

**Richmond Consolidated School - School Committee**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
Thursday April 9, 2020 at 6:00 PM

Joint Meeting with the Berkshire Hill Regional School District Shared Services

APPROVED RSC 5/12/2020

**Present:** Dewey Wyatt, Susan Benner, Adeline Ellis, Peter Dillon, Anne Hutchinson, Steve Bannon, Sean Stephen, Molly Thomas,  
**Also Present:** Lauren Broussal, Peter Smith, Bob Gniadek, Amanda Hale, Jill Pompei, Cristina Lenfest, Neal Pilson, Sharon Harrison, Eileen Mooney, Evan Triantafilidis

Call to Order at 6:04PM

Discuss Shared Services, plans for RCS and BHRSD, engaging a consultant.

Meeting held remotely due to COVID-19 restrictions. This was a meeting with BHRSD to discuss Shared Services, plans for RCS and BHRSD, engaging a consultant.

Dewey — introduction, 5 years working relationship and we need to understand how we are going to meet needs of everyone involved, educationally, administratively, financially, operationally. We're at the point where we need more specifics. So far there has only been a conceptual discussion.

We have a grant to evaluate what the future looks like.

Understanding Financial viability is key.

RCS prek-8 wants to remain autonomous. This is one point every at Richmond is aligned on. There is also interest in understand plan for HS kids?

It's complicated, but we have a path to engage a consultant which is critically needed to move ahead.

A lot of people are wondering if a new relationship with BHRSD is even possible.

Introduced other Richmond participants: Bob Gniadek — Fin com chair, Neal Pilson, Select board, Lauren Broussal - former SC chair, Chari of Richmond Superintendency Advisory Committee.

Steve — we've been discussing for a long time, need to hire and engage a consultant.

Peter — \$25K available, talking to Jake Eberwein about taking on the consultation role.

Bob — can grant be a bigger scope to allow Richmond to understand full picture?

Dewey — Talked Christine Lynch at DESE (Dept Elementary and Secondary Ed) Governance Dept. She said we have wide latitude using the funds as the purpose of any study like this is to be able to come out with enough information for sound decisions. If something doesn't make sense, don't do it.

Neal — Grant document would allow RCS to explore things with BHRSD and other possible options including independent status, recreate SMSU, or talking with another district, not to exclude BHRSD but free to explore other options

Steve — not sure about process and how we are going to do this.

Dewey — one key point is how to identify what model can work / not work early on so as to not waste everyone's time?

Lauren — the problem we have is there haven't been any negotiations, or any true discussions. I don't think anyone is trying to move in a different direction, we're interested but we haven't seen how it will happen. If we need to go with someone else we do that.

Neal — what is time table for consultant, we all have free time, we're available, next week, 10 days

Steve — deadline for Jake to let us know if he's interested.

Peter — will let us know his availability in next week

Lauren — a week is good

Dewey — this is such as key to make progress we need to put a priority on getting this going.

Bob — need financial models

Peter — I think it should be done by someone external, it's a negotiation

Bob— we need to act with a proposal in hand

Neal — I agree with Bob, concept of HS only, no current liability for a new/or renovated high school, we're not totally familiar with your arrangements with Stockbridge or West Stockbridge, we cannot be expected to initiate financial information, we would like basic structure of how BHRSD would envision this would work, we'd like to know, we have a limited number of HS students, does it make sense financially for our students and tax payers, we need initial financial info to begin the discussions, we need that info, it would be helpful to get that through the consultant, it's been out there for too long

Peter — described the budget process at BHRSD

Bob — question about capital formula at BHRSD

Sharon — eqv and number of kids, we'll share RAAC

Bob — question about MLC

Sharon — every community has one, most are above, and Richmond is way above

Peter — we will share RAAC

Lauren — RAAC is just financial piece, there are many other issues

Dewey — you're right, how do we focus on education.

Peter — MARS (Mass Assoc Regional Schools) put together document, 40 pages with questions.

Dewey — this person is to help identify and prioritize needs, wishes, financial, educationally, operationally, start individually, get clarity on what's really important, and where there are similarities and gaps.

Steve — all sides agree on that, rest of it needs to be discussed and if it works for all students

Lauren — it's hard for Richmond to take first step, a lot of issues we cannot anticipate, parents worry about not having local control, people are worried

Lauren — we're stuck in two places since Hancock and New Ashford are moving ahead on their Superintendent interviews.

Dewey — is there anything else we can do

Steve — BHRSD has no intention of using an arbitrary date of June 30, will continue to support any transitions.

Lauren — we need to get consultant aboard and going

Susan Benner — do we need to make a motion to get consultant going?

Dewey — need to look at availability, vote to engage, I'll compare notes with Steve Bannon to move forward

Steve — work with Doreen to schedule a meeting next week.

Group agreed next meeting 4/21 6pm will work.

Bob Gniadek — tentative agreement on approving our budget

Adjourn 7:38PM Motions AE, Seconded DW, all in favor