

# SCHOOL TAX RATE STABILIZATION AND QUALITY EDUCATION COMMITTEE MINUTES

April 16, 2018

Selectmen Present: Jim Trudell, Steve Moscicki, Bruce Beane, Donna Clark-AA

Committee Candidates Present: Tim Carignan, Beth Carignan, Sheila Post-Czarnocki, Diana McGrath, Meredith Findley, Thomas Smith, Nancy Simano, Reegan Hubbard, Kristina Daniels, Lori Williams, Raymond Doubleday, Craig Simpson, Cathy Colby, Michael Colby and Gwen Selleck.

The meeting came to order at 7:00 pm.

The Selectmen held an organizational meeting for the School Tax Rate Stabilization and Quality Education Committee that is being created in accordance with the following amended warrant article that was passed at the 2018 Town Meeting:

To see if the Town will vote to endorse the appointment by the Board of Selectmen of a committee for the purpose of investigating and evaluating ways to stabilize school taxes related to the Lisbon Regional School District and to instruct the committee to prepare a report of their findings for presentation at a meeting to be announced and posted. At least 50% of the membership shall be parents of current Lisbon Regional School District students.

This meeting was noticed as required and everyone who signed up as a candidate for the Committee received a reminder a few days prior to the meeting. Rather than selecting just a few candidates to serve on the Committee, the Selectmen chose to allow all of them to be members, believing that having more people involved means more ideas will be brought to the table for discussion. The members were sworn in and each read and signed a "General Guide to the Right to Know Law" document which outlines the meeting requirements and member responsibilities for public bodies. A few questions on the topic were asked and answered. It was also pointed out that members must attend as many meetings as possible as a quorum (majority) is required in order to hold a meeting. Jim Trudell will serve as the Selectman's representative on the Committee as he is also a school board member. The group selected Tom Smith as Chairman and Ray Doubleday as Vice Chairman. Since this is a Selectmen-appointed committee, Administrative Assistant Donna Clark will take minutes for the meetings whenever possible.

Packets containing the following information from the SAU were given to each member for review and discussion:

- FY 2019 Adequate Education Aid - How the Cost of an Opportunity for an Adequate Education is Determined
- List of classes offered at LRS and the number of students enrolled in each
- Adequacy aid amounts for Lisbon and Lyman
- Cost per student for Lisbon and Lyman
- FY 2019 Proposed Athletic Budget

The following is a summary of the discussions that took place.

How can we improve education and maintain a reasonable tax rate?

- Perhaps some long distance learning as well as conventional training
- Sharing specialty instructors with other schools
- Revisiting the school's cost sharing formula - since 1999 based on 80% average daily attendance and 20% equalized valuation of the towns
- Can the group/members reach out to outside sources for input? Yes
- Maybe encourage Landaff and Bath to join the regional

Major issues -

- Lyman only has two school board members out of nine
- Lyman shares the cost of the Tri-Town transfer station based on % of population - could that be part of the cost sharing formula
- Improve the quality of education in areas that are lacking
- Funnel more money into academics
- The physical school needs repairs and not a lot of money has been put away for those expenses so have to borrow (i.e. \$350,000 roof & bleacher bond this year)
- Revenue from tuition students is not reliable
- Losing some state financial aid every year

Other comments –

- The committee is made up of a diverse group of residents but members need to leave personal agendas aside and work towards the common goal of fiscally responsible school system with quality education.
- Quality education requires personal involvement at home by the parents as well as at school.
- Clarify the mandate. Is the Committee looking at just at LRS or other options? Stay with Lisbon Regional (not withdrawal) but look at other options, compare our situation to other similar schools. First try to fix things at Lisbon but any ideas are welcome. Keep an open mind when looking for solutions.
- Grant writing is essential, especially for facilities money. Trudell thinks there is a grant writer at the SAU.
- The Lisbon Regional School Board meets the 2nd Wed of the month at 6:00 pm.
- Property taxes are pricing people out of both Lisbon and Lyman, now and in the future.
- What is the status of NH Senate Bill 193 - Education Savings Accounts/Vouchers for private schools?
- Read over information provided and come back with ideas for next meeting.

The Selectmen thanked everyone for participating and adjourned the meeting at 8:30 pm. The next meeting of the School Tax Rate Stabilization and Quality Education Committee will be held on April 30, 2018 at 7:00 pm at the Lyman Town Hall.