

Grand Isle Supervisory Union Board
Meeting Thursday, August 27, 2015
At Grand Isle School

Present: Barbara Burrington, Beth Hemingway, Mike Savage, Skip Prairie, Jennie Lund, Gary Marckres, Teri Geney, Mike Talbot, Bridget Timms, Dave Davis, Andy Julow, Louise Koss, Jennifer Rafferty, Barbara Callahan, Kris Bowser, Mike Bishop, RJ Sweeney & David Cain

Meeting called to order by Barbara Burrington at 6:06 p.m.

Barbara Burrington welcomed everyone to the first Act 46 organizational meeting. She advised that her role is to support the work of the merger study committee in the same manner she supports the school boards. The Act 46 committee will be receiving ongoing technical support from retired Superintendent Mike Deweese and Andrew Pond (board member from MMMUSC). Mike Deweese unfortunately could not attend this meeting due to a family emergency out of town. The purpose of tonight's meeting is to organize the study committee, as required under statute, and then hold the first committee meeting to begin some of the administrative and logistical tasks the committee will need to take care of in the beginning of the process. The main purpose of this meeting is to get started on pursuing options and opportunities under Act 46 and establish a study committee that is charged with developing a proposal to create a union school district under Act 46 that achieves the goals laid out in the Act. These goals are:

1. Provide equity in the quality of variety of educational opportunities;
2. Lead students to meet or exceed the Education Quality Standards
3. Maximize operational efficiencies through greater flexibility
4. Promote transparency and accountability
5. Committee's objective is to prepare a proposal for submission to voters in all 5 participating districts (hoping to achieve incentives under the Act)
6. The GISU board must give the Committee a specific charge, which has been drafted and to establish a budget (also drafted for tonight)
7. Direct the Superintendent to apply for a reimbursement grant from the AOE as defined in Act 46

Barbara continued on to give a preview of the evening, and how the evening would progress. First, board members will break out into local meetings. If they haven't already done so, a motion needs to be made to participate in the study committee. Sample motions have been provided to each board. Each board must do three things: Authorize the formation of the study committee; identify committee members (one of which must be a school board member) and alternates; and approve the committee budget. The local board meetings will adjourn, and everyone will reconvene to the GISU meeting. At this point, Barbara introduced Andrew Pond from Bolton. Andrew is a school board member and has been contracted by VSBA to assist our committee. Andrew has done this process in his district and has some thoughts on membership and appointing alternates. Andrew gave a brief background on himself. He spoke about the difference between merging school districts versus merging school buildings. Andrew stressed how important it is that there is a consensus on votes. All boards must vote yes to merge, and then all 5 towns must vote yes to merge. It is not a majority vote. A question was asked about the budget if the district merged. Andrew answered that all town votes are mixed together – it doesn't matter what town you are in. Andrew spoke about the role of alternates. The importance of alternates is to be sure someone from your town is present at meetings because you want as many people as possible at meetings. Alternates must be identified, but they can be changed. Andrew said the timeframe of committees is between 1-5 years. For most communities, it will be at least 2 years. Barbara told the board that the proposed budget will be \$25,000.00 with \$20,000.00 coming from AOE and \$5,000.00 coming from the local districts, which is prorated based on equalized per pupil. After the budget is approved, the GISU board will reconvene. The GISU board chair, Andy Julow will then read aloud the study committee's charge. The GISU meeting will end, and the Study Committee meeting will start. There will be two pieces of business: elect a chair and direct the Superintendent to submit a reimbursement to the AOE for \$20,000.00. Work with the committee will then continue.

At 6:44 p.m. the local boards met separately in different rooms.

At 7:07 p.m. the GISU meeting reconvened. Andy Julow read the charge:

- I. In accordance with Title 16 §706b, Act 46, and Acts 153/156, study the benefits and challenges of forming a union district comprising the towns of Alburgh, Grand Isle, Isle La Motte, North Hero and South Hero.
- II. Contract with outside person(s) to support the work of the committee within the established budget. This may include but is not limited to: process facilitation, data analysis, facilitation of committee discussions, legal counsel and community forum support.
- III. Consider if there is a benefit to our communities to invite other districts as advisable members of the committee. As outlined in Title 16 §706b(2) the committee has the final determination of what districts, if any, are deemed advisable.
- IV. Make a determination as to whether the formation of a union district is advisable and should be taken to the voters.
- V. If determined advisable, prepare a report for the State Board of Education including all elements required by Title 16 §706b and Act 46 in the formation of a union district. The report should be submitted in a timely fashion to allow for a community vote (if held) to occur during FY17.
- VI. The Articles of Agreement required in Title 16 §706b should be written to provide maximum flexibility for the newly created Board to govern the district to best represent the community and serve educational needs of the students into the future.
- VII. Keep the SU Board and member District Boards regularly apprised of the committee's progress.

Louise Koss made a motion to authorize the Study Committee to fulfill the Study Committee Charge as read by GISU Board Chair, Andy Julow. Second by Barbara Callahan. All in favor.

Mike Savage made a motion to adjourn the GISU meeting. Second by Mike Bishop. All in favor. GISU meeting adjourned at 7:10 p.m.

Act 46 Study Committee was called to order at 7:11 p.m. by Andrew Pond

Mike Bishop made a motion to nominate Andy Julow as chair of the committee. Second by Barbara Callahan. No other nominations. All in favor of Andy Julow as chair.

A few things were noted: the focus of this group should be on what's best for students; the chair is the spokesperson for the committee (with Superintendent, attorneys, VSBA, etc.); committee members cannot act individually for the board; regular communications to the communities is very important; all motions made have to be a consensus, not a majority. At this point, introductions of the committee members were made:

Andy Julow – NH

Dave Davis – NH

Bridget Timms – NH alternate

Kris Bowser – SH

Mike Bishop – SH

RJ Sweeney – SH

Lauren Bartlett – GI

Mike Talbot – GI

Charlotte Kennedy – GI

Teri Geney – GI

Carol Miller – GI (not in attendance)

Don Bartlett – GI alternate (not in attendance)

Gary Marckres – GI alternate

Elizabeth Fula – GI alternate (not in attendance)

Barbara Callahan – ILM

Louise Koss – ILM alternate
Jennifer Rafferty – ILM alternate
Mike Savage – ALB
Skip Prairie – ALB
John Goodrich – ALB (not in attendance)
Allyson Sweeney – ALB (not in attendance)
Jennifer Lund – ALB

Andy Julow would like to start a webpage for the committee. It will be on the GISU website. Study committee agendas could also be posted there.

Barbara advised that Vaughn Altemus and Brad James are developing formulas to run cost effectiveness regarding tuitioning out 7/8 or keeping them in district. Other districts are running reports/models regarding middle school scenarios.

South Hero members said they were happy to be included in this process, but are still looking into other options. Alburgh expressed the same thoughts.

It was noted that with the grant money, all options will need to be explored, and the study will not be focused on just our own district.

It was decided that an Accelerated sub-committee would be formed. It consists of Dave Davis, Skip Prairie, Barbara Callahan & Charlotte Kennedy. There is a worksheet on AOE website that needs to be completed, and the sub-committee will report back to the full committee. Andy suggested pulling up the webpage and doing a quick review of the worksheet. Andy read the questions aloud. It was decided that the sub-committee was not feasible at this time. Barbara Burrington advised that she would ask Mike Deweese to bring the different options of structure to the next meeting.

A motion was made to direct Superintendent Burrington to submit an application on behalf of the committee for a \$20,000.00 grant to reimburse districts participating in a merger study committee, as defined in 16 V.S.A. §706b, for the legal and consulting fees necessary to produce the analysis and report required under 16 V.S.A. §706b. So moved by Mike Talbot. Second by RJ Sweeney. All in favor. Kris Bowser asked to amend the motion to include the amounts each school is expected to contribute which includes 6% for ILM at \$300.00, 10% for NH at \$500.00, 2% for SH at \$1000.00, 31% for GI at \$1550.00 and 33% for ALB at \$1650.00. Second by Charlotte Kennedy. Question was asked as to which budget year this contribution comes from. Answer is that the committee decides. All in favor of amendment. All in favor of motion with amendment. Hiring a clerk was discussed. They will pay \$100.00 per committee meeting. A committee member will take minutes at all sub-committee meetings.

Meeting dates were decided on. They will occur the 3rd and 4th Tuesday of September. September 15th will be at North Hero and September 22nd will be at Isle La Motte. They will be from 6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

Mike Bishop made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Second by Dave Davis. All in favor. Meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.