

Act 46 Study Committee
Approved Minutes for January 13, 2016
Harwood Union High School Library

Act 46 Study Committee Members Present: Jill Ellis (Fayston), Rosemarie White (Harwood ex-officio), Garrett MacCurtain (Harwood ex-officio), Gabe Gilman (Moretown), Christine Sullivan (Waitsfield), Rob Rosen (Warren), Alex Thomsen (W-D for Waterbury), Jason Gibbs (W-D for Waterbury)

Other Board Members Present: Alycia Biondo (Warren), Stephen Sands (Harwood), Dale Smeltzer (Harwood), Reed McCracken (Waterbury-Duxbury), Doug Mosle (Fayston), Michael Ketchel (Warren), Adam Greshin (Warren), Heidi Spear (Fayston), Kitty Friedman (Fayston), Barclay Rappeport (Waitsfield), Matt Staples (Warren), Kate O'Neill (Moretown), Jim Burmester (Moretown)

WWSU Administrators: Brigid Nease, Michelle Baker, Donarae Dawson, Sheila Soule

Consultants: Jeff Maer, Walter Nardelli

Other: Kaiya Korb, Howard Wynne, Channel 44 camera person

- 1) **Call to Order:** Gabe Gilman, chair of the Study Committee called the meeting to order at 5:35 p.m.
- 2) **Confirming Agenda:** There were no changes.
- 3) **Approval of Minutes** of December 17, 2015:
 - i) **STUDY COMMITTEE ACTION:** Rob Rosen moved to approve the minutes as written. Garrett MacCurtain seconded the motion which passed unanimously.
- 4) **Hear Reports and Follow Ups**
 - a) **Reports from Brigid re attorney questions** – Brigid reported on some of the issues she consulted about with attorney Chris Leopold - All towns are advisable, but none should be necessary so that the project can still go forward without a revote. The documents for formation of the Waterbury-Duxbury Union were reviewed, and he recommends that first W-D should vote to dissolve its union district in order to vote the merger forward for the district within the same ballot question. This would then result in each town voting separately regarding Act 46.

New Questions for attorney:

 - 1) (from Alex): who runs the schools until the bigger board gets up and running?
 - 2) (from Dale): make sure it is clear what board would remain in existence in the event of either one or the other of Waterbury or Duxbury voting against going into the unified board.
 - 3) (from discussion later on closing schools): what would be the process for amending the Articles?
 - 4) (from Reed): How to deal with restriction on the W-D reserve fund of needing a vote by the public before being used?
 - b) **Round Table Share** – Gabe reported that Moretown remains unanimously in favor of the merger proposal. Reed reported that W-D's recent meeting was mainly information sharing and there were questions about the Harwood piece (would it be a separate board in the event of a partial RED). Alex noted that the W-D's board opinion is not fully formed. Christine and Eve reported that Waitsfield is still on board. Garrett reported that everyone seems to want this to move forward on the Harwood board. Alycia reported that they are getting a lot of questions and concerns from residents in Warren, and she wondered if the local board is responsible for organizing local forums or will there be help from the larger group. Gabe noted that there would be people available to attend and provide information (but not to sell it) at the forums, and Alycia and Rob thought this would be helpful to allow the facts to be presented. One of the ideas being pursued by some people in Warren is an investigation of going independent. Jill reported that her board is still very supportive; and that communication will be critical. The meeting minutes will be posted under the Act 46 section on the website to make them more easily available.
 - c) **Report from Consultants** - Report from the consultants –
 - i) Article 8 does not need to be specific about allocation of expenses to the town due to a change in the rules.

- ii) Article 10 will be voted on the same date as the merger vote. (Note – they are working on figuring out the due date for the petitions for the new board members - this could be a challenging timeframe and they are working on it)
 - iii) Notification to the state certifying the vote has to happen within 45 days; petition to rescind must be within 30 days; revote must be certified within 15 days.
 - iv) Authority to close schools - subject to state provisions but no vote requirement is mentioned. Process for amendment of articles needs to be clarified - question for Chris Leopold. Questions about what language around closing schools is required around a RED. Also, is the wording in this article conflicting with state statute?
- 5) **Discussion of the Articles to date:** Gabe distributed a handout of a working draft of the Report and Articles as of January 13, 2016. Suggestion - add # years for the indebtedness in the information that goes out, rather than just the gross number. Garrett noted that the location of Harwood and CBMS is Duxbury, not Waterbury. Jill noted that there needs to be more discussion about how maintenance reserve funds are most equitably dealt with. Gabe asked people to send him comments in advance of the next meeting.
- 6) **Next Steps:**
- a) Brigid wants board members to send her story card data ideas for their towns, pros and cons.
 - b) Gabe wants any comments on draft wording for the Articles.
 - c) Next Meeting:
 - i) Need to go over story cards;
 - ii) Review all Articles and make edits
 - iii) Develop specific questions for the attorney who cannot attend that meeting but will meet with a subgroup at central office in advance of the following meeting.
- 7) **Other Business:** There was none.
- 8) **Adjournment of Study Committee:** Gabe Gilman moved to adjourn the Study Committee meeting at 6:37 p.m. Rob Rosen seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Minutes recorded by Dale Smeltzer