

LAMOILLE NORTH SUPERVISORY UNION
ACT 46 STUDY COMMITTEE MINUTES
GTMCC COMMUNITY EDUCATION CENTER
SEPTEMBER 16, 2015

Committee members present: Pierre Laflamme, Jeff Bickford, Bill Sander, Laura Miller, Ken McPherson, Raven Walters, Patti Hayford, David Whitcomb, Peter Ingvoldstad, Becky Penberthy, Tim Sullivan, Matt Mitchell

Others: Edie Beatty, Marilyn Frederick, Dana Jewett, Michelle Aumand, Steve Sanborn

Note: All votes taken are unanimous unless otherwise noted.

1. *Call to Order, Approval of Agenda*

E. Beatty called the meeting to order at 6:03. She recommended one change to the agenda. She said D. Whitcomb and D. Regan had suggested introducing the consultant and providing an opportunity to ask him questions as part of the third agenda item, but waiting until the end of the meeting to vote on approving hiring him.

MOTION: B. Penberthy moved to approve the agenda with the suggested change, seconded by P. Ingvoldstad. P. Ingvoldstad said he would like to add possible approval of Wolcott being represented on this committee. They represent significant income to the high school and middle school and he thinks they should be at the table as we discuss this. **B. Penberthy accepted P. Ingvoldstad's addition as a friendly amendment. The motion was passed.**

2. *Welcome and Introductions*

E. Beatty said the committee is here to study feasibility of a merger. It has already been discussed with the LNSU board, the LUSD board, and the executive committee of the LNSU board. The full LNSU board recommended that the 6 districts form a study committee and all 6 districts voted to do so. We have done everything we could not to rule out an accelerated merger. That is why there is such an ambitious meeting schedule. Our SU is considered a "poster child" for a merger because our 6 districts all send students to the same middle school and high school. Structurally, we are poised to do it. But we have different cultures and community preferences. Our work is to understand Act 46 so we can make sure the electorate understands the choices and is prepared to vote.

3. *Election of Chairperson and Vice Chair and Introduction of Act 46 Consultant*

W. Sander nominated P. Ingvoldstad for chair. W. Sander said he thinks in a committee of this sort where the consequences can be extreme it is important for the chair to be someone who has had experience with the SU. P. Ingvoldstad has long experience on the high school board and has shown a commitment to the entire SU.

R. Walters agreed that P. Ingvoldstad would be a fine candidate and nominated P. Laflamme.

There were no other nominations. E. Beatty invited the nominees to say a few words.

P. Ingvoldstad said he would like to serve as chair. He thinks it is a difficult thing we are exploring. A few years ago we went through the process of deciding whether to build a middle school here or a high school/middle school on the other end of the county. We came up with a process that brought out a huge number of community members. He thinks a similar approach would help us go through this process.

T. Sullivan asked if P. Ingvoldstad has any predisposition as to what will come out of this process. P. Ingvoldstad said he is leaning one direction. As chair, his role would be to be neutral. He will make sure all opinions are heard and that will be the strength of what we do. He hopes the community will hear all opinions and then decide. We can find compromises through expressing all opinions.

P. Laflamme said it seems that he and P. Ingvoldstad want the same things. He thinks the committee would be well served by either of them. He thinks his personal opinions are immaterial to the functions of the committee and the chair. He would be neutral in the process. He would work towards consensus and make sure the committee has enough information to go back to the electorate.

B. Penberthy asked P. Laflamme to talk about how he runs meetings. P. Laflamme said he has working knowledge of Robert's Rules from his experience on the school board and other groups. He doesn't yell. He feels the job of facilitating is first and foremost for the chair. He doesn't bring his ego. When he runs a meeting he is driven by the actions to be taken in the end and facilitating the process of finding consensus. He keeps meetings goal-oriented.

Several committee members asked for voting to be done by paper ballot. **P. Ingvoldstad was elected chair by a vote of 8-5.**

P. Ingvoldstad took over as chair.

MOTION: L. Miller moved to amend the agenda to add election of a vice chair, M. Mitchell seconded, and the motion was passed.

L. Miller nominated P. Laflamme for vice chair, seconded by M. Mitchell. **MOTION: D. Whitcomb moved that nominations cease and that the clerk be instructed to cast one unanimous ballot for Pierre Laflamme as vice chair, M. Mitchell seconded, and the motion was passed.**

E. Beatty gave some background. We became aware that VSBA and the VT Superintendents' Association were building a bank of consultants to help boards with Act 46 implementation. We envisioned we might interview a few consultants. But more SU's than anticipated have formed study committees. Before the boards even voted on creating a study committee, Steve Dale and Jeff Francis said the list of consultants was short. By the morning after we voted they said 2 or 3 people were still on the list. E. Beatty felt Steve Sanborn was the best suited of the remaining consultants. Consultants were going like hot cakes and we needed to identify one or maybe end up not having one.

Particularly if we continue to look at an accelerated process, we don't have the internal capacity to do all that needs to be done in accordance with the timeline. So E. Beatty said we would take S. Sanborn and bring him before the board. She has worked with him in the past. He has been a superintendent. He has worked in the Northeast Kingdom, so he understands rural areas and he has worked in Chittenden Central so he understands more urban and centralized areas. He is bright, considerate, and a good facilitator. He doesn't have a yacht in this race. He is not here to help us consolidate. He is here to make sure we have the resources we need so the community can make a decision. She recommends him.

Steve Sanborn said he lives in the Northeast Kingdom. He was superintendent in Essex-Caledonia SU, which has the 3 poorest towns in the state. Before that he was in Chittenden Central, one of the most well-to-do areas in the state. He has taught at UVM and Lyndon State. When he met with the Addison-Rutland study committee the first question they asked him was, "Are you from the state?" He told them no, he is working for them. He has no agenda but to get the board the information needed for communities to make a decision. He won't be able to answer all questions on the spot. His job is to go find the right answer. He is not a lawyer but he can get the right answer. He has had 3 more calls this week. He would love to work with this group but he doesn't need to. There are a lot of SU's looking for support.

L. Miller said she imagines since he is working for other boards he will probably share questions we might not have thought of yet that other boards have been asking and information he gathers.

S. Sanborn said he is working with Addison-Rutland. They are set up almost exactly like LNSU. They are going into their 3rd meeting. They are really focused on the accelerated option. There are a lot of options out there. Our job is to explore them all and challenge them all.

K. McPherson said he googled S. Sanborn and he found things he feels could lead people to believe he is anti-consolidation. To what extent is he ready to deal with that? Is there anything else about him that could generate community opposition?

S. Sanborn said he did at one time think the state wasn't ready for consolidation when he was working in the Northeast Kingdom. When he was superintendent in Chittenden Central, they voted to consolidate, which he thought at the time was a great idea. Then the vote was recalled, then it happened again in 2007. When he moved to the Northeast Kingdom he was working with a lot of small communities in which the school was everything. But we have more challenges now and he thinks we have to look seriously at consolidation. There are fiscal challenges and an increasing number of special needs students and special programs that sometimes each district is running individually. Now he comes with an open mind and will try to give both sides.

W. Sander said it is probably a good thing if folks come to the study committee meetings with somewhat different ideas, but willing to be persuaded. He has great reservations but

he is not trying to block consolidation. He feels the way we have done things here has pretty much accomplished what the state wants, but we do it without throwing off a lot of school board members. If we are going to be compelled to do it anyway we might as well do it in the way that is best.

T. Sullivan suggested tabling this discussion until after the committee has had a chance to see S. Sanborn in action. The rest of the committee agreed.

4. *State and Local Perspective / Study Committee Process and Charge / Next Agenda*

S. Sanborn briefly reviewed guidelines about creating a study committee. Meetings have to be public. The committee must elect a chair. The chair's name has to be sent to the Secretary of Education. He drafted a tentative charge for the committee. If the committee determines consolidation is advisable part of the charge is to bring a recommendation to the State Board of Education through articles of agreement. There have been two or three situations in Vermont where articles of agreement have been developed. Those become the focal point of the work the committee will do. Articles of agreement need to be brought to each school board, but not for them to vote on. This committee will make the decision to move forward with consolidation or not, then bring it to AoE and the Board of Education, then it goes to the public in each community to vote on.

One important thing is the timeline, especially if we are thinking of the accelerated process. The earliest we could bring the recommendation to the community for a vote would probably be town meeting. The latest would be about April 15. There has to be a 45 day recall opportunity before June 30. In the accelerated situation we have a very small window. We have to get the committee's report to AoE for their review, then to the State Board at their January 19 meeting.

There have been 3 different consolidation acts. We will focus on Act 46 tonight, which includes the accelerated program, but he doesn't want to eliminate the other 2 acts, especially Act 153. This committee may decide it is not interested in what Act 46 has to offer but could be interested in Act 153.

The preferred structure under Act 46 is a single district serving at least 900 students with one of the preferred structures: PK-12, PK-8, or PK-6. The vote for an accelerated merger has to happen by July 1, 2016. The accelerated process was developed for SU's that have previously undertaken this kind of opportunity or those that are configured in a manner that lends itself to an expedited merger process. The accelerated merger incentives include homestead tax rate reduction of 10 cents in the first year, 8 cents in the next year, and so on for 5 years and a Transition Facilitation Grant of \$150K or 5% of the base education amount multiplied by the new ADM, whichever is less. The new district will keep any small school grants currently received by any of the merging districts. The decision on a merger should be driven not just by the fiscal piece but by what is best for kids and the community. The committee shouldn't lose sight of that.

M. Mitchell said legislators told us the money for tax incentives would come from the education fund. If we don't do the accelerated merger, could our taxes go up? S. Sanborn said districts that don't choose to do a merger may end up with more on their tax bill. The

money has to come from somewhere. K. McPherson asked where the money comes from if everyone does a merger. S. Sanborn said there is no magic fund. K. McPherson said, so once a certain number of districts agree to consolidate the incentive actually goes away because we have to put the money in to get it back again. If everyone gets a 10 cent reduction the money has to come from someplace, probably from everyone in proportion to their existing tax bill, which means the incentive goes away. S. Sanborn said that could be. E. Beatty said those who haven't formed a study committee by now are unlikely to get in on the first year of incentives. It is safe to say not all will consolidate the first year.

S. Sanborn said conventional mergers give more time and opportunity to merge, but those who do a conventional merger lose a year of the tax incentive, while keeping the other incentives. The small school grant is a big one for those receiving it. It really influences budgets. The 3.5% cap is big as well. It is not just the tax reduction that is important. Those two pieces will make a difference.

P. Ingvaldstad asked how many of our schools get small school grants. M. Frederick said Eden and Waterville do. Eden gets about \$20K and Waterville gets about \$70K.

S. Sanborn said there is more flexibility with conventional mergers. There are some other options available that aren't available for the accelerated merger.

S. Sanborn reviewed the financial consequences if we do nothing. We will not get the tax incentives. By July 1, 2017 there is a 5% tax penalty. We would lose the 3.5% ADM hold harmless protection and the state would make a decision for us. Schools that don't merge can only retain their small schools grants if the state board determines they are geographically isolated or can demonstrate academic excellence and operational efficiency.

All the information discussed tonight will be on the LNSU website.

S. Sanborn said if the committee hires him he will work for the committee, not VSBA or the state. He would want to set up a way to communicate with all committee members. He would set up an email list. People could send him questions, which he would not answer individually as he thinks it would violate open meeting law. He would wait until the next meeting to answer them.

K. McPherson said he saw a statement that this should only be done if it will be economically beneficial, meaning it will provide either a better product at the same cost or the same product at a lower cost. It seems like S. Sanborn is coming at it from an institutional standpoint. The question of whether school size affects educational outcomes has been argued for about 40 years. It is very complicated. To what extent would we be looking to perform a quantitative analysis of whether it would be beneficial to go to a larger district and what are S. Sanborn's qualifications and experience with that?

S. Sanborn said he doesn't have qualifications for the fiscal piece. VSBA and the Superintendents' Association have gotten a consulting group set up so they can model

every SU in the state. That will be one resource. The business manager will have information she can share. K. McPherson said we can do it at an accounting level or an econometric level. How would we measure the output of the school system to determine whether it can do the same thing cheaper or better things for the same price?

S. Sanborn said the state will do it based on school quality standards. If we tell them this SU is working well, they will look at school quality standards to see if they agree. L. Miller asked if that means assessments. S. Sanborn said yes. W. Sander said that assumes that with this new structure things will be better. It seems like this was set in motion to address problems we don't have here, such as declining enrollment and runaway costs. In terms of outcomes, ours are pretty good, especially considering the socioeconomic factors we have to deal with.

D. Whitcomb said he thinks we should look at the elementary schools forming one district, with LUSD remaining a separate district. He doesn't know how we would get that way, but he would like to see that. With just one larger district the LUSD board will be gone and the LNSU board will be gone. He comes from a small town. Small towns will get the short end of the stick. He believes the legislature will take another look at Act 46 and make a lot of changes, so he would like to spend time on this and not go with the accelerated option. His question is how we can have 2 districts. P. Ingvaldstad said that will come at subsequent meetings. S. Sanborn said we could have an elementary district, a high school district and an SU board. P. Ingvaldstad said he thinks the numbers are there to pull that off. S. Sanborn said there are a lot of configurations we can look at.

K. McPherson asked S. Sanborn how he would lead us to address the questions. S. Sanborn said at the first couple of meetings he would have some presentations set up about what the situation is now and what might be different under consolidation with regard to special ed, curriculum, food services, transportation, etc. We would look at whether there is a way to improve in those areas through consolidation. K. McPherson asked who would do the work. S. Sanborn said he would ask people who work in the district – the curriculum director, special ed director, business manager, etc. – to do presentations on what we have now and how it could be better. His job will be to find answers to questions committee members generate. Then we will ask if we want to start building articles of agreement. That is a collaborative process. P. Ingvaldstad said we are going to direct the process. As committee members we will have a lot of control to set direction for the committee. S. Sanborn is here to give us information when we need it.

E. Beatty reviewed statistics about our SU as it is now. There are 6 towns, 6 elementary districts, and a union district. There are 36 elected board members and 19 members appointed to the LNSU board. There are 8 school boards and 9 separately approved budgets. We have 5 elementary schools, 1 middle school, 1 high school, 1 tech center, and 1 central office.

What can we do better for students? She notices that when board members come to LNSU board meetings to make a decision they caucus with other members of their town to discuss what is best for their town. Under consolidation, board members would ask

what is best for all students PK-12. Rebecca Holcombe talks about equity and quality of learning for all students. It is possible to centralize without consolidating but structurally and organizationally consolidation can make it easier. Our principals spend a lot of time doing management, dealing with buses, boilers, budgets, etc., not teaching and learning. If we had one budget, there would be less work. There would be possibilities of sharing staff.

What can we do better for communities? We could have meaningful local control. What we would have after consolidation is how it is done in 49 other states. It is not a question of whether it can work. The question is if it can work for us. When she was consulting in California, every school had a local advisory committee that had a lot of input and decided on procedures. They had a lot of local control about delivery.

What areas have we consolidated currently or in progress? Transportation, the teacher agreement, the support staff agreement for unionized members, special education teachers, curriculum, common professional development, accounting, and some technology.

E. Beatty distributed copies of the draft study committee charge S. Sanborn developed. He said he wrote it for an accelerated process, but that can change very quickly. This is a possible charge to look at and think about. We can change it as the committee moves.

P. Ingvoldstad asked, don't all town meeting agendas get printed in mid January? Doesn't that determine our timeline? S. Sanborn said we would have to get approval from the State Board of Education at its January 19 meeting if we wanted a vote on town meeting day. Then we would have to get ready for town meeting very quickly. The warnings are very different for voting this. The petitions are very challenging. If we take the accelerated route towns would vote not just on whether to consolidate but also on the members of the school board for the new union district. That will be confusing for people. Turnaround time for this committee will be very strained. W. Sander asked if anyone has checked the legality of electing people to something that hasn't been created yet. S. Sanborn said yes; it is legal.

B. Penberthy asked if we would be electing a backup board in case things stayed the same. S. Sanborn said if we took the accelerated route and voted on town meeting day it would still be a year and a half until the new board would take over. On that same day voters would also be voting for members of existing local boards which will have to continue through June 30, 2017 while the new board puts together policies and negotiates with the union in order to develop a whole new district.

T. Sullivan asked, what if we bring a consolidation recommendation to towns and 5 of the 6 say yes and the other says no? S. Sanford said it depends on how we write the articles of agreement. The language can say a particular school district is either necessary or advisable for consolidation. In the articles of agreement for a merger involving Essex Junction and Essex, both were deemed to be necessary. If either voted no there would be no consolidation. Westford was determined to be advisable. If they voted no and the

others voted yes, the others would consolidate and then Westford would be reassigned by the Secretary of Education. When Mount Mansfield voted on a merger the articles of agreement said all the districts were advisable. If a majority of districts voted yes, those would form a modified union and those who voted no would stay as independent school districts. One thing that may happen at the end of 2 years is that the Secretary of Education may tell a district that it has to be part of a unified union even if it doesn't want to.

T. Sullivan asked how it impacts the ability of a community to say no to consolidation if their students are already going to Lamoille Union. S. Sanford said he has asked for a legal decision on that. There is one town in Addison-Rutland that has asked if they will continue to be part of the union high school if they vote no.

J. Bickford asked, what if Hyde Park voted no and others voted yes? The union high school is in Hyde Park.

D. Whitcomb said he doesn't think we should go for an accelerated merger. We need to have meetings with voters. We might as well forget about that option. We have budgets coming up to deal with. There is no way we will get this to town meeting this year. We should reject the carrot and spend some time on this.

P. Ingvaldstad said he wants us to decide at this meeting or the next which way to go. He would like to work back from town meeting day and look at the work we would have to do to get ready to have that vote, then decide as a group if it is realistic or not.

M. Mitchell said S. Sanford had mentioned renegotiating with the unions. We just finished up negotiations. How will that work? S. Sanford said if we consolidated into a single district then the new board would open negotiations with the teachers' association and try to create a new single contract. W. Sander said we already have a single contract. P. Ingvaldstad said we have done most of the things on the list already as an SU. B. Penberthy said there are different scales of pay among elementary teachers at different schools now. She imagines that under consolidation teachers would all get the same pay. P. Ingvaldstad said we will explore that. Costs would also be shared over all the SU. E. Beatty said she is pretty sure the current contracts end that year, so we would be negotiating again then anyway. W. Sander said there are still some carveouts for certain districts in the contract, but we are largely there with having a single contract. S. Sanford said by law the new board has to negotiate with teachers in its first year. If a contract isn't settled by the time the district becomes operational, then existing contracts would continue until there was a settled contract.

S. Sanborn said he would like to talk about whether any consolidation will be accelerated or some other type. That would change the charge considerably. He thinks maybe that is important to discuss before this committee decides on the actual charge. The draft charge he created is an example of what the charge could be. He also created a tentative work plan building back from March 2 to tonight.

P. Ingvoldstad asked S. Sanborn what he is thinking of for the second meeting of this committee. S. Sanborn said he is thinking of talking about where we are right now with curriculum, instruction and assessment, student services, and information technology and what might improve or change in those areas with consolidation.

P. Ingvoldstad asked if there are proposals about how we should go forward. T. Sullivan said D. Whitcomb has made it clear he has a particular perspective. Maybe there should be a straw poll of members about the appropriate tack. P. Ingvoldstad said he would suggest that at the second meeting we list all the thoughts we are coming up with. First he wants to know what the hurdles are, then the advantages. B. Penberthy suggested adding what our concerns are. P. Ingvoldstad said he thinks that is included in the first thing he mentioned. He wants to bring the community into the discussion right away. He thinks we should do a road show to every community, including Belvidere separate from Waterville. Possibly we could set it up as a debate. We should get everyone's input so we can learn from the communities what their concerns are and what they think the advantages are.

L. Miller said many who work at our schools are taxpayers and live in our communities. She is a special educator and she found out her check was coming from her SU and if she hadn't been on a school board here she wouldn't have known why that was. Faculty and staff will see consolidation as one more thing shoved down their throats. All taxpayers have a vested interest but the people who are personally having their lives changed really should know what the process is. The more community members involved, the better. And staff are part of our community, said P. Ingvoldstad.

R. Walters asked if P. Ingvoldstad is proposing we would go out to townspeople before or after we hear presentations on what administrators see as advantages and hurdles of consolidation. P. Ingvoldstad said he would say probably after. He thinks it would be great if staff show up and are part of our discussion.

D. Whitcomb said he thinks every school board should have on its agenda from now on a report from our committee. Then if members of the public want to come in to those meetings they can get in on the debate. After about the third meeting we have to work with the community.

W. Sander said we should also invite all faculty and staff to a meeting. He has often found that decisions made without consulting those who will implement them can be disastrous.

L. Miller said the experts on curriculum, instruction and assessment are the teachers. Cambridge would say no to consolidation if it meant giving up its gifted and talented program. Everyone needs to know what they would be giving up and gaining.

W. Sander said the hope is that everyone will be raised to a greater level of opportunity. He has heard the concern about the gifted and talented program. Maybe under consolidation everyone will have that, or maybe no one will. He would ask that principals

be directed to tell their staff when meetings are occurring. B. Penberthy said she doesn't necessarily think it is the principals' responsibility. It is ours. She will ask her principal if she can talk to staff in a staff meeting. L. Miller said boards could also put discussion of this committee's work on their agendas as D. Whitcomb suggested.

M. Mitchell said we need to know what our end product has to look like so we can know whether we can get there in time for the accelerated option. S. Sanford gave the URL of a page that shows Mount Mansfield's and Essex's articles of agreement (<https://redstudy.wordpress.com>). He encourages people to look at them. E. Beatty said the URL can be emailed out.

B. Penberthy asked what E. Beatty thinks about members of this committee who don't already have them getting LNSU email addresses. Our emails are considered public documents, so it could be a problem to mingle them with personal emails. E. Beatty said she doesn't see why that couldn't happen.

P. Ingvaldstad said he wants to find out about the cost to go through this process. One thing he is concerned about is public communication. We don't have a way to post on Front Porch Forum across the whole SU. That would cost us \$60 per town. That is an example of a budget issue. E. Beatty said as soon as the boards voted to form a study committee she filled out the application for a \$20K grant that would fund the consultant and legal services. P. Ingvaldstad asked if the grant can pay for advertising. S. Sanford said it can pay for advertising that we are having meetings, etc., but not to try to influence people. L. Miller asked, if we have food at every meeting, where is the money to pay for that coming from? E. Beatty said not from the grant. It comes out of the SU budget.

S. Sanborn distributed a sheet outlining 4 phases of community engagement to discuss in the future.

MOTION: T. Sullivan moved to hire Steve Sanborn as a consultant, W. Sander seconded and the motion was passed.

5. ***Representation of Wolcott on the Study Committee***

E. Beatty said she reached out to the superintendent of Orleans SW and the Wolcott board and asked AoE about what is possible. She met with one of the Wolcott board members and invited her to the LUSD board meeting last night and tonight's committee meeting. E. Beatty updated her about where we are and she updated E. Beatty on what the Wolcott board is thinking. E. Beatty asked her if she would be interested in joining the study committee or seeing what it does. If we did an accelerated merger without Wolcott we could later merge with Wolcott. It is not all or nothing now.

L. Miller said she doesn't understand what Wolcott has to do with us. E. Beatty explained that they don't have a middle school or high school. They send 30 students to our high school. P. Ingvaldstad said 3 years ago the high school board voted to run a bus to Wolcott because of the money tuitioned students can bring in. Fourteen thousand dollars times 30 is a chunk of change. In a time when student numbers are going down we are staying fairly even and the tuitioned students are part of the reason. If Wolcott

decided to be part of this district he thinks it would be pretty cool. Hyde Park and Wolcott are in the same legislative district.

E. Beatty said Wolcott has choice. They send 30 students here and similar numbers to Lamoille South and Orleans SW. The Wolcott board loves school choice. The board is not likely to jump at joining us, but they don't know if their community loves choice enough to go with the stick rather than the carrot.

K. McPherson asked, they will have to pick one consolidated district to go with, right? E. Beatty said no, they don't. The law protects choice. If a district has choice it doesn't have to give it up. That causes a little problem for Orleans SW, because for them to get in on the accelerated option Wolcott has to agree to give up choice. If they had to give up choice, she doesn't know that they would go with us. She doesn't think they are ready to join this committee, though she extended that as a possibility. The board member she spoke with said she would bring it back to her board.

P. Ingvaldstad asked if the committee is okay with exploring having a Wolcott member.

T. Sullivan said he has reservations. We already have 6 communities represented. If we go out to Wolcott and add another layer of complexity he is not sure that benefits the conversation.

MOTION: B. Penberthy moved to approve Wolcott joining the study committee if they choose to, seconded by R. Walters.

R. Walters said we were required by statute to appoint members to this committee based on a proportional model. In what capacity could they come in? S. Sanford said they can have a legal member of this committee. The guidelines on proportionality would be the same as those for each of our districts. E. Beatty asked, if they did join us and then we went out to vote and our 6 towns voted yes but theirs voted no, where would we be? S. Sanborn said we would say in the articles of agreement that they were advisable, not necessary, so if they voted no there would be no change. E. Beatty asked if we could do the accelerated merger if they voted no. S. Sanborn said he has to check on that. P. Ingvaldstad said we won't go forward with including them if it turns out everyone involved in the study committee has to vote yes for the accelerated option.

L. Miller asked if there is a maximum number that can be on the committee. B. Penberthy said no; we decide.

M. Mitchell asked what the number of people on the new union board would be. S. Sanborn said we could have up to 18 members on the board.

W. Sander said a complication of including Wolcott with proportional representation is that only their high school students would be counted. Several other people said no; their elementary school would be part of our district.

K. McPherson asked if we can invite them to attend as observers until we have made decisions about the timeline. **B. Penberthy and R. Walters withdrew their motion.** B. Penberthy said instead she would suggest giving them a friendly invitation to join us at our meetings. She suggested that E. Beatty call them and update them on this meeting and invite a member of their board. E. Beatty said she can do that.

6. ***Timeline, Meeting Locations, Number of Meetings and Meeting Times / Communications, Community Engagement***

P. Ingvaldstad asked if it would be okay with everyone if he, P. Laflamme, S. Sanborn, and E. Beatty stayed after this meeting and put together an agenda for next time. There were no objections.

L. Miller asked about setting dates for the 5th and 6th meetings. E. Beatty went through the suggested meeting dates: September 29, October 13, October 27, November 10, November 30, and December 8.

P. Ingvaldstad asked if people are willing to meet on a weekly basis if we try to go for a March vote. When we do the road show he doesn't think all committee members have to be there, but he thinks there should be good representation from the committee. D. Whitcomb asked, don't we have to have a quorum at any meeting we go out to? We also have to have someone to take minutes. S. Sanborn said he doesn't think a quorum is needed if there will be no action taken. He will check.

MOTION: J. Bickford moved to wait until the end of the third meeting on October 13 to vote on whether to pursue an accelerated timeline and then decide on a meeting schedule, seconded by W. Sander. E. Beatty said there was some conversation about having the public forums before making a decision. Is he thinking we would have forums before that meeting? **J. Bickford amended his motion to say that at the end of the third meeting on October 13 the board would determine as a group whether to ask the communities if they want to move forward on an accelerated timeline.** P.

Ingvaldstad suggested that the committee discuss at the end of meetings 2 and 3 whether we are ready to make that decision. S. Sanborn said in 2 other groups he is working with, he initiated a check-in as part of each meeting. People go around the table and each say what they are thinking.

R. Walters asked at what point in the discussion we will get informed about what the different options are for models. S. Sanborn said any time the board would like the information he can give a presentation on the models that meet state guidelines. With the accelerated option there is only one model. P. Ingvaldstad asked, don't we want to know that really early, like at the next meeting?

M. Mitchell asked if the people giving presentations can talk about how curriculum, finances, etc. would look not just for a K-12 system but also for K-6 and 7-12 systems. E. Beatty said one way to look at it is that we are already consolidated for grades 7-12. The biggest change would be for grades K-6 because now we have 5 schools. But there might be models other than the one D. Whitcomb suggested.

K. McPherson suggested we ask S. Sanborn to come up with a set of decision criteria we could use to include or exclude different models. There should be fairly simple indicators we could use to decide.

7. ***Adjourn***

D. Whitcomb moved and B. Penberthy seconded to adjourn at 8:16 and the motion was passed.

Minutes submitted by Donna Griffiths

UNAPPROVED