

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

BOARD OF SELECTMEN WORKSHOP MINUTES FEBRUARY 13, 2019

CALL TO ORDER: The Board of Selectmen Workshop was called to order by Chairman Duval at 5:30 p.m. Vice Chairman Nowak, Members Hoyt and Bush. The Finance Committee Workshop was called to order by Chairman Burdick at 5:30 p.m. Present were Vice Chairman Cowie, and Members Corrigan, Foster, Lesure, and Cushenette. Member Tomkowicz entered the meeting at 5:41 p.m. Member Johnson entered the meeting at 5:50 p.m.

APPROVAL OF FINANCE COMMITTEE MINUTES: The January 3, 2019 Finance Committee meeting minutes were presented for approval. *There was no Finance Committee quorum at the time of this agenda item, and it will be voted on at the next meeting.*

NEW BUSINESS: Discussion and report from the Regional Agreement Amendment Committee (RAAC): Member Hoyt gave a background about the reason for the RAAC being formed and the composition of the Committee. Superintendent Vosburgh, School Committee Chairman Butler, and Jay Barry represented RAAC. Mr. Barry advised he works with Mass Association of Schools, which is a consultant group that updates regional agreements. He informed that the consultant group and RAAC have been working to meet compliance and to reflect the current laws. He noted that the Regional Agreement for the School District was well written and there are many things in the agreement that should be there. He expressed that there was a need to update the document to draw the two towns of Adams and Cheshire together to cooperate and vote jointly. He explained this will strengthen cooperation between the two towns to make important decisions. He pointed out that the Regional Agreement needs to be a reference document to serve as a roadmap for what is done to keep stakeholders informed as changes take place in staffing. The proper route for legislation was worked out with the respective attorneys and the process is pretty far along. He explained that the RAAC worked through the sections of document and revised it according to their wishes, the laws and regulations. The document was then referred to the School Committee and the legal counsel for the Towns of Cheshire, Adams, and the School District for review. It has been vetted and met local scrutiny. He explained that the Department of Education School Office is being kept apprised. The School Committee decides whether a public forum will be needed, and appropriate language needs to be sent to the Town Clerk in both towns for Town Meeting approval. The final step in the process is to have the Commissioner of Education give the document a final review and approval. A simple review will then take place in five years. The individual sections of the agreements were reviewed. Changes were outlined in each section. The name of the School District would change to Hoosac Valley Regional School District to be less town-based and more regional based. The original agreement had vocational wording, but this would be addressed in a different section. Concern was expressed that additional vocational programming would be in competition with McCann and should not be left to the discretion of the School Committee but instead to the voters. It was clarified that this enables the School District to facilitate education at McCann. It was noted that the wording was in place in the event that McCann School would dissolve, but there is no interest in challenging the current status quo. It was confirmed that the School Committee ratio will stay the same and that by Chapter 71 requirements that all constituents are equally represented by seats on the School Committee, under "One Man, One Vote". Elections of School Committee Members are district wide and have residency based requirements. The problem noted was that there must be November elections to be in compliance so Special Legislation is needed. Once the Special Legislation is accepted, there will be May elections and everything otherwise stays the same. Questions were fielded on population changes causing proportional changes on the School Committee. It was noted that in order for there to be a quorum the School Committee has to have members from each town.

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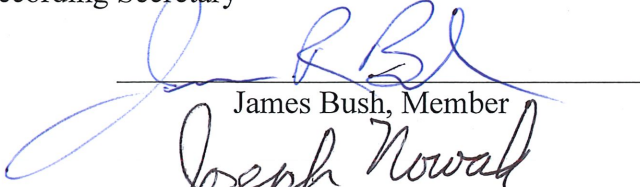
There has to be an agreement between both towns, and they are to be mandated to work together. Examples of big decision items were listed. The legal names, number of schools and where they are located were updated. The budgeting process of the School District was reviewed and some of the language was updated but the process will stay the same. Definitions and timelines were adjusted to meet the law. Language was changed on the areas of Operating, Capital, and Transportation Costs to become a better reference document, but it will be done the same way. The apportionment of ratio stays the same, and uses actual enrollment to apportion costs. It was noted that the original agreement did not include education reform, and some buildings did specific instruction on certain locations. A school-based capital project would apportion costs based on the number of students from each town in the school. Borrowing money for major capital projects, not borrowing for cash flow or temporary borrowing purposes, would require a School Committee two-third majority vote. Another option of having a town by town approval was also represented. Tuition was set for Savoy students that are occasionally enrolled, and the School District will facilitate and set the cost for the vocational process. It is the responsibility of the School District to transport kids, and the changes defined the process by which one town or the other can request an amendment to the agreement. A process was included in the event there was an admission of a new town. The School Committee must approve the addition of new town, and the two towns and the Commissioner of Education have to approve it. The Department of Education requires that the town wishing to join as well as the School District develop documents of long-range plans to outline that the best interest of the children is in place. In the event that the School District dissolved to join with another town or district, legal counsel would need to be consulted. Withdrawal from the District is addressed if one town leaves the established District of three towns, or if one town leaves the two-town District it would therefore no longer be a District. It was noted that the Department of Education would need to see long-range plans for this type of proposal. Financial responsibilities are more clearly defined. Post-employment benefits are clarified, as well as legal costs, capital, and operational costs relevant to a withdrawal. It would require Town Meeting approval in both towns and a non-binding vote of the Commissioner and the Department of Education approval. School Committee membership and composition changes were noted with a withdrawal. To keep the document from going out of date, a five year review was added, as well as a mandatory review in ten years. The School District will submit an annual report to the Board of Selectmen. The timing of the Special Legislation was discussed in regards to the upcoming elections and how it would affect the amended agreement. The amended Agreement would require Town Meeting and Commissioner of Education approval before becoming effective. As Town Meeting is after the election, it may have to stay the same for a year. It was noted that the Special Legislation was filed by the School Committee before being presented to both communities. The timing of Town Meeting, the Special Legislation process and elections were discussed for clarification. If the School Committee wants to have a public forum for town meeting this would be the next step. It was further clarified that if a town withdraws, both towns have to agree. Individual town ownership of buildings and investment, removal of the town from district, and an agreement to assign and divide assets and liabilities for the individual towns would be drawn up. Disestablishment was discussed. The RAAC was thanked for their work on the revisions.

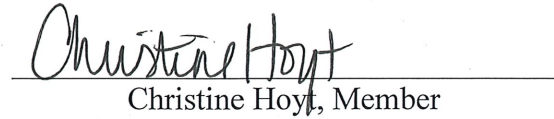
ADJOURNMENT: *Motion made by Member Nowak to adjourn the Board of Selectmen Workshop, second by Member Bush. Vote: Unanimous. Meeting adjourned at 6:27 p.m. Motion made by Member Foster to adjourn the Finance Committee Workshop, second by Member Cowie. Vote: unanimous. Meeting adjourned at 6:27 p.m.*

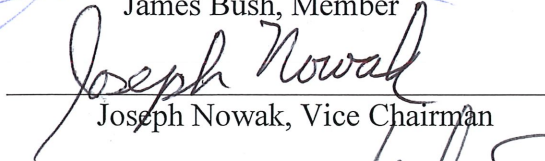
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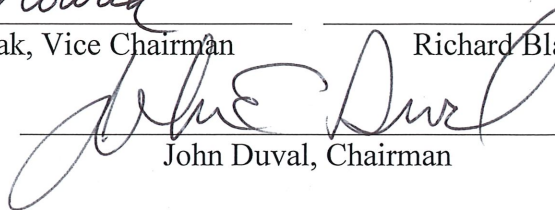
Respectfully Submitted by Deborah J. Dunlap,
Recording Secretary


James Bush, Member


Christine Hoyt, Member


Joseph Nowak, Vice Chairman


Richard Blanchard, Member


John Duval, Chairman