

Ad Hoc Committee for Inter-district Education Cost Sharing
Programming Sub-Committee
Special Meeting
Minutes
March 17, 2022

7PM

Call to Order: Chairman Bisson called the Meeting to order at 7:02PM.

Roll Call: Rose Bisson, Kathy Donahue, Wendy Sears, Juan Arriola, Cassidy Martin

Audience for Citizens: none.

Approval of Minutes of February 24, 2022 Special Meeting

By general consent, the Minutes were approved.

Work Session for Budgetary Issues

Wendy Sears reviewed the changes made to the chart: the name of the committee was corrected; the line item in the Combined Budget for Pupil Transportation for Hampton Elementary School was reduced from \$110,700 to the actual amount, \$55,350, with the fuel line reduced from \$13,950 to \$6,975. It was agreed to note that Hampton uses two, rather than three buses, to explain the discrepancies in costs between the towns, to include the rest of Hampton's transportation costs, which cover the expenses of transport to Parish Hill, in the Hampton Board of Education Budget, and to include the total amount in the line for Total Pupil Transportation. After discussion, the explanation for the Principal's Salary range changed the acronym "DRG" to "District Reference Group" and used "Comparison" and "Classification System" instead of "Rating".

The Recording for the Meeting started at 7:16PM, at which time Rose Bisson reviewed the conduct of the meeting to that point.

There was discussion on the information presented on the chart, and the language used, to describe the costs and savings for the towns. The debate on the inclusion of per pupil costs per the combined budget continued, with Rose Bisson arguing that the amount, \$16,637, was deceiving as it doesn't include the costs absorbed by the town, and Kathy Donahue countering that both per pupil costs, the combined school's and the towns', must be included for the sake of clarity. Ms. Sears will re-label these items and distribute to members for approval.

Ms. Donahue questioned some of the costs included in the combined budget, errors which were acknowledged. She will review all numbers for accuracy and send the list of questionable numbers to members. She also stressed the importance of consistency with consideration of grants, advocating that grant funding typically used to offset expenses be listed separately in all instances. Members agreed with Ms. Donahue's suggestion that the combined budget model be clearly labeled as a "draft" and Ms. Bisson's suggestion that the word "estimated" is also stressed.

It was agreed that the committee must meet again to complete remaining items, and in a joint meeting with the full committee to present the combined budget model and report, prior to presenting to the Boards of Education. Cassidy Martin announced that she will cancel the meeting scheduled for March 24 with Scotland's school board. Ms. Sears requested that members contribute their input for the report portion of the presentation, having only heard thus far from Juan Arriola.

There was some discussion on reporting the Educational Cost Sharing. Ms. Donahue recommended that ECS funding, which is lessening by approximately \$30,000 for Scotland and \$50,000 for Hampton per

year for the following five, be included in the report. Questions remain on how the ECS grant will be applied in a combined model, as well as whether other federal and state funds are allocated to the school or the towns. Contact lists for the State Department will be obtained to secure the answers to these questions.

There was also discussion on the costs of special education. During the Governance Sub-Committee meeting, it was confirmed that the combined budget would include the costs of special education services provided in the school, while out-placement services and related expenses will be absorbed by the individual towns. The actual costs of special education in both towns for a range of five years will also be included in the narrative, as these can fluctuate markedly from year to year. Ms. Donahue advocated for a simple statement, cautioning against inadvertently using identifiable information.

There was also some discussion on including estimated costs of retirements, potential law suits, and unemployment compensation, and on the inclusion of the costs of curricular and extra-curricular opportunities. Ms. Donahue suggested that potential costs could not be included in the combined budget model as it would skew comparisons with current program costs. While it was acknowledged that the Board of Education for the combined school would be ultimately responsible for programming, input on community interest should be solicited and considered. Ms. Sears noted that many of the suggestions for curricular and extra-curricular opportunities support the middle school's programs, in academics and athletics. It was also noted that a larger student count would enhance additional opportunities, such as spelling and geography bees, and invention conventions.

General Discussion

Ms. Martin expressed her discomfort with the inclusion of an advisory question in a referendum. Ms. Bisson concurred, stating her concern that the vote on an advisory question would not necessarily sway the board members charged with approving the Cooperative Agreement, and that this might anger voters. Ms. Donahue stressed the need for the community to have a voice, and Mr. Arriola stated his belief that the Board of Education has an obligation to ascertain where the community stands. Ms. Sears stressed the importance of voters receiving the information prior to the vote in order to make an informed decision, stating that multiple opportunities must be available to disseminate accurate information.

By general consent it was agreed to meet March 31 at 7PM. Ms. Sears asked members to send information on the potential costs of curricular and extra-curricular activities. She will incorporate the changes made during the meeting to the combined budget model, and revise the chart and distribute to members, requesting that members review, and reply to, the new version in a timely manner.

Audience for Citizens: none.

Adjournment: There being no further business, the special meeting adjourned at 9:25PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Dayna McDermott Arriola

<https://transcripts.gotomeeting.com/#!/s/590a5b647b86243b8f747880815d6bce4095a5a62ff95089bbd470e1329295362>