

TOWN OF ADAMS, MASSACHUSETTS

ADAMS TOWN HALL BUILDING, 1st FLOOR, ADAMS, MA 01220

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BOARD OF SELECTMEN WORKSHOP MINUTES 10/09/2018

CALL TO ORDER. The meeting was called to order by Chairman Duval at 5:30 p.m. Vice Chairman Nowak and Members Blanchard, Hoyt and Bush were present as well Interim Town Administrator Cesan, ACRSD Superintendent Vosburgh, and ACRSD School Committee Chairman Butler.

NEW BUSINESS:

ACRSD Discussion about the MSBA Application and Process: *School Committee Chairman Butler* advised that the Cheshire Board of Selectmen has been approached already about the MSBA application. The process takes ten or more years, and frequently takes several efforts before it is accepted. The School District application was accepted the first time around after being submitted in January, and received seventy statements of interest. The next step is the eligibility process then site visits. Assessing both towns' interest in funding this is a part of the process. On October 17th five members of MSBA will come out for a visit to review the Statement of Intent, followed by a tour of the school and identification of the areas of concern at the school. Detailed information has previously been provided about the Hoosac Valley Elementary School with an avenue for constructing a brand new elementary school at the Hoosac Valley High School Campus. Options will evolve from this visit, and having a single campus option is part of the equation. The question is the ability to fund it.

At 5:37 p.m. Member Hoyt entered the meeting.

Superintendent Vosburgh advised that the earliest this would start is three to four months after the eligibility process is completed. Documentation must be provided regarding enrollment and the condition of the school. The full process is about a year. Another school in the area took approximately six years to get to this point. The accelerated repair program may be valuable to discuss for funding of projects like roofs, boilers, windows, and other items for a quicker turnaround. The pros and cons for that avenue are being evaluated. The completion of the payment installments for Hoosac Valley High School is estimated for 2025. The need for both Cheshire and Adams to be in support of this was discussed. The need for one campus and options for funding were reviewed. An inquiry was made about the rationale of building a new school with shrinking enrollment and the current push to regionalize. Regionalization was discussed more in depth and it was pointed out that taxes are paying for schools to be built in the eastern part of the state so why not have the funds go to the students here. The roof was explained as being in deplorable condition but the Elementary School overall was described as having room needed for special needs children, and bringing vibrancy to the downtown. If repairs are made to the school the Town will want to put more attention into putting funds into the building than trying to convince Cheshire to go with one campus. It was explained that if the numbers and timing are right the High School may be paid off by the time this is ready to go forward. Accelerated repair would be payments on top of High School payments. A one-campus district would have to pay a significant amount for feasibility studies, and it was brought to the Board's attention that \$800,000 was the cost for the Adams Memorial School. An experience of building a brand new school to draw in attendees that did not come was expressed with concern. It was noted that a new school is not a guarantee that kids will come back from other communities to attend. The difficulty and years of work to renovate and get the Adams Memorial School to be viable again was noted as a reason not to have another empty school. It was explained that there are elementary schools in almost every community, which adds to the character of the downtown. With one campus Adams would no longer have a public school system in the community. A request was made to get input from the Berkshire County Education Task Force.

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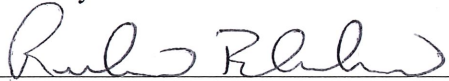
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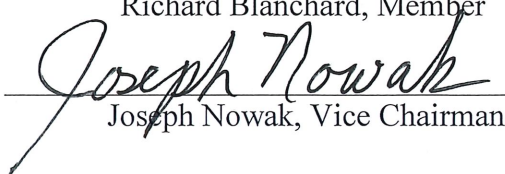
Superintendent Vosburgh noted that this process will get the elementary school on the map because this school needs help. The declining population and its effects were discussed. It was noted that there was a study of projected enrollments for ten and twenty years down the road with eligibility and feasibility for the footprint and MSBA will do their own study. It was pointed out that the curriculum is what matters, not all students are geared to going to college and the School District is losing students to McCann. It was explained that in the past a student had to go to college to get ahead. The influx of students and families coming to the area was noted as being a challenge to educate kids from different social and diverse backgrounds. Superintendent Vosburgh noted there is currently a strong group of adults working with the kids in the school system and the student engagement is awesome. He also noted there are few behavioral problems. The biggest struggle in the School District is to align the curriculum to state standards. The potential of the curriculum introducing more trade types of coursework was discussed and some is possible, but it is not cheap. The facility has existing shops that could be outfitted, and instructors found. The shop at Taconic was closed because the kids didn't want to do it and it is difficult to spend \$250,000 for a shop if kids are not interested. Creating a niche for ACRSD to bring back students was discussed. The CNA program was explained as no longer being a possibility. The District may look at it again but is looking at later evening classes. Having a sales pitch was expressed as important. Getting test scores back in order was noted as a priority as parents choose schools by test scores. Work is being done to change the perception of the District being underperforming. Project Lead the Way is potentially being expanded into the elementary school. It was explained that General Dynamics was looking for three hundred engineers in the county, which may be a track in the District to get a certificate and when graduated, students can continue on to get a degree and come back to a job. Other possibilities were noted as human services, science and engineering, business management, information technology, and having kids take the core requirements. Today's educational needs are vastly different and there are currently one thousand two hundred students total in the district, which would not fit in the campus right now. MCAS shortcomings were briefly noted.

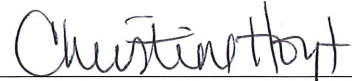
Consensus was reached by Board Members for the ACRSD Superintendent and School Committee to move forward and keep the Board informed.

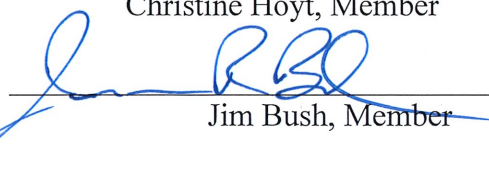
ADJOURNMENT: Motion made by Member Blanchard to adjourn the meeting, second by Member Hoyt, Vote: Unanimous. Meeting adjourned at 6:21 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted by Deborah J. Dunlap,
Recording Secretary


Richard Blanchard, Member


Joseph Nowak, Vice Chairman


Christine Hoyt, Member


Jim Bush, Member

John Duval, Chairman