

## **RSU2 Informational Committee on Contract Renewal Review**

Organizational meeting held on October 27, 2016 at Pownalborough Hall. Members in attendance were:

Dale Hinote (1st. Selectman), Jeffrey Pierce (Planning Board Chair), Brandon Perreault (Budget Review Committee), Brenda Sawyer (Resident at Large/teacher) and Patty Stewart (Resident at Large).

Jeff opened the meeting at 6 p.m. with introductions of all those present.

**First order of business** was to appoint a Secretary. Jeff nominated Shari Lilly; Dale seconded and with no other nominations, the motion carried unanimously by a show of hands.

**#2 - Laying out the purpose** of this committee, Jeff noted that it was voted at our last town meeting to form a group to review the RSU2 contract and make recommendations at the next town meeting as to whether it would be better to continue in the RSU2 or seek other alternatives.

**#3 - Choose a Chairman** of the committee - Jeff nominated Brandon Perreault; Dale seconded. So approved by all. His duties will be to coordinate the agenda and handle any other specifics that may be necessary for the Committee; such as giving 'assignments' for certain interests that are needed for discussions, etc. Brandon asked if we should elect a Vice-Chairman? All were in agreement so Jeff volunteered. All members approved. All members will need to be sworn in by the Town Clerk. It was also mentioned that we have two (2) citizens-at-large.

**#4 - Strategy** - We will have a number of items to complete. What angles to look from - financially, do the values quantify with the numbers, how to attack this. It may be a good idea to break it off into separate groups, do research on each one, then come back to the meeting with the info. Jeff also suggesting making the meeting dates that would work for everyone.

**#5 - Issues** - We need to have copies of the current contract that includes the lined detailed budget. Check the cost. See what the value of the education is set at. Find out how the RSU2 is performing and where we fall in the scale as well as what their curriculum entails. We need to set a meeting day/date that is compatible for all members, if possible. It was decided that Thursdays are best for most. We'll meet here at Pownalborough at 6 p.m. on Nov 17th to get things going.

**Dale** mentioned that every person is supposed to be educated to the best extent at the cost of the town. Including special needs, etc. as well as those children we don't see.

**Jeff** noted that there is a bond issue on the ballot this year to raise the minimum wage and if it passes, it will affect the pay of teachers also. Dale noted that subs get paid a lot less so a raise would be nice.

**Jeff** said our task is to see if this is the best situation for us or if we should look into

removing from RSU2.

**Brandon** added that we should look at the contractual obligations - Town to RSU2. Check out the financials. Look at the payroll for staff in Dresden. See what the other costs are that we pay for. Another issue is the transportation costs. It is believed that the town has to pay for the busses.

**Patty** said that we need to see if the RSU2 is working for us, but should we also see if other options are available with the quality of education for our money? She said some parents have told her they are not happy with the RSU2.

**Jeff** said we need to get parents and residents to know that we have these meetings which are open to the public. We want them to have all the information that we can give them. They can sit in on any meeting, but may not be allowed to speak. We'll need to get notices out about these meetings as best we can.

**Brandon** and Jeff would like to have Bill Zima attend to see if he anticipates any curriculum change plans. Or what he and others may predict after the vote on the issues in November. Brandon will ask him to come to the meeting on Nov. 17.

**Patty** feels we have a lot of hoops to go through but she really would prefer to have the contract & budget to look over.

**Brenda** wants to make sure that the teachers know that this is not something attacking them, but is to help. Brandon said we want them to know that we support them and want to make things better for them. Jeff said he was proud to present a County Teacher-of-Year Award to Erica Atkinson who is a teacher here at Dresden Elementary. He noted that Dresden is in the top 10 highest ranking schools in the State. However, every time something is brought up about the RSU, they threaten to close Dresden. All members agreed that we would definitely try to move out of the RSU if that happened. Patty said that Dresden has a much higher rating than any of the other schools in the RSU. The options we have at this time for school choices would be either Richmond or Hall-Dale. Jeff said there may be others out there that would want to take our students; such as, Chopps Point or even Wiscasset.

**Jeff** said that we are funding the RSU at 59%. Brandon, speaking financially, asked if we want to go as far as looking outside the realm of this area. Jeff said we need to consider it. Patty said we do need to have a per-student cost.

**Jeff** said that if we find the RSU isn't the way to go, we could consider the 'voucher system' with another town. Then we could take back our school. Dale said states with County Superintendents have a multitude of district Superintendents. Jeff said there are a number of options.

It was noted that any contract would be for our students. That the school would be responsible for them. Our teachers are paid through the town.

**Transportation - Administration** - All info on these should be at the Town Office.

**Patty** said we really should get a look at the contract to know what we are dealing with.

**Brenda** noted that some of the schools who have pulled out of the RSUs have really gotten soaked financially. We need to consider that as well for the taxpayers.

**Brandon** asked how many students we have. Jeff and Dale said roughly 180 - 185.

**Patty** said that about 70% of our taxes goes to the RSU. We don't have a lot of schools that want to take on all of our students.

**Jeff** said we pay about \$6300.00 a year per student. We also have a few that go to other schools now. The transportation isn't provided for those students.

**Dale** will check on the school contract and the transportation. They may both be under the same contract. **Brandon and Brenda** both mentioned that a lack of bus drivers has created some issues too.

For next time, get copies of the contract, budget (full form) and transportation. See what the allocations are. Discussion on these will continue at our next meeting.

*Adjourned at 7:00 p.m.*