

SCHOOL TAX RATE STABILIZATION AND QUALITY EDUCATION COMMITTEE MINUTES

May 21, 2018

Members Present: Thomas Smith, Diana McGrath, Nancy Simano, Kristina Daniels, Raymond Doubleday, Craig Simpson, Cathy Colby, Michael Colby, Beth Carignan, Jim Trudell-Selectman

Others Present: Donna Clark-AA

Chairman Thomas Smith call the meeting to order at 7:06 pm.

It was noted that there were barely enough members present to hold the meeting. Regular attendance is critical to the success of this large committee.

A member not present at the last meeting introduced herself and briefly explained why she wanted to be on the Committee. She thinks LRS is a good school but is concerned about the tax rate and thinks the budget could be improved. Due to being a military family, her children attended many different schools.

The minutes of the April 30, 2018 meeting were reviewed and approved. Chairman Thomas Smith signed the minutes on behalf of the Committee.

As discussed at the last meeting, various Committee members reached out to local schools and regionals to gather information on tuition, cost sharing formulas, numbers of students and programs offered.

- Craig Simpson gave a report on White Mountain Regional School which includes the towns of Carroll, Dalton, Lancaster, Whitefield and Jefferson and totals about 1,100 students. Their formula is based on 60% ADM (average daily membership) and 40% valuation and their 2016-2017 budget was \$20 million.
- Kristina Daniels gave a report on Lafayette Regional School which includes the towns of Easton, Franconia and Sugar Hill. Per Kris Franklin at SAU #35, none of those students are eligible for adequacy aid. Tuition rates run from \$30,000 to \$42,600 per student.
- Ray Doubleday (and Melanie Millette) reported on Haverhill Cooperative School District which includes students from Piermont, Pike, Benton and Bath. Tuition rates are \$18,000 to \$22,000 per student.
- Craig Simpson will work with Tim Carignan to pull together the numbers presented this evening and format them into a spreadsheet. Donna Clark will provide them with information regarding town valuations and tax rates.

Cathy Colby reported on the online classes offered at LRS. Four different companies are utilized in the Distance Learning Program. Online courses are chosen by the student, then approved by the high school guidance counselor.

- Virtual High School courses - \$450 each

- OdysseyWare - free and for high school credit only
- Running Start - earns college credit and high school credit (dual)
- Better than Advanced Placement classes
- Virtual Learning Academy Charter School
- Only juniors and seniors are eligible to take online classes
- E-Start online classes are for college credit - \$150 paid for by the family - community college classes
- Independent Study Class Block - students can take up to two classes to stay busy
- Students may leave LRS with up to 40 college credits
- LRS students have four 1-1/2 hour blocks scheduled per day and take 4 classes per semester. Littleton has A and B days so students take same classes all year, just on alternate days.

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

- Jim Trudell mentioned he spoke with another school board member who acknowledged the current formula is totally unfair.
- Paul Williams writes federal entitlement grants only. LRS does not actively look for grants. Many other schools received a lot of money from the last grant round.
- General Fund only had \$100,000 at Annual Meeting.
- Kristina Daniels has experience with planning events as fund raisers and would be willing to assist if this is something the town/school wants to pursue.
- Kristina will work on a student survey. Teachers should also be asked what they are lacking.
- Kids are not participating in extracurricular activities as much as they used to. Always online and seem to have shorter attention spans.

Jim Trudell thinks the Committee needs to focus on two or three things to present to the Lisbon Regional School Board. Lyman needs to have solid recommendations, not just say it's not fair. These are at the top of the list and should be worked on.

- Formula - What is fair to everyone number-wise? What could the formula look like?
- Grants - The lack of a person at the school or the SAU skilled in grant-writing means we are leaving money on the table every time there is a missed opportunity to apply for funding.
- Push for putting money away annually in Capital Reserve Funds (CRFs) for future expenses.
- Try to get Landaff to join the regional as opposed to just tuitioning students.
- Ask for a third School Board member for Lyman. It is hard to find even two residents to run for the School Board positions but the way to wield power is by having a presence and not backing down.

The Chairman thanked everyone for participating and the meeting was adjourned at 9:00pm

The next meeting of the School Tax Rate Stabilization and Quality Education Committee will be held on June 18, 2018 at 7:00 pm at the Lyman Town Hall.

Approved:

Chairman

Date

Signed on behalf of the Committee