

NEWRY WITHDRAWAL COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF MEETING
Wednesday, February 16, 2015

Present: **Committee members:** Jim Sysko (Chair), Bonnie Largess, William Andrews, Brooks Morton
Legal consultant: Dan Stockford
Educational consultant: Dr. Mark Eastman
Community members: Alison Aloisio, Tama & Gary Drown, Doug Webster, Heather Vail

Open Session Proceedings:

Meeting was called to order at 5:20 pm by Chair, Jim Sysko.

The minutes of the January 28th meeting were reviewed. **William moved for approval of the minutes; Brooks seconded. Motion passed unanimously.**

Citizens' Comments: With no citizen's offering comments, Jim noted to those in attendance that comments may be made at any time as long as they are not disruptive.

Old Business:

- a) **Discussion on the withdrawal of a bill before the State Legislature which would have prevented all town withdrawals:** Jim mentioned that he and Dan had email conversations regarding this bill. The person that introduced this bill to the legislature has since withdrawn it.

Dan reported on the status of the Frye Island bill stating that no hearing has been scheduled; they are waiting for the bill to be printed. Dan explained that this bill would modify the exception that applies to Newry and Frye Island – changing the cost sharing formula to 50 percent pupil/50 percent valuation rather than the 100% valuation that applies to SAD 44 & SAD 6 currently. Dan will send the bill # and the text of the bill to the committee members when it's available. The group spoke of bringing this topic up next week's Town Meeting so that the town's people are aware of this bill, since Newry has not had any input in this process.

New Business:

- a) **Discussion of the SAD 44 school board sub-committee's counter proposal to the Newry Withdrawal Plan (Note: issues which involve strategy and negotiations will be done in Executive Session):** Jim reported that the counter proposal was received just before 1pm today (Feb 16, 2015). All of Newry's committee members have received a copy via email, and hard copies are available for any one present at tonight's meeting. The SAD 44 sub-committee also included a position paper noting where they stand on the issue of Newry withdrawing from the district. Due to receiving the document at such a late hour, the committee has not had time to review the material in any depth.

Jim reminded those in attendance that a negotiation session is scheduled for March 4 at Dan's office in Lewiston. Dan believes this meeting is scheduled for 9am; he will confirm and send an email to Jim. At this point, the plan is for Jim and Brooks to attend this meeting. If Brooks is not reelected as Selectmen, then William will attend with Jim.

The material received from SAD 44 was labeled "confidential"; however, Dan stated that the proposal is not confidential at this point. It has been shared by the district with the Newry Committee, and is a public document at this stage. Dan cautioned that negotiation and strategy should still be discussed in Executive Session.

With Mark leading and Dan offering insight where appropriate, the group proceeded to review the material page by page.

Mark stated that he will get a copy of the cooperative agreement, from David Murphy, showing how costs are shared.

William commented that, after briefly reviewing this document, it seems that the two committees are significantly distant in their respective proposals, and asked if it is of any value to start negotiations this far out? Mark explained that legally, in order to move forward with the withdrawal process, there needs to be an agreement between this committee and SAD 44.

b) Executive Session Withdrawal Plan Discussion:

Brooks moved to go into Executive Session to receive legal counsel pursuant to 1MRS Section 4056E. Motion passed unanimously.

The committee entered Executive Session at 6:08 pm. Executive Session ended at 7 pm.

c) Dates for next meetings:

- Dan, Jim, Mark, and either Brooks or William will meet Wednesday, March 4, in Dan's office to start to frame a counter proposal directly following the 9am negotiation session.
- The next meeting of the entire Withdrawal Committee is scheduled for Monday, March 16, at 5pm.

Adjournment – Brooks moved to adjourn; Bonnie seconded. The motioned passed unanimously, and the meeting was adjourned at 7:06 pm.