

**Shaker Regional School District
FINAL Withdrawal Study Committee Meeting Minutes
Canterbury Meeting House
July 25, 2022**

IN ATTENDANCE

Committee Members: Randi Johnson, Committee Chairperson; Ruth Mooney, Bob Steenson, Eric Johnson, Alice Todd (via telephone), Tracey Leclair, Rue Toland

Excused: Charlie Krautmann

Administration: Michael Tursi, Shaker Regional School District Superintendent

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Randi Johnson called the meeting to order at 5:32pm.

MEETING MINUTES

Review/Approval of July 11, 2022 public meeting minutes.

A motion was made by Ruth Mooney and seconded by Tracey Leclair to approve the July 11, 2022 Public Withdrawal Study Committee Meeting Minutes as presented. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

The next meeting of the Withdrawal Study Committee will be August 8, 2022 at the Canterbury Meeting House.

NH SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION DISCUSSION AND QUESTIONS

The committee welcomed Will Phillips, Staff Attorney and Director of Policy Services, to tonight's meeting.

Is Canterbury its own school district as defined in RSA 194:1? Per Will Phillips, the answer is No. When the cooperative school district was formed, the Canterbury district dissolved and Canterbury became one part of the Shaker Regional School District.

Can Canterbury Elementary School form its own School Board? Per Will Phillips, the answer is No. Canterbury can only form its own school board if it withdraws and becomes its own school district.

If Canterbury withdrew from SAU80, would that qualify as a dissolution of districts in two towns per 194:45-51? Will Phillips stated No, that is for special districts such as a village district.

Do both towns have a vote if a dissolution were recommended? Will Phillips answered Yes. (RSA 195:29 vote for withdrawal) If there are only two towns in the school district, it becomes a dissolution of the cooperative school district. This vote would be on the ballot for the cooperative school district and only requires a majority vote. Other references, RSA 195:25 and RSA 195:30.

Do you have a list of open enrollment public schools in the region and state per 194-D? (This section discusses lottery, payment out of district, etc.) Per Will Phillips, the answer is No. We are not aware of any open enrollment public schools. Bob Steenson asked Will to define an open enrollment public school? Will answered that it allows any student from any town to attend that school.

Why isn't SAU80 considered a cooperative school district between Canterbury and Belmont per RSA 195:1? Will Phillips stated a regional and cooperative school district mean the same.

When was the last time the state board prepared and published a geographical plan per RSA 195-A:2? Per Will Phillips, he is not aware of any being done in the last 20 years.

Get the layman's explanation of an Area School (RSA 195-A) vs. Cooperative school (RSA 195)?

Will Phillips stated that there are now very few Area Schools being formed. An area agreement is similar to a tuition agreement, but less flexible. Will is aware of SAU29 in the Keene area. There are still several area agreements, however, they are older. Most towns have entered into tuition agreements.

Will Phillips mentioned that Goshen went through a coop dissolution process. Goshen does not operate any schools; they have tuition agreements for all students. Long-term tuition agreements normally detail capital improvements, special education, etc. Short-term tuition agreements (one year or less), does not require a vote of the residents and can be used if a sending town has overflow and needs a temporary district for students from that town to go to for school. When considering this withdrawal, keep in mind that with long-term tuition agreements a sending town has no say on staff cuts, class offerings, etc. If Canterbury and Belmont had an area agreement, Belmont would have the school board with no representation from Canterbury. If there was a dissolution of the district, Belmont may cut staff and may not be willing to allow tuition-in of Canterbury students.

Rue Toland asked Will Phillips about the risk of withdrawing from a cooperative school district with no guarantee that a town will accept that town's students. Discussions ensued.

Bob Steenson asked if a long-term contract would be on the ballot of both towns. Will Phillips stated he would expect it on the ballot for voters to decide due to the financial implications.

Ruth Mooney asked if there was an instance where a small town such as Canterbury would possibly offer the south end of Canterbury to go to one school district and the north end of Canterbury to go to another school district. Will Phillips contemplated the question and provided a response.

Eric Johnson asked about the steps the committee should be going through to lay all of this information out. Will Phillips stated that at some point in the process, the committee should consider seeking a consultant to work with the members to prepare necessary documentation. Will suggested reviewing some of the more recent plans such as White Mountains Regional, Jaffrey-Rindge, and Mason. Rue Toland asked for possible names of individuals that may be available for such assistance, and Will provided a few names.

Will Phillips explained that withdrawing from the cooperative school district does not mean Canterbury is withdrawing from the SAU. Reference provided, RSA 194-C:2 SAU organization, reorganization, or withdrawal.

Tracey Leclair asked clarifying questions regarding if Canterbury withdraw. Discussion ensued, including if they became the Canterbury school district for grades K-5, and tuition their other students for grades 6-12.

Will Phillips suggested a review of Hollis-Brookline documentation as he believes they have an unusual configuration for grades K-6, and also possibly Madison NH.

Bob Steenson asked if the withdrawal is deemed impractical, are there any towns that provide funds to allow parents to have their child attend another school district. Discussion ensued. Will mentioned the town of Croyden which offers complete school choice for families/students.

Pros and cons of a cooperative school district vs. forming a single school district? Will Phillips explained that if a town has a school(s) to maintain, the town has to have a budget that would support that school, even though the town may give school choice for parents to have their children attend schools in other towns.

Eric Johnson asked if there was a requirement for Canterbury to have a superintendent. Will Phillips explained a town can contract out their superintendent services; hire a part-time superintendent; or use a principal that is appropriately certified.

Tracey Leclair and Eric Johnson asked questions regarding staffing and reduction of force (RIF) at Belmont Middle School and Belmont High School if Canterbury withdrew from the district. Will Phillips explained that staff may be concerned that their jobs are at risk, or staff that had not considered leaving the district in the past, may decide this would be the time to make a move.

Ruth Mooney asked who pays for consulting fees if one is used by the committee. Will Phillips talked about a minority report that may be filed with the State of NH Board of Education on behalf of the town.

Tracey Leclair asked about transportation requirements and would like to ensure the study includes transportation and what will make sense for all students in Canterbury. Tracey also mentioned the need to pay special attention if Canterbury offered choices for high school students, it would need to take into account for transportation to other districts. Will Phillips referred to RSA 189:6 Transportation of Pupils and the mandate to provide transportation for students for grades K-8. A town is not required to provide transportation for high school students.

Michael Tursi, Superintendent, asked Will Phillips some clarifying questions for the step-by-step process in the first year after a withdrawal.

PUBLIC COMMUNICATION/CORRESPONDENCE

None

REPORTS AND UPDATES

Update on Reach Out to Surrounding Towns – Randi Johnson presented information that was also included in the informational packet.

- o Belmont – All information has been received.
- o Concord –Randi stated she received information and distributed it to the committee members.
- o Gilford – Randi Johnson will continue to follow up.
- o Laconia – All information has been received.
- o Merrimack Valley – Randi stated the district will be reviewing further and responding to Randi's request.
- o Winnisquam Regional –Randi will follow up to determine if the district is interested.

Information Consolidation Status -

- o Academic – Eric Johnson and Tracey Leclair - Eric Johnson stated Belmont, Laconia, and Bow Program of Studies have been received and have started to be compared. Tracey Leclair stated middle school may be difficult as they may not have an actual Program of Studies.
- o Extracurricular – Alice Todd and Charlie Krautmann– Alice Todd stated she pulled information for towns being considered. Middle school was more difficult and provided little difference between schools. She stated some school districts use different names for similar activities, district to district.

- o Contracts and Financials – Bob Steenson and Rue Toland – Bob and Rue are still reviewing contracts and what key provisions they should extract.

NEXT STEPS AND OPEN QUESTIONS

Randi Johnson stated she will not be present for the next meeting; Eric will chair. Additional information on Academics, Extracurriculars, and Contracts and Financials will be presented at that time.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Ruth Mooney and seconded by Rue Toland to adjourn the meeting at 8:07pm. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

Respectfully Submitted,

Gretta Olson-Wilder
School Board Secretary