

Regionalization Planning Committee
Meeting Minutes

Location: Mill Pond School, Hodgdon

Time: 6:30pm

Date: Tuesday, January 8, 2008

Representatives from: MSAD #14, MSAD #25, MSAD #29, MSAD #70, CSD #9, Moro Plantation, Orient, Bancroft, and Hersey.

1. Bob McDaniels, Superintendent of MSAD #70, welcomed all the RPC participants.
2. Mary Jane asked for the approval of the November 15, 2007 minutes, a motion was made and then seconded to approve the minutes. The motion duly passed.
3. Mary Jane asked if there was any public comment related to the RPC's work. There were a few people from the public attending, one of whom mentioned they were here for information. There were no other public comments.
4. Mary Jane mentioned that in everyone's chair was a copy of the letter from Commissioner Gendron in response to the Reorganization Plan that was submitted. She mentioned that the committee can ask questions regarding this letter in their subcommittee group, or if their question fell outside of their subcommittee, they can ask now. She also welcomed any other questions. She will open up the meeting for additional questions at the end as well.
 - a. Mary Jane summarized the letter from Commissioner Gendron stating that all is well and nothing is in error, but continued work is needed. Many areas were marked as incomplete, but that was expected. The next submission due date is 2/1/08. The plan submitted on 2/1/08 will not differ much from the plan submitted on 12/1/07. The state is trying to keep a regular check on everyone's progress. She expects that we will need to submit our plan on a monthly basis. At this time she is not sure if each school board will need to approve each submission of the plan.
 - b. The Personnel and Asset & Liability subcommittees have a major portion of their work done. The other two subcommittees, Governance and Finance, still have a lot of work to do. Mary Jane invited members of the Personnel and Asset & Liability subcommittees to break out and join the other two subcommittees. She said for those going to a new subcommittee, feel free to be heard or just listen.
 - c. Mary Jane suggested the formation of an additional subcommittee. One of the things that needs to be written into the plan is how the SAU's will share the costs. She is suggesting a new subcommittee to complete this piece. She requested that each town meet separately to determine who will go to the new subcommittee called Cost Sharing. She also stated that she has some ideas she can share on how this new subcommittee can get started. It would be easier for the Personnel and Assets & Liabilities members to join the Cost Sharing subcommittee but there needs to be a fair representation from each SAU and town.
 - d. A comments was made that the Finance subcommittee still had a lot of work to do and the closer they are getting to realizing there are not going to be any savings. He asked at what point does this group make a statement or stop meeting. He feels that this is not going to save the area any money and local control is going to be lost. He asked if we keep going forward with this are we saying, is this a good idea? He read in the Bangor

Daily News that most of the RPC meeting plans were submitted and finalized. The Bangor Daily News gives this impression that the plans were finalized. He feels that the 27 towns out there are asking the RPC members how it is going, he replies not good and they say that is not what the papers are saying. At some point, this group has to make a statement and say this isn't working. He said it is all about money. Mary Jane responded that she has documentation that there are no plans done anywhere in the state. The law requires that each RPC submit a plan. Almost all plans have several components that are significantly incomplete. There wasn't any position requested in the submission of the plans, so the press's take on it maybe through the voice of the department, may have put a spin on it. Another comment was made that he does not believe it will work or save any money. If it does save money, can he be ensured that the local control will not be lost? Everyone is so far apart it is a logistical nightmare. He is all for lower property taxes, but he just does not see it. Mary Jane said that tonight the Finance committee is going to be looking at the configuration of what the new district office would look like in terms of staffing and put a cost to that. She feels we are not there yet to determine if there is going to be any cost savings, there is still a little way to go. She doesn't blame him for worrying about this because a lot of places around the state that are coming closer to the conclusion that they won't see any savings or any significant savings. She understands the concerns but they do not feel we are quite in a place yet where we can definitively say we are not there. He asked if we got to that point, then what? Mary Jane said that then we need to have a discussion as a whole group. The law requires that the plan be put together and it is the voters that decide. You cannot just not submit a plan. She confirmed that the individual making the comments didn't want to submit something that would harm his credibility. She asked that he stay with us a little longer. Another comment was made by another individual stating it looks like they all supported this because of being on the committee. Mary Jane said that all we can do is tell the truth on what we found out and let the voters decide.

- e. Mary Jane commented on Bill 1932, which has several changes in it. One of the changes is the ability to figure out how to share the costs to run the RSU that best suits the SAU's and towns. She mentioned that there is several different ways to look at cost savings. At this time, she is not sure what the Education Committee is trying to do. She stated all we can do is continue on, collect data, know what we are getting in to, and let the voters decide.
5. The RPC committee broke out into subcommittees for work time.
 6. The RPC came back from their subcommittee work time and Mary Jane stated that the next scheduled RPC date is Tuesday, January 22, 2008 at 6:30pm in Danforth at East Grand School. Each subcommittee chair then provided an update:
 - a. Greg Ryan, Governance – They discussed the local committee again and they recommend that there be no local committee. They sent their RSU breakdown of their proposed board to the state and it was sent back to them requesting that they seek legal council to have it checked. He asked for permission to have this done. It was asked who paid for this, and Mary Jane said that money had been set aside for legal fees and she is checking to make sure that this qualifies to be reimbursed for by the state. They specifically need to check on the one man one vote.

- b. Greg Sherman, Finance – They reviewed the model for budget and staffing. It calls for five and one half employees in the central office but they bumped it up to seven with the following positions and possible salaries:
 - 1. Superintendent - \$100,000
 - 2. Assistant Superintendent - \$80,000
 - 3. Business Manager - \$60,000
 - 4. Payroll - \$35,000
 - 5. Bookkeeper - \$35,000
 - 6. Administrative Assistant - \$32,000
 - 7. Secretary - \$25,000

They will get figures on benefit costs for the next meeting.

- c. Paul Harrison, Cost Savings – At the next meeting, they will get 281's to review so they can understand where they are at and how they can get there. They are also going to review a couple of the 10 options they were provided. They will look at the districts continuing to pay what they are over the EPS. As the RSU grows and becomes more efficient, that may change.

7. The next RPC meeting will be Tuesday, January 22, 2008 at East Grand School in Danforth.

The meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kelly Farnham