

**NEWRY WITHDRAWAL COMMITTEE  
MINUTES OF MEETING  
Wednesday, February 25, 2016**

**Present:** **Committee members:** Jim Sysko (Chair), William Andrews, Gary Wight,  
**Educational consultant:** Dr. Mark Eastman      **Legal consultant:** Dan Stockford  
**Community members:** Alison Aloisio, Brooks Morton, Tama Drown

**Absent:** Bonnie Largess

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**Open Session Proceedings:**

Meeting was called to order at 5:02 pm by Chair, Jim Sysko.

The minutes of the February 1<sup>st</sup> meeting were reviewed. **William Andrews moved that the minutes of the previous meeting be approved; Gary Wight seconded. Motion passed unanimously.**

**Citizens' Comments:** Jim noted that comments may be made at any time during the meeting.

**Old Business:**

- a) **SAD 44's refusal to send NWC a counterproposal; sending a letter instead:** Jim Sysko reminded the Board of this situation and about Mark Eastman's conversation with Jim Rier, the former Commissioner of the DOE.
- b) **Weakness in the Statute:** Mark Eastman spoke of the letter he sent to the DEO in regards to his concerns with the weakness in the statute. Mark spoke of the phone conversation he had with Jim Rier. Rier stated that he is aware of the issue. Mark informed him that SAD 44 is look at moving to an alternative cost sharing proposal and Rier asked to be kept in the loop so he may advise the DOE. Mark will continue to update him on the status of this process.
- c) **Letter that Jim Sysko sent on the 21<sup>st</sup> to the Commissioner:** Jim reported that he has not yet received a response to this letter which was in regards to this committee's concerns with the lack of negotiations.  
  
Brooks Morton noted that Dr. Murphy reported at the School Board meeting that he had had lengthy conversations with the acting commissioner, Beardsley.
- d) **Financial Status:** Jim reported that there is approximately \$5000 left in available funds for this committee. Cost saving options that were discussed included the possibility of the committee meeting without the presence of the consultants and communicating with the consultants via email or video conference. The hope is to stretch the money out to June 14<sup>th</sup>, the expected date of the Town's vote on this process.

**New Business:**

- a) **Conflict of Interest:** Brooks reported that he talked to the Selectmen about a potential conflict of interest with Wendy Hanscom's job in the Administrative Office at SAD 44, and the fact that she attends School Board meetings and takes the minutes. He stated that, since there is no money exchanged, the Selectmen did not view it as a conflict of interest. Brooks noted that Wendy suggested a change in wording for the warrant, which was the wording used for the vote, and that Wendy voted on the issue. Dan Stockford explained to the group the statutes that address conflicts of interest and/or the appearance of a conflict of interest.  
  
Conversation ensued in regards to bias and to pecuniary interests.
- b) **Timeline of the Vote:** Jim explained that the warrant must be created 45 days prior to the vote. The public hearing must be held at least 10 days before the vote. Gary explained that SAD 44 is required to start the cost-sharing process; if they have not done so, the Newry Selectmen will not sign the warrant, and there will be no vote. Discussion continued in regards to the need for the Townspeople to vote one way or another since there is only \$5000 left for the committee to use in this process.

Later in the meeting, Jim noted that this committee needs to ask for more money from the Town if the vote from the Townspeople is for this committee to continue this process. He suggested asking the Selectmen to add a question with a request for money on that same ballot. It was noted that some citizens have offered to contribute their private money toward this cause.

- c) **Binding Arbitration or Legal Action:** Jim asked the group if this was something they were interested in pursuing, per the Town Administrator's advice at the committee's previous meeting. Following discussion, the consensus of the group is that they are not yet at this point.
- d) **Town of Newry Representation on the Cost-Sharing Committee:** It was decided that this would be decided by the Town's Selectmen. Mark explained who can serve on this committee and who selects the people to serve on this committee.
- e) **Executive Session: William moved to enter executive session to consult with legal counsel regarding the legal rights and duties of the Withdrawal Committee pursuant to 1MRS Section 4056E. Gary seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.** Committee entered Executive Session at 5:40pm, and the session ended at 6:17.

**Adjournment: William moved to adjourn; Gary seconded. The motion passed unanimously, and the meeting was adjourned at 6:17 pm.**