

## **Brattleboro Representative Town Meeting Finance Committee**

### **Corrected Minutes of Dec. 13, 2018**

Cusick Conference Room

2<sup>nd</sup> floor - Windham Regional Career Center

80 Atwood Street, Brattleboro

#### **Call to order/Review agenda**

A quorum was present and the meeting was called to order by Chair Franz Reichsman at 5:34 p.m. Members in attendance: Franz Reichsman; Elizabeth McLoughlin; Abbe Sweeney; Nancy Anderson. Two guests present: WSESU Superintendent Lyle Holiday and Business Administrator Frank Rucker. The chair announced that Scott Smyth has resigned from the committee.

The agenda was reviewed.

#### **Minutes of November 15, 2018**

Accepted with one minor change.

#### **Review schedule/future meetings**

Place: Cusick Conference Room, Career Center; Time: 5:30

Jan 3    Jan 17    Jan 31    Feb 14

Other possible date: Feb 28

#### **Current status of FY2020 budget process \Updates from board meetings and Act 46**

##### **1. Municipal budget:** (Liz and Franz -Select Board meeting)

- Jan 8 – Final Budget review at Select Board meeting
- New position - Town Planning Director, Sue Fillion, hired as consultant for some of the planning tasks, since no "Town Planner" position is in place
- 0.4 Municipal Budget increase
- 2020-21 budget: New four year scheduled building fire (department) inspection plan to replace the existing ten year plan.
- "Sustainability" position - \$10,000 Salary with no job description – not in budget – Town will consider it for next year's budget
- Risk management – Options considered - Insurance will cost more – Franz satisfied
- Library – Town spends 20 percent on book fund – Endowment pays the rest
- Local option sales tax includes online purchases  
(Franz): Finance Committee suggested we talk more on Jan 3 meeting – possibly consider a committee vote on making recommendation to town meeting

##### **2. Town school budget:** (Franz)

- Dec 19 – Budget available
- Budget Presentation to public on Jan 2; Board approval after meeting.

##### **3. BUHS budget:** (Franz)

- Dec 17 – Budget Presentation to public 6:00 p.m. at Cusick Conf. Rm ; Board approval right after meeting

##### **4. Act 46**

Information and discussion session with Lyle Holiday and Frank Rucker

- (Lyle) Concern: State Education Board says, a supervisory union has to be formed for Vernon Independent ( a total surprise and concern to committee):
  1. Because an independent must also fit into a bureaucracy - district.
  2. All the schools in the four town plan must be in one district

3. Representation on Supervisory board with Combination of Vernon with the four other towns: 3 members from Vernon; and 3 total members from the four-towns, combined (Another total surprise and deep concern to committee!)
- (Frank) Financial statistics:
    1. Preliminary costs available Dec 15, but not final until 2019
    2. Statistical study: Done from 10 year period – 900 kids with fewer employers (town supervisory\boards) is more efficient than 900 kids with more employers (town supervisory\boards).
    3. BHS (Brattleboro High School - BUHS) - good because all towns use it – same costs - tuition
    4. Out of state tuition: Vernon “independent” pays additional tuition to out of state schools – average cost derived by state with budget figures from all New England states
    5. Long Term planning better – more efficient – “match resources with needs”
    6. 2015 Decision: State must be streamlined for need of at least 900 students for (transportation; Special Ed; food; finance)
  - Further discussion about Vernon:
 

Vernon will, “no doubt” be in a supervisory with other group of schools.

Options:

    1. Central Supervisory Union (Dover & Wardsboro could fit; all have the same tuition to BHS.
    2. All separate (?)
    3. Vernon join another supervisory
  - (Abbe) Finance should check with legislature from the financial perspective because “we can’t come up with any numbers”.
  - ( Franz) Defeats the savings towns were supposed to get by joining schools; Consider at the our next meeting, if Finance committee should inform the town people further about the inequitable costs of further modification of the new (Act 46 required) “four town” supervisory union budget, should Vernon be required by state ACT 46 to join same supervisory.
  - (Frank) Former Sec. of State Education made 300 page study of the affordable costs for schools – 30 pages useful for our region; Frank will send this to Franz
  - January: transitional board sets date of election of new schoolboard.
  - (Franz) Modification of supervisory union budget: S
    - Hard for Frank to come up with figures;
    - Don’t know what HS numbers are;
    - Have to give up financial figure to have Vernon in a supervisory;
    - Committee will bring this to attention of town.
    - Cost – inefficient – Vernon staff insurance will make this inequitable to rest of the schools (not 900 students)
  - (Frank) Summary on Vernon costs:
    - Tuition Rates – Vernon to BHS set by state
    - Vernon HS budget expense for food, transportation, Spec Ed and Finance divided by number of kids – less than 900, making it inequitable.
    - Tuition to Northfield – state sets average rate of all neighboring schools in region

**Other Business** None

**Adjournment** The meeting was adjourned at 6:54 p.m.

Corrected Minutes submitted to Town Manager Secretary Jan Anderson on 1\7\2019

Nancy Anderson, Recorder