

***Durham, Freeport, & Pownal
Reorganization Planning Committee
Meeting Minutes
June 11, 2008
Freeport High School~Freeport***

Members Present: Fred Palmer, Paul Schumann, Allan Purinton, Jennifer Kaplan, Rhonda O’Shea, Laurie Poissonnier, Sherry Dietrich, Tim Giddinge, Rick White, Cliff Ruprecht, John Gleason, Nelson Larkins

Advisors Present: Elaine Tomaszewski, Superintendent of Schools, Freeport; Shannon Welsh, Superintendent of Schools, Durham; Diane Boucher, Business Manager, Freeport/Pownal

Also Present: Bob Kautz, Facilitator; Cathy Messmer, Business Manager, Durham; and 2 members of the public

Not Present: Amber Snell, Joe Feeney, Superintendent/Principal, Pownal, Wesley Bennett

- The meeting convened at 7:08 pm.
- Bob stated that 2 Reorganization Plans within the State had been voted on the previous evening from other communities. He had a handout for the members to review with the voting amounts. It was stated that one Plan had passed and one did not.
- The previous meeting minutes were reviewed and accepted.
- There were no questions asked from the previous meeting.
- There were no public comments or questions.
- The RPC continued the discussion on AOS and how to proceed with the RPC. A question was asked regarding the referendum procedure regarding charter communities and whether or not the referendum still went to a public hearing or the council just decides. It was explained that with an RSU the communities would be a single entity which would have a “public meeting” for the referendum process. In an AOS, as had been discussed in previous meetings, the communities and their town governing body would pass the budget for elementary/middle schools and the high school would be a public referendum. It was stated the referendum process is not explained clearly. The RPC member with the question stated they would continue to research the information themselves.
- Bob stated the focus of the next item of the agenda would be members discussing whether they were in favor of a RSU structure or AOS. He explained this would be a round table discussion. Some members were under the impression that there was to be additional discussion on Jen’s proposal of an AOS. It was stated some believed this type of proposal would not be passed. It was stated some would like to see some kind of compromise between the two ideas. Some were not sure what plan they could favor at this point. It was explained that there are only two routes for the RPC to go. Once

the route was decided and agreed upon then the issues can be addressed. It was stated that the RPC needed to continue proceeding with the RSU Plan that has been worked long and hard on from the beginning. Besides some agreement on some of the particulars the RPC is very close with the concepts. It was stated that the RPC re-hashes items over and over. It is believed the group needed to make decisions on the Plan and allow the voters to make the decision. It was stated the committee members are not here voluntarily that it was because of the state law on reorganization. It was believed the group needed to make a decision if they can make compromises and get the plan voted on. There was a statement that all towns can still keep their community identity with elementary/middle schools with the option of the RSU allowing local school advisory boards. Some members felt having local school boards would make the RSU much more complicated to the whole process. It is believed the RSU needs to have a new school system with a combined vision. It was stated that the question before the RPC is which road they decide to walk down, not the exact details. A member stated the RSU has a practical chance of allowing voters to vote on a Plan. There was concern that an AOS will not have enough time to be completed and presented to the community. It was agreed the issue of local identity is important to all communities. It was stated that cost sharing may not be much different in an AOS Plan and that local control may need to be discussed again but the decisions that needed to be made with the RSU Plan should not take long.

- Bob asked if anyone in favor of an AOS had anything to discuss. No one came forward in favor of an AOS.
- There was general discussion opened up. There were some members who thought at this meeting the group would be continuing the discussion of local control. It was asked if the tone had changed from the end of the meeting last week. It was asked how important is the local control piece in the communities? It was stated that members of Pownal feel they are giving up local control but not everyone understood what the beginning of the question was. It was stated that some believe knowing they are from a small community giving up local control is necessary. The question was asked differently. It was asked if there is a sense that the RPC can accomplish the discussion of local control within the RSU Plan. It was stated that the RPC could compromise about local control and could be done within a RSU. It was suggested that some would like to have it written into the RSU Plan that local control could be reviewed within a 3 year period. It was stated that within that timeframe the economy will not be better within the state and education funds will be cut and this could pit towns against each other. It was believed that the language could be “beefed up” in the RSU plan for local control. It was stated local control needed to be revisited as it makes others sensitized to the smaller communities. It was asked if local control was being decided financially or philosophically. Some members have issues with local control being financial and it could be unworkable. Members speaking were not suggesting financially and local school committees would be advisory with the discretion of the RSU board. It was stated it does not hurt the cause

of the RSU if there are local advisory committees. It gives the sense of independence for communities but does not detract from the unified mission of the RSU. Durham contingents did look at local control financially. It was stated the school committee in Durham does not micromanage the decisions of running the school it leaves the majority of decisions to the administration. The concern for Durham with local control would be tax dollars. They would like to lessen the impact of being a smaller town. It was stated that individuality in the education seems to be a hot topic. It was said that even with a set curriculum for all three communities it would not change the schools and who are in them. They would still have some of the same goals that the other communities have. It was stated that students not having a consistent high school to attend creates a divide as well. Achieving educational excellence involves creating a single vision for a common goal. It was said the RSU plan leads in that direction and there is still an opportunity in the RSU to make the schools independent. It was stated the biggest piece to see with the voters will be how much it will cost. They can not feel the combined vision. It was asked how budgets work in a RSU. It was explained that within each community each school works on budget and presents to the RSU. The Board rates its highest priorities. Once the Board of Directors finalizes the budget it then goes to public meeting for all three towns combined. It will then get voted on in a referendum which must be passed by a majority of people voting. Bob asked the committee if they were ready to make decision on whether to pursue a RSU or AOS. Laurie motioned to move forward with the RSU and Allen second. It was stated that discussions would still happen regarding which way the RSU decided to proceed. The consensus of the committee was to stay with the RSU plan.

- It was stated that the committee should keep in mind the topics within the Plan that needed to be discussed or reconsidered. It was suggested the plan was reviewed in its entirety. There was a question on whether or not the committee had voted on Scenario 2 to be included in the plan. It was stated this was correct but the committee had not taken a vote on the current plan. Bob explained that local school committees were addressed in LD2323; which would possibly change what was currently in the template. In the law the section of local school committees had been repealed and replaced. The new law now states RSUs may authorize the formation of local school committees established in accordance with chapter 111 which would require those members to be elected as the members of the RSU Board are. It was stated the current plan left it up to RSU Board to create and appoint the local school committee. It was asked if the committee needed to change anything in the current language within the plan. It was suggested that Advisory Committees could still be appointed. It was stated using local school committees as stated in law could create conflict. Some members would lean more towards advisory committees. It was asked if there was an advantage to local school committees being elected. It was said it would matter in Freeport but the other towns would have a difficult time have members run. It was suggested it may be better with an advisory capacity and will still voice some local

control. It was stated there may be no validity in the smaller towns as the RSU Board would have the responsibilities for the school communities. It was suggested that the RPC drop the reference to school committees within the plan. It was asked how the name of the school system would change. It was explained the name would be created by the RPC. It was asked when the committee would reserve time to discuss the plan and whether or not members can support it and where this would be placed in the agenda. It was explained that once the Plan was completed the RPC could discuss the Plan and vote on its submittal. It was stated that areas of concern could be raised during the review of the Plan if necessary.

- Shannon reviewed the Plan and summarized the changes which were noted in bold. The first section of the Plan is where the name of the RSU would be included. It was stated one of the questions is name and asked members to note this as an issue to discuss. It was explained the educational information from the Education Subcommittee was moved to the front of the Plan. It was explained that during the legal review there was language from attorneys that had been added.
- Section 2 was reviewed and had language added by the attorneys.
- Section 3 was reviewed and it was suggested that the words “as defined in the law” with the weighted voting method.
- Section 4 was reviewed and it was requested the words “community school” be deleted. The heading also would have the word “local school” deleted and changed to “advisory”.
- Section 5 was changed by the attorneys to make a positive statement. Personal properties: There was also added wording by attorneys for information regarding Durham’s personal property and the decisions made between Lisbon and Durham which would authorize the Supt. and Chairs to make the decisions of the personal property. It was stated under Section B, the word “tangible” be deleted.
- Section 6 was reviewed regarding cost sharing and school indebtedness. It was stated the structure of language was changed so sentences would clarify information. There was some discussion of how things would change and the Finance Subcommittee would review this section carefully and make the necessary changes. It was suggested that Durham Elementary School in Section B should state “local share”. There was some discussion of how the middle school bond can be assumed and again suggested the Finance Subcommittee review this section and make the necessary adjustments.
- Section 7 was reviewed and it was explained the school units are keeping the lists and dates updated. The exhibits will be given to the RPC to review closer to voting on the Plan. It was explained the bus contracts would stay until the operation date of RSU and then the RSU can make the decisions on the renewal of contracts.
- Section 8 was reviewed and no changes were made. It was asked when the RSU is in operation if the schools that have accounts for specific awards can still be used as specified within the local community. It was explained the funds that are specified and carry a balance still must be used for the specific

reason. It was explained that M.S.A.D. #62's activity list is not complete and needs to be requested from Joe Feeney. It was explained that all activity funds will be updated by the audit if it is completed before the referendum vote. It was stated that by July 2009 M.S.A.D. #62's audit would not be completed and it was asked who would take custody of the funds. It was explained the explanation is listed in 8A and the RSU would become the custodian and will take over on behalf of SAU. The RSU may take action to satisfy any financial obligations. Summer salaries were discussed and it was stated that Durham and Freeport have money budgeted to satisfy their obligations for summer salaries. Pownal has carryover funds to meet their summer salary obligation. There was more discussion on awards and how they would be considered within the second year of the operational date. It was explained as long as there were funds for the award they would have to be spent to support that. If no funds exist the RSU must decide to whether to continue the award. There was some discussion about the common vision and communities will still designate awards or scholarships for the students in their local community.

- Section 9 was reviewed and it was explained attorney language was added. It was asked what local legislative body would be making the decisions as the fiscal agent. It was explained that in Freeport it would be town council but the Plan states the Freeport School Committee would make any decisions with the funds prior to the start of the RSU.
- Section 10 was reviewed.
- Section 11 was reviewed.
- Section 12 was reviewed. It was explained there was language added that the analysis was completed.
- Section 13 was reviewed. It was stated that 13A was deleted was it was repeated from Section 12. It was stated that 13A should be kept.
- 13b was reviewed regarding cost sharing. The Finance Subcommittee will have new language and will review and submit changes.
- 13c was taken directly from the law.
- 13d was reviewed and it was explained the language was changed to reflect the contracts that would be in place. The exceptions are specified within the law. The words "as described in #2 school choice below" were added in place of "students with some exceptions". The word "offer" was added within #2. It was remarked the numbering was confusing and needs to be reviewed.
- 13e was reviewed. There was added language for date submitted and it was stated that none of the schools have any claims outstanding at this time
- 13f was reviewed and contained legal clarification.
- 13g was reviewed.
- 13h was moved to the front of the Plan
- 13h was now Pownal Land Language that needed to be added from the attorneys. Joe Feeney had this information.
- 13i was reviewed was added and reviewed. It was requested that E. be added with the words "other relevant factors".

- Section 14 was reviewed and it was explained the language was changed by Cliff's recommendations. The last phrase in the first paragraph was deleted. There was some discussion regarding circulation of language. There was question of the exception being deleted. The Finance Subcommittee would review Section 14.
- Bob asked the committee if there were topics they wanted to discuss before the close of the meeting. It was asked where the facility study was in its process. There was some discussion on instructional area and the preliminary piece of information is the school should be able to support 550 students. It was asked if the RPC wished to address concerns. The suggestion was made that the RPC digest the information set in front of them and then email Bob their suggestions of what should be discussed at the next meeting. It was stated the facilities discussion should include the person performing the study to answer questions. It was suggested there could be a conference call. It was explained the report was to be completed by the following Tuesday or Wednesday. The RPC would like time to review the report before the meeting. It was suggested the RPC meet on June 25th and allow the Finance Subcommittee to meet and time for the RPC to review the Facilities study and then tentatively schedule a meeting on July 2nd. After much discussion it was decided the Finance Subcommittee would submit their revisions through the RPC Secretary. It was proposed that acceptance from the RPC be via email. However, it was decided that all the work could not be completed with just a meeting on June 25. Therefore, the RPC would meet on June 18th in Pownal to discuss the Plan, the Finance Subcommittees recommendations of changes and any concerns that needed to be addressed or revisited. It was agreed that members would email Bob with any areas of concern or changes that they wished to have discussed and considered at the June 18 meeting. . The RPC would then meet on June 25th to discuss the Facility study, discuss members' level of support for the plan and prepare to vote on the submittal of the Plan.
- The meeting adjourned at 9:13pm

Respectfully submitted by S.Brewer 6.15.08