

Richmond Adhoc Committee on Education

Thursday June 29, 2017

9:00 a.m.

Richmond Library

Minutes

1. Review and approval of agenda
 - a. The agenda was reviewed and approved.
2. Approval of minutes from last meeting
 - a. Meeting minutes from the last meeting were approved.
3. Public Comments – There were no members of the public present
4. Westmoreland School visit – Jed
 - a. Jed visited with the principal at the Westmoreland Elementary School. Westmoreland has its own school board to support its own K-8 elementary school and tuitions its high school students to Keene as part of a regional agreement. Westmoreland sends a representative school board member to the SAU 29 school board. The Town of Westmoreland is very supportive of its school and has not seriously considered sending its elementary students to Keene, even if it could be a little less expensive. The parents like having their students in town and many people attend school activities and volunteer at the school. Due to the size of the school staffing of specials classes (art, music, physical education) can be challenging as a full-time teacher is not required. However, the Westmoreland principal works with other elementary principals in SAU 29 to work out sharing of part-time staff. It was clear in visiting the school that the staff loves its school and works well together to get to know and teach the students. As a rule Westmoreland Elementary School does well on local and state testing.
5. NH Commissioner of Education visit – Doug
 - a. Michael Blair, chair of the MRSD School Board and adhoc Long Range Committee, will be resigning as he and his wife will be leaving the area.
 - b. The school will be reviewing the NESDAC study, which was approved by the school board several years ago. The major recommendation outlined in the report is the consolidation of elementary schools to one elementary school in Swanzey.
 - c. In visiting the NH Commissioner of Education, Doug learned that the commissioner supports school choice.
 - d. Four legislative bills in process will impact educational options

- e. SB8 – Town Choice of Schools – as applied to certain towns, like Richmond that do not have their own school, allow the town to tuition their students to other non-parochial schools.
 - f. State Education Structure
 - i. Governor appoints Commissioner of Education -
 - ii. State School Board – members appointed by commissioner – staggered terms
 - iii. Every district is overseen by an SAU
 - iv. Two types of school districts – single town vs. cooperative
 - v. Every SAU must have a superintendent
 - vi. Richmond must separate from SAU if it wants to do something different and take advantage of SB8.
 - vii. To leave the SAU the individual town's people must vote and approve, and the town's in the rest of the SAU must approve.
 - viii. HB1303 – would change the process of withdrawal – Doug noted that there is no process of distributing the assets. Therefore, Richmond actually may not get capital assets it has paid if the district dissolves – as was stated at the last meeting. Makes it easier for a town to withdrawal and more fiscally equitably. Robert Mitchell has been asked to serve on the committee writing the bill – he is the author of the Gilsum report. The committee report for HB1303 is supposed to be prepared by November 1.
 - ix. SB8 becomes law in August – Written for towns with no school in their district. Allows for the school board to tuition students to another district, but must belong to an SAU. Under SB8, students in the town, at the parents request, can tuition to a school of their choice and the state money will follow them, as long as the district that the town belongs to does not have a school for the grades the student will attend. The receiving school does not have to accept the student. State funds may not be used for religious-affiliated schools.
 - x. State pays about \$3600 per student to district based on ADM. Special education students receive a higher rate.
 - xi. SB8 option is not currently available to Richmond because we are members of the cooperative MRSD.
 - xii. ESA – educational savings accounts – being discussed in the legislature. Arizona has such a model. Money paid to parents who decide where to spend it to educate their children.
 - xiii. Direction is: more choices/options
6. Review of Gilsum Report – Salient points of the Gilsum report:
- a. The motivation for the report: Gilsum wants its own school.
 - b. It is cost prohibitive for Gilsum to withdrawal due to the requirement that they must buy back the building and pay for any additions/renovations to the Gilsum building. There is no reimbursement for any money they have

put into the district – example – tax money contributed for the MSHS renovation.

- c. In order to leave the district, need approval of the rest of the district.
 - d. Gilsum conclusion – would cost more money to leave.
 - e. What would it cost Richmond to pursue the two options: Winchester – going it alone.
 - f. As a cooperative district shares special education and capital improvement costs, Gilsum concluded that staying in the MRSD was the most economically feasible plan.
7. Update of task list: We will focus on the following options:
- a. What is feasibility of going to Winchester. Jed and Peter
 - b. What is feasibility of going it alone. Build own school? Jed and Peter– may incur costs to consult with architect or construction company.
 - c. What is the feasibility of staying put? Doug
8. Public Comments – No public comments
9. Next Meeting Date/Time: Tuesday August 8 9:00 am Richmond Library