

***Durham, Freeport, & Pownal
Reorganization Planning Committee
Meeting Minutes
November 28, 2007
Freeport High School~Freeport***

Members Present: Amber Snell, Allan Purinton, Fred Palmer, Marge Migliaccio, Rick White, Nelson Larkins, Paul Schumann, Jennifer Kaplan, Tim Giddinge, Sherry Dietrich, Cliff Ruprecht, Rhonda O'Shea and Wesley Bennett

Advisors Present: Shannon Welsh, Superintendent of Schools, Durham; Elaine Tomaszewski, Superintendent of Schools, Freeport; Joe Feeney, Superintendent/Principal, Pownal

Also Present: Bob Kautz, Facilitator; Cathy Messmer, Business Manager, Durham; and 9 members of the public

Not Present: Paul Schumann

- The meeting was called to order by at 7:00 pm by Bob Kautz, Facilitator.
- Minutes were reviewed and accepted by consensus from the committee.
- There were no previous questions to be answered.
- There was no public comment or questions. Mr. Kautz added there were various emails from public sent to the Freeport RPC contingents expressing concerns regarding the continuation of the Durham/Freeport/Pownal RPC, however the emails were directed to the Freeport contingents singularly.
- Subcommittees decided to break for only 15 minutes for discussion. The Governance and Transition Subcommittee decided they would like a few minutes to discuss items in the draft plan.
- Mr. Kautz explained that the Freeport RPC contingents met before the meeting and suggested that the RPC consider discussing a work plan regarding future meetings after the Dec. 1 submission of the draft plan. It was suggested if there is time after reviewing the draft plan, the entire committee would come together and each RPC member could state what they feel should be addressed as importance by Mr. Kautz.
- The RPC then broke into subcommittees broke at 7:08pm

Finance, Property, and Cost Savings Subcommittee: Members: Paul Schumann, Cliff Ruprecht, Allan Purinton and Fred Palmer.

Cliff Ruprecht submitted the following notes as scribe:

None submitted

Governance and Transition Subcommittee: Members: Nelson Larkins, Sherry Dietrich, John Gleason, Tim Giddinge, Wesley Bennett

Sherry Dietrich submitted the following notes as scribe:

The meeting was brief and mainly for the purpose of going over the draft report due December 1, 2007 and the Reorganization Plan Cover Sheet. We agreed to report back to the full RPC with the following suggestions:

- (1) Joe recommended we ask the full committee to accept our plan for Weighted Voting and change Section 3.A.(2) from work "In Progress" to "Complete" since the state has accepted our method of voting plan.
- (2) Section A(4). Local school committees. Change "N/A" (or Not Applicable) to "In Progress."
- (3) 3(A)13. The full committee should discuss this.
- (4) Costs that accrue during the transition period from November 2008 to July 1, 2009 need to be discussed.
- (5) The draft plan should incorporate voting dates if possible.

Meeting adjourned to meet with the full RPC

Employment and Collective Bargaining/Other Subcommittee: Members: Jen Kaplan, Bill Crain, Amber Snell, Rick White and Marge Migliaccio.

Jen Kaplan submitted the following notes as scribe:

None submitted

- The full committee came back together at 8:23pm.
- The question was asked that information regarding median household and per capita be given to Employee/Collective Bargaining subcommittee.
- It was also stated that the Commercial and Residential evaluation breakdown is needed for all three communities.
- The plan was reviewed led by Shannon Welsh. It was discussed that if the review plan was approved to be submitted by all three school board Mr. Kautz would deliver the plan on Friday, November 30, 2007 which was the date included in the plan for submission.
- Ms. Welsh stated that underneath the submission date it was recommended that the draft plan include an introduction written by John Gleason. It was discussed that the wording within the introduction were the thoughts of only one community. The question was posed regarding the specific sentence "If, however, we conclude after a thorough analysis that this particular consolidation alignment is not in the best interests of these three communities, we will alert the department that we intend to comply with the school consolidation law through alternative alignments," whether or not this was the feeling of one community or all communities. It was discussed that if agreements could not be made within the three communities the introduction gave the impression that one party could pull away from the table. Cliff Ruprecht asked if the decision to withdraw from negotiations would be the feeling of one community only or all communities making the decision together as a whole. John Gleason stated it would be a collective decision by the RPC to discontinue planning the alignment of all three communities.
- It was stated a cover letter written by the Freeport School Committee would be attached to the draft plan submitted to the Commissioner.
- Mr. Kautz asked John Gleason to make sure the RPC Secretary received a copy of the letter written by the Freeport School Committee Chair for the records.

- It was called for a vote regarding the inclusion of the introduction written by John Gleason. There was one “thumbs down” vote by Cliff Ruprecht. Cliff stated the introduction creates the wrong spirit of the three towns working together and it also creates more strife than solving problems. It was stated it was up to the voters to make the decision whether or not the communities should align.
- Mr. Kautz reminded the RPC that each school committee is to vote to submit or not submit the draft plan only. Once the plan is approved for submission the Commissioner will then review, react and then respond with feedback. If the Commissioner does not agree with the submission, the plan would be sent back to the RPC with recommendations. The RPC would consider changes by the Commissioner and after changes had been made the draft plan could be resubmitted. If the plan was approved by the Commissioner it would be sent back to the RPC to be completed. Once the RPC completes the plan and it is approved by the school committees and the Commissioner, it will then go to the communities for referendum. If the RPC could not move forward with their negotiations the Commissioner would then come in and help with any barriers. If an agreement could not be reached after this process, the Commissioner then has the right to impose sanctions as the communities would then not be following Educational Law. One of the sanctions that could be imposed include withholding of subsidy however, the Commissioner reserves the right to make the decision of sanctions. It was stated the decision to align should be taken to the voters and the decision could not be made just through the RPC. The voters would then need to have clear instruction on what the sanctions could be if the choice was not to align. The Commissioner would consider things optimistically and will continue to encourage the RPC alignments and will help in any way to address any barriers.
- Rick White explained while he agreed with Cliff’s views regarding the sentence, he felt the message itself is a mute point. He did state that the sentence written sends a message of negativity and will achieve its designed intent.
- Mr. Kautz called for a second vote. There were 4 “thumbs down” votes. Mr. Kautz explained that the agreed motion by the RPC is if the group could not either vote “thumbs up” or “sideways” to live with the decision there would need to be a caucus within all three contingents. At that point each contingent group would be allotted 3 votes.
- John Gleason explained the sentence was not to just state the intent of the Freeport contingent alone. The sentence was included so all three communities would be able to go back to their own communities and freely continue discussions to keep their options open. If the decision was not to proceed it would be a collective decision between the RPC. The statement was to benefit all contingents not just one. The statement was to acknowledge options and give some flexibility to the communities to continue to research which choice is to the best of their benefit.
- It was stated that Freeport had submitted one letter of intent. Durham had submitted two letters. Pownal only has one letter as well....The only other option would be for Freeport to file for exception of 1200 students which would only determined by the Commissioner.
- The question was posed what is the language in the sentence helpful for? The Commissioner could have the potential to think negatively. It was stated this was a way to memorialize Freeport’s position.

- It was stated the consolidation of all three communities should be viewed as a merger and as in a business setting each community should be able to preserve the right to say they would not like to proceed. It was explained that there were various issues still needed to be discussed. There was a statement that if the draft proposal was submitted without the language the possibility was the state would feel all three communities were comfortable and there were no barriers. It was discussed that the responsible thing to say is that the three communities need the time to deliberate and have that freedom to do so. There is still compromising to be done. It was believed that the benefit to have this sentence inserted within the introduction. It was stated that the absent language will give a risk and that penalties could be imposed if the RPC was not able to continue. There was a statement that all three communities needed to keep their options open.
- Mr. Kautz called for a third vote regarding the insertion of the introduction paragraph. There were no “thumbs down” and the paragraph was approved.
- Mr. Kautz congratulated the committee on having an extremely productive discussion on a difficult decision.
- The template continued to be reviewed. The Governance subcommittee recommended within the checklist/template that 3. A. 1, 2 & 3 be considered complete. It was stated that the information could be adjusted and changed in the future if needed. The RPC approved with a consensus for 3. A. 1 and 3. A. 2 and 3. A. 3.
- Checklist 3 A. 4 was stated that it had been left for decisions made by the RSU Board of Directors. It was recommended that this piece should be marked in progress and it was recommended to leave in progress by the Governance subcommittee. This was approved by the committee.
- Checklist 3 A. 5 was recommended by the subcommittee to be checked in progress and the press release info. This was approved by the committee.
- Checklist 3 A. 6 was recommended to be checked in progress. It was stated that discussion of particulars within this piece would be discussed with the entire RPC. This was approved by the committee.
- Checklist 3. A. 7 was approved as written by the committee.
- Checklist 3. A. 8 was approved as written by the committee.
- Checklist 3. A. 9 was approved as written by the committee.
- Checklist 3. A.10 was discussed and it was recommended that all other meetings and public forums should be added to show how much work has been done within the communities. This was approved by the committee.
- Checklist 3. A. 11 was approved as written by the committee.
- Checklist 3. A. 12 was discussed. It was recommended that the checklist also include add assistance needed as the press release stated. This was approved by the committee.
- Checklist 3. A. 13 was approved as written by the committee.
- It was recommended that the template include 13 H. as an addition which would include John Gleason’s explanation of the creation of the Education Subcommittee. This was approved by the committee.
- It was stated that Shannon Welsh would make sure the submittal sheet, the developed cover letter, checklist, template, addendums and press release information would be updated by November 29, 2007 and delivered to all three school committees which would meet that evening to review and vote on approval for the submission of the draft plan. If approved the submittal sheet would be

- signed by all three school committees and all three RPC chairs. If approved by all Mr. Kautz would then deliver to the state on Friday, November, 30, 2007.
- It was asked if any other areas within the template should be checked for needs assistance. It was suggested that 3. A.13 should be checked for needs assistance for explanations on cost sharing/minimum subsidy.
 - It was asked if any areas need to be checked as an identified barrier. The consensus of the RPC is that no items were identified barriers at this time.
 - Discussions regarding template were concluded.
 - It was agreed that there should be a discussion regarding a developed work plan of how the RPC should proceed for future meetings. It was suggested that the entire committee receive the subcommittees' guidance of what should be discussed sooner than later. The question was asked whether the next meeting should be for subcommittees to work. It was also suggested that the committee consider factual information and consider a way to present what is happening within each community's educational structure to educate the public.
 - Mr. Kautz suggested the RPC identify the key items and how to proceed for the future meetings should be the first step. The committee agreed with consensus.
 - It was stated that there was overlapping within subcommittees. It was suggested that there should be discussion of what each subcommittee should make decisions regarding. It was also suggested that if there was overlapping that subcommittees may meet together to decide which group would work on specific decisions.
 - There was suggestion the entire group discuss cost sharing and school choice. It was stated that debt will be a huge part of the cost sharing formula and the topic of cost sharing over the EPS should include debt and property. It was the consensus of the RPC these two topics should be discussed within the entire group. One other suggestion is that the entire RPC discuss community vision and that the discussion of the vision should be the first topic to get all contingents on the same plane.
 - One item of importance that was suggested was the estimate of RSU budget going forward. It was also suggested the RPC look at the capacity and costs of the infrastructure of programs specifically at high school and how that would be impacted by all three communities sharing the high school.
 - The suggestion was made that the RPC have the full discussion of school choice first. It was stated this would be a philosophical discussion. Another item for discussion regarding school would be the capacity of Freeport receiving all secondary students. It was suggested that school choice be put on the agenda as the 1st agenda item. It was also recommended that cost sharing be the second topic and it was discussion may include the identification of what the issues are specifically within cost sharing. Community vision was suggested to be the third item and then capacity and costs secondary students. It was asked whether the agenda should include subcommittee work as well. Mr. Kautz explained that the RPC needed to consider which goal should be first. The RPC agreed by consensus that school choice, cost sharing and community vision would be discussed by the entire RPC in that specific order.
 - Mr. Kautz introduced written surveys from UMO and asked those interested to complete form and mail in. He explained this survey was completely voluntarily and the RPC was chosen within the area to participate.
 - The meeting was adjourned at 9:02pm

Respectfully Submitted by S. Brewer 12/2/2007