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Tri-board Sub-Committee Minutes  
Minutes for Meeting  
Friday, September 23, 2011  
11:00 AM

In Attendance: Paul Sylvia, Sue Sundermeyer, Richard Canfield, Bud Dunham, and Linell Grundman

The meeting began with introductions and a review of the mission of the committee. In simple terms communication is the key purpose. It is a place where ideas and issues that the three boards might need to be made aware of, or talk about, or work on, can surface, be aired and be communicated to the three respective boards. Being able to easily share issues of each parent group's last meeting would be of value, as noted by Sue. Paul added this is a place to identify stakeholders and develop a communication plan so everyone feels "in the boat" on important issues that cross into work of all three boards. He believes if you do that up front, most projects are made easier. The TBSC could help avoid potential problems as well as raise awareness where explanations of issues are concerned. It was also agreed that the group could bring important information back to their parent boards in a timely and consistent manor.

Bud and Dr. Canfield like the idea that their presence is not required on a regular basis. They would be available as a resource when needed. They can come to the committee with an issue or an idea and receive feedback.

Dr. Canfield and Bud talked about the challenges and possibility of software for accounting and statistical work being "compatible" between the municipal finance offices and the school district business office. Dr. Canfield mentioned his "Entry Plan," which uses a research-based model. He is part of a Superintendent Induction Program for the commonwealth, which provides networking and advise about the Mass. Educational system, laws that govern it, and funding. In June Dr. Canfield began gathering qualitative data by talking to town officials, school faculty, parents, community members, etc. relative to how they saw the school system. Dr. Canfield believes that there is a need to account for what the schools do in a fair and concise manner and to make the case for what they need in seeking community support.



2.

The idea of common software surfaced from several sources as Dr. Canfield talked to people. He, Bud, Doreen Guild and Michele Austin met several times to discuss it.

Some points have emerged in these discussions about common software. Just an accounting program does not fix problems. It does not provide all the help necessary in the school business office. The schools software is 30 years old. There are federal and state reports the schools are obligated to provide or they could potentially lose out on grants and funding. The current software needs to be updated to help with this. There are programs available that would make records tracking better. The school needs to move away from paper and have more electronic record tracking capabilities.

Bud said that if you can't find a 100% compatible system, perhaps a "batch" program would be helpful so physical re-entry of bills, which is labor intensive, could be eliminated. Moving toward a system and organization that would allow more checks and balances of operations and policy internal in the school central office would be helpful. Dr. Canfield commented that having the Human Resource Department, (which services the school department,) outside the schools is a first in his 40-year career. The next meeting about software will include Doreen Guild, Craig Mayen, Mike Toomey, and Ed Childs.

Dr. Canfield believes the community is looking for transparency and accountability. Finding better software may help accomplish this. Coupled with policy and process improvements it could also make the work more efficient. Compatible software and business improvements could be a good step. It would help let people know the schools are being open and honest about what they do. Bud brought up the fact that funding a unified system, once a recommendation was in place, would be an issue. It is costly.

The group discussed the budget work. Dr. Canfield would like to get started as early as possible. Both Bud and Dr. Canfield agree that the school department and the municipal departments have to be prepared for the budget realities. Dr. Canfield is very happy he has a strong working relationship with Bud. He welcomes questions from the Finance Committee. He is open to working together with the three policy and budget committees and the community.

3.

Sue and Dr. Canfield bring up and discuss briefly the "Program and Staff Use Report" This could be very useful to Finance Committee and the Board of Selectman. It will show what staff is being used and where. Dr. Canfield said interviews for the Director of School Facilities would begin the week of Sept. 26<sup>th</sup>. The topic of facilities and maintenance consolidation was briefly discussed. Bud and Dr. Canfield agree that the fact there are two unions would be a challenge in looking at this.

Dr. Canfield informs the committee that he has a "parents council" underway with representation from the PTA's and other parent groups. He also informs the committee that the Community School Advisory Board, which is being formed, will work directly with him and the Director of the Community School. He mentions that the pool is getting old. Some recent repairs have been covered by warranty and insurance.

The committee adjourns at 12:15 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Linell Grundman



10/27/2011