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Regional School District 13
Utilization Study Committee
October 29, 2015

Committee members present: Kerrie Flanagan, Victor Friedrich, Merrill Adams, Norm Hicks
BOE Members present: Jeremy Renninghoff, Francis Willett
Staff Members present: Dr. Veronesi, Mr. Melnik

The meeting was called to order at 6:04pm.

Public Comment: None.

BOE Member comment: None.

On a motion by Mr. Hicks, second Dr. Friedrich, the agenda was unanimously approved.

The minutes to the meeting of September 22, 2015 were discussed. As there was no quorum present at that meeting the minutes were just reviewed. No changes were made.

Information Session Follow-up: Notes from the meeting were distributed. Mrs. Flanagan asked members to review them to identify any issues that are not already being addressed.

Responding to questions from the public: Mrs. Flanagan feels the committee and the board need to have a consistent response and need to keep track of the questions. If a board member feels comfortable answering a question they should; if not, emails and questions should be sent to her or Dr. Veronesi.

Mrs. Flanagan thanked the members of the committee for all their hard work. The facts were well presented and well received.

Mr. Hicks also thanked Mrs. Flanagan for the many hours she has put into the committee and in preparing for the presentation.

Revised Enrollment: A revised report from Milone & MacBroom, based on this year's actual enrollment figures, was distributed. The report shows a slight uptick at the elementary level from the previous projections, but still an overall decline. By the year 2021/22 the projected total enrollment is 1374 students districtwide.

Dr. Veronesi feels it is important to update the enrollment projections frequently throughout the project.

Mrs. Flanagan agreed and said they would recommend including it during the next budget cycle. Mrs. Flanagan also mentioned the CABE State Data Team Project that shows enrollments town by town. She said they project an even greater enrollment decline for our district, 35%; we have been measuring a 30% decline.

Mr. Willett asked for the CABE report to be sent to him electronically.

Dr. Veronesi recommended that committee members visit other renovated schools to see what education spaces look like today.

Review Critical Path Approach: Mrs. Flanagan shared a handout of her thoughts on how the committee should proceed. She suggests establishing three sub-committees to move forward with different phases of the work. The first committee will be the existing committee that will continue work on the utilization plan for the entire district. The on-going project work of this committee is substantial and is spelled out in the handout. The second sub-committee will focus solely on the disposition of Korn School and will also include town officials and community members. The third committee will

focus on the closing and transition of Korn School. This committee will primarily be managed by Dr. Veronesi and district staff.

Mrs. Flanagan pointed out that if the committee is serious about reducing the number of schools to four by the year 2020/21, a request for proposals from architects would have to be ready this December in order to meet the State of CT grant timeline.

Mrs. Flanagan feels that a final decision about the disposition of Korn School needs to be made within a year. The district cannot carry the school into another budget cycle. She suggested that the next meeting of the Utilization Committee be with town officials to start the process of forming the sub-committee regarding the disposition of Korn School.

Mrs. Flanagan said the immediate capital needs at all of the schools need to be reviewed. A decision will need to be made about how much to invest in the schools that will remain and those that may close.

Mr. Melnik said a Building Committee will also need to be appointed. Members of the public from each community must sit on this committee. He also suggested that enough room be left in the schedule in case a referendum fails and the project budget needs to be reduced.

Mrs. Flanagan feels the board and the district need more administrative help for this committee. This is a complex critical path and it will involve significant work.

Mr. Willett suggested asking some of the parents who are concerned about the transition to sit on the transition committee when key questions are being answered.

Dr. Veronesi said weekly meetings of the core transition team are going to take place. A parent should be on the committee. Updates will also be sent to parents monthly.

Mrs. Flanagan said she is going to focus her agendas on outcomes. At the next meeting the committee will focus on the critical path and talk further about the idea of administrative support for the committee.

Dr. Friedrich suggested inviting the 1st Selectman and a representative of each town finance board to the next meeting. They can then suggest other members of the town that they want to sit on the sub-committee to discuss the future of Korn School.

Mr. Willett said he would like to represent the Board of Education on this committee.

A tentative date for this meeting with town officials was scheduled for Thursday, December 3rd at 4pm. Approximately 1 hour will be spent with the officials and then the committee will continue with the rest of the agenda once they leave.

Public Comment: None.

BOE Member comment: None.

On a motion by Mr. Hicks, second Mrs. Adams, the committee unanimously approved to adjourn at 7:29pm.