

RED Study Committee
Essex High School Library – Essex Junction, VT
June 30, 2015

Attendees: Adam Sollace (EJ), Tom James (ET), Heidi Coppola (Westford), Linda Costello (EJ), Marla Durham (EJ), Brendan Kinney (ET), Tom Thompson (ET), Bob Bouthillier (EJ), Martha Heath (Westford), Keeley Schell (EJ), Wes McClellan (EJ), Amy Chess (EJ), Kim Kedzierski (ET), Brian Donahue (EJ), Rachel Preston (ET), Mitchell Stern (ET), Jill Tarule (ET), and Gary Kling (ET)

Absent: Kim Gleason (ET), Cathy Printon (ET), and Samantha Gilliam (ET)

Facilitator: Brian O'Regan

Others: Judith DeNova (CCSU Superintendent), Mark Andrews (Essex Town Superintendent), Chris Leopold, Al Bombardier, April Burbank (Burlington Free Press), Ben Dickie (CCSU – Minutes), Jess Wisloski-Martin (Essex Reporter arrived at 7:55 p.m.)

Brendan Kinney called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m.

Visitors to be Heard

None

Communications Update

- Brendan Kinney said that the task team met last night, but is waiting to see what the committee decided tonight
- The task team looked at the survey results, as there have been over 650 responses so far
- Brendan drafted a press release to have ready to go and to be able to share with media in the case that there is a positive vote tonight

Approval of Minutes from June 25, 2015

Tom James motioned to approve the minutes from June 25, 2015, Marla Durham seconded the motion.

Marla mentioned one change, as Kim Kedzierski was listed as present, but she was not actually at the meeting.

The motion passed unanimously with the amendment.

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Articles of Agreement

- Brian O'Regan talked about focusing on the outstanding articles that the committee had not tentatively agreed on yet
 - He handed out the latest draft of the [revised articles](#) of agreement
- The committee discussed the potential name of the new RED
 - Chris Leopold mentioned that the committee only needed to have a place holder and the official name could be decided at a later date
- The committee talked about if the articles could be modified after they are sent to the Agency of Education?
 - Chris Leopold said that the articles probably wouldn't be reviewed until August, so he would recommend August 1 be the cut off to make changes to these articles
- The committee decided to revisit the name until later in the meeting
- **Article 1:**
 - There was discussion on how articles 19 and 20 are tied to this article
 - Chris Leopold talked about when these articles go to vote, what portions the community will actually see and this is decided on by state statute
 - There was conversations around listing all three communities as necessary, as the committee looked at the pros and cons
 - Brendan Kinney mentioned the additional article that has been added, which said Westford could still join up to one year later if they voted 'no' as part of the original vote
 - Marla Durham mentioned that there have been some other statements included in the revised articles to show the Westford community that this committee understands their concerns and wants them included as part of the merger, so this committee shouldn't have to list Westford as 'necessary'
 - The committee was in favor of the article as worded
- **Article 2:**
 - With the revised wording modification from last meeting, the committee gave tentative approval to this article
- **Article 3:**
 - Rachel Preston had a question around the Vermont Education Health Initiative (VEHI) and if it no longer exists in 2017?
 - Brian O'Regan mentioned that everyone would be in the same boat whether a RED was formed or not
 - Chris Leopold said that within 60 days of the new board forming, they would be obligated to start to work on teacher negotiations
 - This would give them more time than normal to work on an agreement
 - The committee approved this article

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- **Article 6:**
 - Keeley Schell suggested a change to the wording, saying that it should read:
 - ‘The forming districts of the Union District recognize the benefits to be gained from establishing district-wide curricula as well as their obligation to do so, and to otherwise standardize their operations on or before July 1, 2017.’
 - The committee approved of the article with the suggested language change
 - **Article 8:**
 - Additional language was added since last meeting to address the ownership of the high school
 - Chris Leopold also provided a second revised version
 - The purpose of the revised version was to address some of the concerns the committee had on how it might effect individual districts, capital improvements, etc.
 - It also included a new provision related to the high school property, which said that the board should have the discretion on how the property would be sold and it should be treated differently than the elementary buildings
 - Brian O’Regan mentioned that in the preamble it can be further explained that any sale of property would require voter approval
 - The committee approved the revised vision with the revisions
 - **Article 9:**
 - Chris Leopold mentioned that there are a couple different ways that this could be structured and he explained the two options that the committee would be looking at
 - Proportional vs. at-large
 - Marla Durham asked that if the new RED board wanted to change the voting process in the future, could it?
 - Chris Leopold said yes, the new board could revisit the process in the future
 - There was discussion around potentially combining the two options
 - Chris Leopold added that there would still be issues with having at-large members if an advisable district voted no in terms of joining
 - He also said that the committee could take article 9 at written, but add additional language around how the board shall look at the system again following when the next census
 - After back and forth discussion around this topic, the committee approved the language as is, with a revision that there would be language added that every 10 years the new board would review the census information to make sure that the populations are proportional and when
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131 they do that, they can give consideration to moving to the
132 at-large option

- 133 • **Article 10:**
 - 134 ○ This article looked at the terms of the board members once they are
 - 135 elected, the potential composition of school directors and when terms
 - 136 would start/end
 - 137 ○ Additional language was added since last meeting
 - 138 ○ Brendan Kinney mentioned the date listed and Chris Leopold said
 - 139 whatever date that is set in article 11 will dictate this date
 - 140 ○ The committee approved the article as is
- 141 • **Article 11:**
 - 142 ○ There was discussion by the committee around the date of the vote, as it
 - 143 needs to take place by June 30, 2016 in accordance with Act 46
 - 144 ○ The committee talked about the overall timing and what would be
 - 145 needed to schedule a revote if one was needed
 - 146 ■ If any of the communities votes 'no,' then turnaround time would
 - 147 be very limited if the original vote it pushed back from November
 - 148 to the spring
 - 149 ○ Practicality wise, local town clerks have suggested that having a vote in
 - 150 the spring isn't ideal and instead suggested the November date
 - 151 ○ November 3 has been used as a potential date to hold the vote
 - 152 ■ Martha Heath recommended pushing it back to November 10
 - 153 ○ This would be a special election because there are no other votes taking
 - 154 place in November this year
 - 155 ○ The committee voted that November 10 would be the date of the vote,
 - 156 to be included in articles 10 and 11
- 157 • **Article 12:**
 - 158 ○ This article was tentatively approved at a prior meeting
 - 159 ○ There were some modifications made in the language since last time
 - 160 which were suggested by the committee
 - 161 ○ The committee approved the article with the modifications
- 162 • **Article 13:**
 - 163 ○ The committee approved this article previously
- 164 • **Article 14:**
 - 165 ○ There was a modification made from last meeting, giving CCSU an
 - 166 additional month to close out its books
 - 167 ○ Brian Donahue asked if one of the first jobs of the new board would be to
 - 168 hire a new superintendent?
 - 169 ■ Chris Leopold said yes
 - 170 ○ The committee approved the article with the modification
- 171 • **Article 15:**
 - 172 ○ Mitchell Stern had a question about the narrative and when will that be
 - 173 written?

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- Brian O'Regan and Brendan Kinney said that the financial information that has been presented over the course of the meetings would be included as part of the preamble/narrative
 - The work of Grant Geisler and Roger George was brought up and how the committee was appreciative of their continued efforts
 - Marla Durham highlighted the fact that the preamble might be even more important than the language in the articles
 - Brendan Kinney said that if the articles were affirmed tonight, work would then began on the preamble and the committee should aim to have that completed by July 20
 - At that time, the articles and report would then be submitted to the Agency of Education by August 1
 - **Article 16:**
 - This article looked at [grade configurations](#)
 - The article highlights that no school closures are planned in the immediate future
 - There was typo in second grouping where it says 'Essex Junction High School' and should be changed to 'U#46'
 - Also it should read that there are six elementary schools, two middle schools and one high school
 - There was a question on if CTE should be listed?
 - Chris Leopold said that it's part of the high school, but you could list it separately here
 - The committee agreed that it should be added to the list
 - The committee approved article with additional changes listed
 - **Article 17:**
 - There was a suggestion in the last sentence to change 'thee' to 'full authority'
 - The committee thought the wording in the first sentence should be changed from 'provided however,' to 'provided however with parental consent'
 - There was discussion on the phrasing and the use of the word 'parent'
 - The committee approved the article with the added revisions
 - **Article 19:**
 - There was a suggestion to add the word 'until' in the first sentence prior to 'June 30, 2016'
 - After some discussion, Chris Leopold mentioned that under current law, the state can't require a unified union be assigned to another district or that districts can be assigned to a unified union
 - There was also a suggestion to end the first sentence with 'to reconsider and join the Union District.' This would eliminate 'by voting in favor of

217 joining no later than June 30, 2017 with admission granted in advance by
218 the Union District.'

219 ○ The committee agreed to the language with the revisions

220 ● **Article 20:**

221 ○ Chris Leopold said that before the articles are submitted to the Agency of
222 Education, there has to be a name associated with the work

223 ○ The committee decided to form a sub-committee to work on a name
224 prior to the report being finalized

225 ○ The committee approved the article as written and will call it a unified
226 union district until the sub-committee makes its recommendation

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228 *Brendan Kinney motioned to approve the articles of agreement as amended, Martha*
229 *Heath seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*

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231 ● Marla Durham added that the minutes make this meeting official, so the
232 committee needs to approve them once they are finished

233 ● Brendan Kinney said that he will look at the logistics and reach out to the
234 committee to set up a time to approve the minutes once they are distributed to
235 each of the committee members

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237 Martha Heath thanked Brendan Kinney for all his work, as well as Judith DeNova, Mark
238 Andrews and the staffs at CCSU and ETSD for their help and everything that they
239 provided this committee

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241 **Next Meeting Date and Topic:**

242 ● The committee will schedule a meeting to approve of the minutes from this
243 meeting

244 ● A sub-committee will be formed to work on a potential name

245 ● The Communications Task Team will continue to meet as needed

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248 The meeting adjourned at 8:56 p.m.

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251 Respectfully submitted by Ben Dickie