

8 Town School Consolidation Committee
September 25, 2019
Stockbridge Town Hall

Final

The following members of the committee were present: N. Hawver from Sheffield, C. Cardillo from Stockbridge, P. Dillon, Superintendent from BHRSD, M. Ryan from West Stockbridge, S. Bannon from BHRSD School Committee, L. Prashker from Alford, G. McGurn from Egremont, D. Sears from SBRSD School Committee, J. Sylbert from Monterey, T. White from New Marlborough, E. Abrahams from Great Barrington and B. Regulbutto, Superintendent from SBRSD.

Also in attendance were several members of the BHRSD and SBRSD School Committees and members of the press.

The minutes of the September 12th meeting were reviewed. Motion to approve was made by Jon Sylbert, seconded by Chuck Cardillo. Approval was unanimous.

A discussion ensued on whether the 8 Town Committee should include the BHRSD and SBRSD school committees as part of the original group of 12. The conversation started by focusing on a facilitator and/or consultant that would be needed to lead the group/groups forward and also gather information on both the academic side and the financial side. There is money that is available through the state for this process. There were also many suggestions of people with expertise that could be contacted for this process and Peter Dillon and Beth Regulbutto will be contacting some of them to attend our next meeting to give a presentation on what they could offer.

Merging the two school committees into the original 8 Town Committee (total of 28 people) could become unmanageable and getting to the facts and moving forward could become difficult. There was also a question if this could be done without going back to the Select Boards of the 8 Towns for approval. The two separate groups could share a facilitator, whose job would be to keep things moving forward, and a consultant who would gather facts seemed to be the consensus of the groups. These groups could break out in sub-committees and then come together every other meeting to bring forth ideas, comments and questions.

A motion was made by Jon Sylbert, seconded by Lucy Prashker to table the discussion of merging the two groups. The vote was unanimous.

Jon Sylbert made a motion: That the 8 Town School Consolidation Committee thinks it is a good idea to share a facilitator with the two school committees. Motion was seconded by Chuck Cardillo. This passed unanimously.

A letter/email will be sent by Chairman Hawver to the Chairmen of BHRSD and the SBRSD School Committees to invite to our next meeting to explore sharing a facilitator.

Dennis Sears stated that he would like to see the formal DESE process followed. At this time, it was decided that the Committee would like the freedom to proceed and have discussions openly to see where this work will lead the 8 Towns. Nadine Hawver assured the Committee that there is latitude that will be given to the 8 Towns going forward as this is the first such venture in consolidation. The formal process will need to be followed if and when the Committee feels that there is a strong sense of what and how consolidation will occur.

Facilitators will be asked to come to the next meeting and explain to the Committee and the 2 School Committees how to guide us and organize us through the formal process. This will include whether a consultant is also needed to explore curriculum, data, cultures of the Towns etc. Once it is known what we need, an RFP could be written.

Nadine Hawver will send an email inviting the two School Committees to attend the next meeting and listen to those will come to make a presentation.

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, October 15th at 6:00 pm in the Stockbridge Town Hall.

Motion to adjourn was made by George McGrun, seconded by Chuck Cardillo was unanimous.

Respectfully submitted by:

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Tara White".

Tara White, Town of New Marlborough Rep.

Documents Reviewed:

Minutes of 12/9/19 meeting