

Washington West Supervisory Union Executive Committee
“UNOFFICIAL” Meeting Minutes for December 11, 2013
Washington West Central Office

WWEC Members Present: Doug Mosle (Fayston), Deb Hunter (Harwood), Dale Smeltzer (Harwood), Jim Burmester (Moretown), Eve Frankel (Waitsfield), Rob Rosen (Warren), Steve Odefey (Waterbury-Duxbury), and Ben Smith (Waterbury-Duxbury)

WWSU Administrators Present: Brigid Scheffert, Michelle Baker, Sheila Rivers, Donarae Cook

Other Administrators: Amy Rex (Harwood), Kaiya Korb (Waitsfield)

Other Board Members: Jill Ellis (Fayston), Heidi Spear (Fayston), Susan MacLean-Daley (Fayston, Harwood), Adam Greshin (Warren, Legislator), Mike Ketchel (Warren), Dan Raddock (Harwood), Charlotte Robinson (Warren)

Legislators: Rebecca Ellis, Maxine Grad, Tom Stevens, Adam Greshin

Public: Rosemarie White, Rachel Goff (Valley Reporter)

Eve Frankel called the meeting to order at 5:38 p.m., thanked everyone for attending, and noted that the agenda had shifted somewhat.

1) Action Items:

- a) **Approve minutes of November 13, 2013:** Ben Smith moved to approve the minutes of November 13, 2013 as written. Rob Rosen seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

2) Discussion Items

- a) **Education Funding Challenges:** Brigid Scheffert gave an overview of the challenges that local school districts are encountering as they get further into the budget process, with announced base tax rates and state data on equalized pupils. Two different examples were provided:
 - i) Waterbury-Duxbury’s level service 5.2% increase budget would result in a 5.6% in Ed spending, with a 0.7% decline in Equalized Pupils (EP); giving a 6.3% increase in Cost per EP. This results in a 12.5% increase in the Equalized Tax Rate. Even if there was no budget increase, there would be a 6.0% increase in the Equalized Tax Rate.
 - ii) Waitsfield’s level service budget of 5.6% results in an Ed spending increase of 8.1%, and with increased EP gives Cost per EP increase of 3.8%, but still a high equalized tax rate increase of 9.8%. With no budget increase, they would still have a 3% increase in the equalized tax rate.Michelle Baker pointed out that given the large dollar amount of reduction needed to make any significant impact on the actual tax rate, it makes it very hard for local school boards to make any reasonable decisions on the scale that might realistically be considered. Adam Greshin gave a brief overview of the challenges faced in dealing with these figures in the Ways and Means Committee. There was then discussion of the issues.
- b) **The School Year Calendar - A conversation with legislators:** Brigid noted that the ideas being brought up are different from the Calendar 2.0 that had been brought up in Chittenden County. She noted that there are many initiatives being expected of schools, which require training of teachers. These trainings are now being scheduled on school days, which is both disruptive to student learning and expensive in terms of hiring substitutes and Professional Development costs. Her suggestion is to commit to a certain number of days statewide that will be for this training/professional development and that school days will not be scheduled on these days. The teacher work year would need to be longer, given more PD days (different from school days). There was discussion and feedback from board members.
- c) **WNSU Boundary Adjustment: Follow Up to SBE 11/18/13 Mtg.-Prepare for SBE 12/17/13:** Brigid gave an update on the current situation following the meetings held by the Board of Education (BOE), plus a following meeting of the 3 superintendents working together. She went through a presentation titled “What is our WWSU Plan going Forward?” Given the projected actual costs estimated by Michelle to provide these services, there would be extra costs for all the current member districts, with \$29K for largest district (Harwood) to accomplish this change. She presented 2 recommendations – either have Granville and Hancock become part of WWSU as full members w/all students attending our schools; or

alternatively have the students become counted ADM students in their receiving schools with WWSU doing the minimal amount of budget work needed for the remaining issues. She said that the meeting with the 3 Superintendents did not come to a resolution for an exact plan; however, they agreed that students should receive SU services from the schools that they attend, therefore Granville & Hancock are not a good match for WWSU. She then noted that the BOE does have authority to redraw SU boundaries. It has been suggested by our attorney that contacting all BOE members in advance and attending the meeting will be important. Waterbury legislator Rebecca Ellis suggested that the 4 legislators could write a letter to the BOE asking for a decision to be delayed. Deb, Ben and Dale can attend the BOE meeting on Dec. 17. Rob and Heidi will draft a letter to the newspapers, and circulate it for review by other board members. Asking for a delay of the decision might also be important.

- d) **WWSU Budget Presentation Draft #2 FY 2015:** Michelle provided a handout with two suggested budgets to bring forward, with the second option being a separation of costs that are not required for CO operation but rather are services that are currently operated centrally for the schools rather than billing back to the districts. Comparables with several other SU's of similar structure were also provided, salaries in WWSU and SU cost as a portion of overall spending in the SU, and a listing of statutory responsibilities now required of SU's. The current % increase as discussed at the last meeting is 9.4% (in Draft #1). Since then, they have taken out food costs that had been provided at the schools and reducing PowerSchool support, decreasing this to an increase of 8.4% in this Draft #2. Then, an Option #3 was presented which took out the "bill back" items for schools, which reduced the % increase to 5.9%. These items are PowerSchool and its online learning, Alert Now and Google Vault.

ACTION: Dale Smeltzer moved to recommend FY15 Budget Draft #2 (12/11/13) to the full WWSU board. Rob Rosen seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

- e) **Update on Health Care Reform:** This was deferred.

- f) **Financial Report:** Michelle noted that there is currently a projected fund balance of \$563, with the full report included in board packet.

- 3) **Other Business** – There was none.

- 4) **Adjournment** – Rob Rosen moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:20 p.m. Ben Smith seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Minutes recorded by Dale Smeltzer