

Berkshire Hills Regional School District School Committee
&
Richmond School Committee
July 2, 2020 Meeting Minutes

Approved - Richmond

Remote Meeting via Google Meet

Present: BHRSD: Stephen Bannon, Richard Dohoney, Sean Stephen, Molly Thomas, Anne Hutchinson, Peter Dillon
Richmond: Dewey Wyatt, Ina Wilhelm, Adeline Ellis, Lauren Brousal, Neil Pilson, Bob Gnaidick, Christina Lenfest, Joy Mullen, Jill Pompei, Rachel Kanz, Mary Shook,

Meeting Opened: 6:00pm
Dewey – Opened RCS Session
Rich – Opened BHRSD Session

Dewey — Shared opening statement on working together

Karen shared two slides outlining (attached below).

Ina asked about procedures for the RAAC process.

Karen will share document from [State (DESE Manual for Regionalization: Phase 1, Massachusetts DESE District Standards)].

Group discussed RAAC procedures, preliminary disadvantages/

Karen — some ways to enhance preliminary discussion. Good to do a quick self-assessment, collect and gather info in an organized way

Letter to Richmond to be sent over weekend regarding our work through Phase One (subsequently received from Karen by email 7/10/2020).

More talk with BHRSD

Karen — what do people need to stay at table?

Rich — we have a high level of comfort because we have been educating each other's students for a while, we would like to move forward to next stage of process

Sean — we have done before, it's a commitment, takes a long time, we're willing to go through process

Dewey — We're not familiar with the RAAC process, this is a very big, detail ability to turn in future if it doesn't work out, has evolved into an element of distrust, I do want it move ahead to get to a thoughtful process to get to a sound decision, process can lead to something that

Karen — how do we move forward

BHRSD would be able to ask town for town vote

Richmond would need more time to educate community on what this was about, what it entails, pros/cons.

What are threshold are there to move forward or wait.

Rich Dohoney — sooner than later, we're not into unfair deadlines but there should be move forward or not, maybe Karen you work with them or not, I hear that apprehension.

I wouldn't share what our chances of merging are, if there's a 10% chance that it may be a good thing then as an elected official I have an obligation to pursue and improve

Maybe you Karen work with Richmond on this and get back to us.

Karen — that way I could get to know Berkshire Hills better

Dewey — what info do we need to help us close gap, potential for workable path, financially viable, maintaining local control, no other obligations.

Lauren Broussal — question about public comment.

Dohoney — We didn't post, want to be fair about OML, and inviting people.

BHRSD logged out of meeting, continued meeting with RCS people.

Neil Pilson, thanks to Karen for explaining case to go to RAAC, we got an inside look on how Berkshire Hills operates and not wanting to hear public comment on Richmond side, we need to understand financial parameters, we will have difficulty, I've been asking for it for 7 months and haven't seen anything.

Dewey — something that needs town vote needs a thorough picture developed, this is far more complicated.

Lauren — we met several times with Berkshire Hills, said what we wanted, said hat we needed, have yet to hear anything form Berkshire Hills, I'm getting frustrated , process hasn't bright that yet

Karen — RAAC is study group, you have heard from Berkshire Hills that this is all negotiable, you cannot have an answer because it would be speculation, you're asking for assurances that you have to have a compelling reason to go forward with a study.

No decisions made in meeting.

Adjournment: 7:20pm

From Karen Fierst:

Agenda 7/2/20

1. Revisiting the process and developing a shared understanding of the importance components of process
2. School Committee discussion "Staying at the table"

