

**NEWRY WITHDRAWAL COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF MEETING
Wednesday, March 16, 2015**

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

Open Session Proceedings:

Meeting was called to order at 6:02 pm by Chair, Jim Sysko.

The minutes of the February 16th meeting were reviewed. **William moved for approval of the minutes; Bonnie seconded. Motion passed unanimously.**

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

Old Business:

- a) **Report on March 4th negotiating session with SAD 44:** Dan reported that present at that meeting were David Murphy, Marcel Polak, who is the Chair of the SAD 44 committee, and their attorney Bill Stockmeyer. Most of the session was spent walking through SAD 44's counter proposal. Dan reviewed highlights from the session, which included information on SAD 44's stabilization fund proposal, the Region 9 proposal, as well as information regarding current balances of both the Undesignated Fund and Capital Reserve Fund. Dan stated that more details from the March 4 meeting will be discussed in tonight's Executive Session.

Jim spoke about the discussion on Targeted Funds, and noted that the date for the next Negotiating Session will be discussed in tonight's Executive Session.

New Business:

- a) **Discussion of spreadsheet showing individual town payments to SAD 44 in 2014:** Jim distributed the spreadsheet, which shows how much money each town has put into SAD 44. Jim explained the information noted within the document and clarified that his is just informational, showing what the each town would pay if every town paid on a per-pupil basis.
- b) **Discussion of mill rate spreadsheet in SAD 44 position paper:** Jim explained that this document was created by SAD 44 committee to show why the current funding is fair within the district. Jim explained his view on how the mill-rate table is skewed since a \$150k house near the ski area would be a much smaller house than a \$150k house further away from the ski are, i.e. in Woodstock. Dan said he would work with Mark to get the amount the district raises over and above EPS so this committee can look at the total amount raised for education with local funds included.
- c) **Update on Frye Island's funding formula bill before the state legislature:** Dan stated that he did not receive a phone call today from their attorney as expected. However, per that Town Manager's email, he learned that another bill has been introduced to the legislature. This bill would cap the contributions from a municipality, which belongs to an RSU, at the lesser of the figure based on valuation and the figure based on EPS per-pupil rate multiplied by pupil count. As it's drafted, Dan said this would not impact Newry. He noted that it doesn't make sense for this Withdrawal Committee to make a stand, but encouraged the Town to continue to monitor it.

(Note: issues which involve strategy and negotiations will be done in Executive Session).

- d) **Executive Session Withdrawal Plan Discussion – Discussion of a new method of achieving funding fairness at SAD 44 over 10 years:** Jim explained to the audience that what will be discussed in Executive

Session is this committee's response to SAD 44's counterproposal. William has a spreadsheet showing the possibilities.

Gary Drown asked for an update on where the committee stands financially in regards to the \$50k raised for this effort. Jim reported that there is currently \$39k left in the budget, but stated this does not include the latest invoice from Dan Stockford which has not yet been received. The committee stated they will announce the balance at the next meeting during the public session.

Brooks Morton asked if Bonnie could confirm whether Marcel's statements in the Position Paper are the consensus of the school board. Bonnie replied that the paper was drawn up by the SAD 44 Withdrawal Committee and was not voted upon by the School Board. She explained that the Withdrawal Committee does not bring information to the School Board for approval; they bring it to the Superintendent and to the attorney.

Tama Drown asked who is on the SAD 44 Withdrawal Committee. Bonnie listed the names: Marcel Polak, Larry Merlino, Roberta Taylor, and Tim Carter.

In regards to SAD 44's counter proposal, Tama asked if they said where the extra money would go. Dan explained that SAD 44 would receive the same amount from Newry, but that the total educational cost for Newry would be greater under the district's proposal.

Jim asked Dan if there is anything in the agreement preventing Newry from building its own school if Newry were to withdraw. Dan said that if the town chooses to build its own school, there is nothing in the agreement preventing that; however, the town could not receive state aid for a five-year period.

William moved to go into Executive Session to consult with legal counsel pursuant to 1MRSA Section 4056E. Bonnie seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

The committee entered Executive Session at 6:39 pm. Executive Session ended at 8 pm.

e) Dates for next meetings:

- The next meeting of the Withdrawal Committee is scheduled for Wednesday, April 8, at 5pm.

Adjournment – William moved to adjourn; Bonnie seconded. The motion passed unanimously, and the meeting was adjourned at 8:00 pm.