Committee to Study Dissolution

Regional School District No. 11

Minutes of the Meeting of November 13, 2017

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:07 p.m.

Present: Clare D'Appollonio, Stephanie Harrington, Jennifer Nelson, Steven Kurcinik, Rose Bisson, Matthew Venhorst, Bettina Bronisz (for Sheree Mailhot), William Hooper (for John Bolduc)

Absent: Cesar Beltran, Nick Brown, William Fazioli

II. Discussion of Update of Information from 2009 Study

a. Review of Report Establishing District

Ms. Nelson reviewed the temporary regional school study committee report establishing Regional School District No. 11. Brief discussion of this report ensued.

b. Updated Cost Comparison Models

Ms. Nelson distributed a chart containing various costs to the current regional district, including out-of-district expenses, special education, and transportation expenses. The chart also contained tuition costs that would be charged by area schools that would receive Region 11 students in the event of dissolution.

c. Enrollment Trends

Ms. Bisson reported that she is working on obtaining future enrollment projections for the Region 11 district, which have been difficult to obtain. Ms. Bisson further reported that she will continue to attempt to obtain this information and will provide the information to the Committee when it becomes available.

d. Halloran and Sage Update

Mr. Hooper reported that he had spoken to Chaplin First Selectman Matthew Cunningham regarding what happens to the Region 11 buildings and grounds in the event of dissolution. Mr. Hooper reported that Mr. Cunningham said that he understood that the three towns would jointly own the property, although it was not clear how it would be divided up. Mr. Hooper reported that once the property is no longer in use by the regional district, there are many possible uses for it including selling it or using as a tri-town recreation facility. No decisions have been made regarding how the property would be used.

III. Next Steps

Mr. Venhorst distributed copies of Connecticut General Statutes Section 10-63c and discussed required next steps as the Committee's work draws to a close. Mr. Venhorst reported that the statute is ambiguous regarding when the Committee's one-year period is concluded, but that it would be no later than December 21, 2017, one year from the day that the final designation to the Committee was made. Mr. Venhorst reported that it would be advisable for the committee to finish its work well in advance of that date so that a preliminary version of the report can be submitted to the Office of the Attorney General for legal sufficiency.

Discussion ensued regarding the elements required under 10-63c, and Committee members commented that many of the issues that have been addressed by the Committee are not explicitly required under 10-63c, although they may be instructive in assisting Committee members to reach a recommendation as to whether dissolution is advisable. Committee members agreed that the work of the Committee must be accelerated significantly so that the report can be concluded no later than December 21.

The Committee agreed that the next meeting date will be November 27 at 6 p.m., at which time a preliminary vote will be held regarding whether members believe dissolution to be advisable. Meetings were also scheduled for Dec. 4, 11 and 18 – all to be held at 6 p.m. in the Parish Hill library.

IV. Audience for Citizens

Various committee members spoke about the dissolution and add/withdrawal processes that are unfolding in the district. One member of the public expressed confusion about the referendum process for the add/withdrawal committee, which is being held on Nov. 16, and the preliminary vote of the Dissolution Committee which is scheduled for the Dissolution Committee's November 27 meeting. Another member of the public reported that she believes the Dissolution Committee should issue a press release because community members do not understand the processes of the dissolution and add/withdrawal committees. Another member reported that the current per pupil costs are too high and are unsustainable and that it is troubling that enrollment at Parish Hill continues to decline.

V. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 7:40 p.m.