

Ad Hoc Committee for Inter-district Education Cost Sharing
Programming Sub-Committee
Special Meeting
Minutes
March 31, 2022

7PM

Call to Order: Chairman Bisson called the Meeting to order at 7:21PM.

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

Audience for Citizens: Juan Arriola criticized Chairman Bisson for a communication mailed to certain residents in Hampton titled “Are you aware that a small committee is trying to close Hampton Elementary School?”, alleging, among other things, that “cost comparisons are not being accurately presented” and encouraging residents to “please contact Rose Bisson” to join the “Keep HES Open” political action committee. He expressed concern that Ms. Bisson assumed this role while serving as the committee’s chairman, and reminded members that the committee was charged with studying programming in a combined model and its costs, not with “closing the school”, and that all of Ms. Bisson’s requests regarding cost comparisons were honored by committee members, as evidenced in the Meeting Minutes. He suggested that the alleged inaccuracies are reviewed and corrected during the meeting.

Approval of Minutes of March 3, 2022 and March 17, 2022 Special Meeting

By general consent, the Minutes of both Meetings were approved with the following amendments to the March 3 Minutes: under Work Session for Budgetary Issues: *To Ms. Bisson’s question on the combined school’s surplus, Ms. Donahue said that, as with the district, the surplus would be assessed per student count and applied to the next year’s budget*” was eliminated; and “Ms. Sears reported that Scotland had applied for a STEAP grant for the recreational field adjacent to the school *in previous years.*”

Work Session for Budgetary Issues

Wendy Sears reviewed the changes made to the chart to reflect the actual amounts provided by Kathy Donahue. These included changing the Hampton Health Insurance figure from \$189,241 to \$175,889, and the Hampton Other Insurance figure from \$20,418 to \$19,708, and changing the totals accordingly. Chairman Bisson expressed concern that the estimates would not be accurate as insurance needs fluctuate year to year. After discussion, it was decided to include a highlighted line next to the insurance figures noting that the numbers are for illustrative purposes only, and to include in the report that health insurance, as with other items such as special education, is difficult to accurately represent with estimation figures as the insurance figures can fluctuate widely due to a number of (listed) reasons. Ms. Bisson also objected to using yellow to highlight information on the insurance chart, as yellow highlights denote items transferred to the towns in other documents.

There was discussion on grants and their application to budget items, particularly the Pre-School Readiness Grant which is applied to salaries and stipends. Kathy Donahue reiterated the need to be consistent in reporting current and estimated expenses with respect to the application of grants to reduce, or in some cases, eliminate the costs.

Ms. Sears created, on request, a chart which compared current staffing levels at the two schools with proposed staffing levels in the combined model. She also discussed the development of a chart that would contain all fiscal information, including the grants the municipalities receive.

On Cassidy Martin’s suggestion, the Business Coordinator’s position for the combined model was increased from a .74 to a full time position, with the understanding that this might be reduced in the subsequent year.

General Discussion

By general consent, it was decided to meet on April 7 at 7PM, though the logistics, in-person, virtual, hybrid, are yet to be determined.

Audience for Citizens: none.

Adjournment: There being no further business, the special meeting adjourned at 8:46PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Dayna McDermott Arriola