

**NEWRY WITHDRAWAL COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF MEETING
Wednesday, January 6, 2016**

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

Absent:

Open Session Proceedings:

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

The minutes of the December 17th meeting were reviewed. **William Andrew moved for acceptance of the minutes as distributed; Gary Wight seconded. Motion passed unanimously.**

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

Old Business:

- a) **Note from Brooks Morton:** Jim read the note aloud for the record, and the board discussed the three concerns raised by Brooks in his note. Jim Sysko explained what took place and stated that the three men (himself, William Andrew. & Jim Largess) met only as concerned citizens and not as Withdrawal Committee members or Selectmen, respectively. Brooks asked when does an elected official stop being an elected official, and when does an appointed committee who's on a mission get to act on their own as citizens just because negotiations are at an impasse?

Dan Stockford explained that when someone is elected to the Board of Selectmen, their authority as a Selectman is limited to the actions taken by the Board as a whole. An individual Selectman has no authority simply by virtue of being a Selectman. At the same time, there is nothing to prevent an individual member of the community from trying to talk to different parties and explore alternatives. Dan stated that he did not feel that there was anything unlawful done in this case.

In regards to beginning the process to change the funding formula, Dan Stockford stated that there is nothing in the statute that prohibits that work from happening simultaneously with this withdrawal process, and reported that this scenario is actually happening in Emden now. Dan explained that a majority of a full board of directors school board) can vote to initiate the process for reviewing the cost-sharing formula, or the review can be initiated by petition of at least 10% of the voters from the last election.

Mark Eastman noted that the committee charged with reviewing the cost-sharing formula would be made up of three people from each municipality and those people would be: two officials appointed by the Town's Selectmen as well as one of the Town's representatives on the SAD 44 Board. This process generally involves multiple meetings with a moderator overseeing each meeting.

Gary Wight suggested contacting the Select Boards of the other towns informally to see if they would be on-board with this cost-sharing review since this would be a better option for those towns compared to Newry withdrawing from the district. It was noted that the committee cannot legally stop the withdrawal process without a vote from the Town. However, in an effort to save money, the committee could suspend the process with an extension agreement from the commissioner.

- b) **Financial Status:** Jim reported that this committee is running out of money and that he received an email from the Town Administrator has requesting a report by February 1st. The committee discussed the possibility being added to the town warrant to ask for more money. Jim reiterated that suspending this process during the funding review would save money. Jim was advised to contact the Town Administrator soon with his request to be added to the warrant.

Jim reported that he would be preparing his report to the Town Administrator after January 22nd, so he may report on whether or not SAD 44's good-faith counterproposal is received by that deadline. With enough money left to pay for the consultants to attend, Jim suggested that the committee meet during the last week of January. Bonnie noted that the next School Board meeting is scheduled for January 25th.

Dan confirmed that private citizens may contribute money toward the withdrawal process as a gift to the Town if they so choose.

- c) **Two Letters – one to SAD 44 Withdrawal Committee requesting a good-faith counterproposal by January 22, 2016, and one to the DOE Commissioner:** Mark confirmed that the letter to the Commissioner was mailed.

New Business:

- a) **Executive Session:** The Committee had no reason to enter Executive Session this evening.
- b) **Date for next meeting:** Monday, February 1, 2016, at 5pm.

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