also discussed an integrated/vertical learning environment that could
- 87 be present all the way from PreK-12
- 88 ● Administrative Efficiencies and Educational Leadership
- 89 ○ Opportunities for an improved board governance structure
- 90 ○ Improved leadership structure
- 91 ○ Stronger professional learning community
- 92 ○ Improved organizational performance

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94 Committee took a 10-minute break at 7:35 p.m.

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97 **Articles of Agreement**

- 98 ● The committee engaged in a continuation of the discussions from last meeting,
- 99 as Chris Leopold and Brian O'Regan provided an [updated version of the articles](#)
- 100 ● The committee looked at articles that they didn't address at the previous
- 101 meeting, trying to come to a tentative approval on each
- 102 ● **Article 7:**
- 103 ○ The committee approved the article as is
- 104 ● **Article 8:**
- 105 ○ Chris talked about provisions around school construction aid in each of
- 106 the scenarios
- 107 ○ Chris and Brian are still trying to clarify some questions with the state and
- 108 are waiting to hear back
- 109 ○ The committee looked at 'forgiveness protection' for each model and
- 110 how it is currently communicated and the contradictions
- 111 ○ There was a request to eliminate the word 'elementary' in the first
- 112 sentence
- 113 ■ Chris mentioned that the forming districts own the elementary
- 114 buildings and that's why they are referenced in the current
- 115 language
- 116 ○ There was also a request to change the word 'party' to 'part' listed in the
- 117 first condition
- 118 ○ A lot of questions were raised around the potential selling of the
- 119 building/property back to the municipality for \$1.00
- 120 ■ The cost would be \$1.00 plus any capital improvements
- 121 ■ Martha Heath said that what if citizens say that they have already
- 122 paid for some of the capital improvements and they don't want to
- 123 have to pay twice?
- 124 ● Chris mentioned that he likes how the article is currently
- 125 written and said that you could credit a communities'
- 126 share of the repayment of any bonds
- 127 ■ Linda Costello wanted to make sure that when the report is
- 128 written that will accompany these articles, it should be noted how

129 important the schools are to their communities and the
130 committee needs to make sure that those opportunities are still
131 available if a RED is formed
132 ○ Chris and Brian will work on a few revisions to this article before next
133 meeting and they asked if anyone had any specific thoughts that they
134 wanted addresses, please reach out to the two of them through email by
135 Monday

- 136 ● **Article 15:**
 - 137 ○ The committee approved this article as is
 - 138 ■ This would be put into narrative format for the final report
- 139 ● **Article 9:**
 - 140 ○ The committee came back to this article, which focuses on the makeup of
141 the new RED School Board
 - 142 ○ It's currently written based on proportionality (census information)
 - 143 ○ There was discussion around proportional vs. at-large, and the pros and
144 cons of each
 - 145 ○ Chris said it's possible to have a combination of the two structures but it
146 complicates things and it could lead to the potential for cases being taken
147 to court
 - 148 ○ There was also discussion around local control, but a few committee
149 members stepped up to remind everyone that once you become a school
150 board member, you don't represent just your town of residence but the
151 best interest of all the students that the board oversees
- 152 ● **Article 1:**
 - 153 ○ Martha Heath noted that she thinks personally that Westford should be
154 listed as 'necessary' because it's the best case scenario for the town and
155 if they don't join the RED with Essex Town and Essex Junction, they will
156 get assigned to another district by the state
 - 157 ■ Heidi Coppola talked about how issues like this need to be
158 advocated to Westford residents so that they see the potential
159 alternatives if they don't join
 - 160 ○ Marla Durham brought up how the committee had discussed another
161 article in the past that could be added that would give Westford up to a
162 year to join the RED if they vote against it at the initial vote
 - 163 ■ Chris Leopold said that this is possible and could be added
 - 164 ○ There was discussion about the wording in the article and what could be
165 changed, but Chris noted that state law says that districts need to be
166 either necessary or advisable
 - 167 ○ Chris will draft two forms of this article for the next meeting
 - 168 ■ One showing Essex Junction and Essex Town as being necessary
169 and Westford being advisable
 - 170 ■ Another that shows all districts as advisable

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173 **Next Meeting Date and Topic**
174 • Tuesday, June 30, 6:30 p.m.
175 ○ Communications Update
176 ○ Articles of Agreement
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179 The meeting adjourned at 9:14 p.m.
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182 Respectfully submitted by Ben Dickie