

SAD 5 / SAD 50 REORGANIZATION PLANNING COMMITTEE
November 13, 2007 – SAD 5 Board Room, McLain School

Present: Committee Members

SAD 5

David Matthews, Owls Head
Maynard Curtis, Owls Head
Paul Luttrell, Rockland
Ruth Hohfeld, South Thomaston
Nancy Jeffers, Rockland
Jeff Northgraves, South Thomaston
Eric Hebert, Rockland
Dick Levasseur, Owls Head

SAD 50

Jamie Doubleday, Thomaston
Bob Worthing, Cushing
David Cobey, Cushing
John Falla, St. George
Judith Zizza, Cushing
Bill Reinhardt, St. George
Connie Russell, Thomaston
(arrives late)

Superintendents – Judy Harvey, SAD 50; Al Pfeifer, SAD 5

Business Managers – John Spear, SAD 50; Toni Reed, SAD 5

Facilitator – Mary Jane McCalmon

Recorder – Ann Matlack, St. George

1. Co-Chair Jamie Doubleday opened the meeting at about 6:30 PM.
2. **Minutes** – The minutes from the October 30 were reviewed and on a motion by Eric, seconded by Ruth, approved as presented.
3. **Public Comment** – Judy said she had spoken with a parents' group at Thomaston Grammar School on consolidation and Many Flags. She said there is confusion about Many Flags versus consolidation: how they relate and how they are different. She suggested contacting local media outlets to encourage interviews so the issues could be clarified.

John Falla said there was interest in discussing this issue in St. George, so he, Terry Driscoll and Bill Reinhardt would be updating the community at a meeting on Wednesday, November 28, at the Town Offices.

Paul said consolidation and Many Flags were different but related issues; however, voting for consolidating was a step towards getting a new school and without consolidation there would be no new school.

4. **Old Business** – Mary Jane reported there would be a facilitators meeting on Thursday, at which time she anticipated receiving the final version of the cover letter to be used when submitting the Plan. She also said the facilitators were still waiting on central office models, which would be forthcoming but were not ready yet.

Judy reported that at the most recent meeting of the Midcoast Superintendents' Association the understanding was that RPCs should not bother developing cost savings estimates for their plans. John Spear concurred and said his understanding was that RPCs were being told they "were not doing it right" and since no RPC would make the December 1 deadline, the Committee should hold off working on cost savings. Mary Jane said RPCs were not finding savings and the savings were not critical for December.

Ruth asked how the Committee would be able to sell this consolidation effort to the public if there were no savings. Bill suggested that big penalties for non-compliance would be the incentive.

Eric agreed that there was underlying concern about the lack of savings. He suggested, however, that the reasons for consolidation be shifted from a mandate from Augusta to a discussion of what works for SAD 5 and SAD 50 and the potential for a new school under the Many Flags model. Mary Jane agreed that a pro-active, positive message would work better than threats from Augusta.

5. **Sub-committees** – The Sub-committees met from 6:50 – 7:45 PM. [Connie arrives during this time.]

6. **Wrap-up**

a) **Sub-committees reports**

Governance – Paul requested direction from the Committee. Previously, this Sub-committee had recommended a 13-member board without weighted voting. This arrangement had been reached using the State Planning Office's estimated census numbers for 2006. However, the SPO estimates include an "Institutionalized Population" figure for Thomaston which no longer applies. John Spear reported that SAD 50 had reviewed this matter as it pertained to the current school board apportionment and found that it did not affect the board's composition. David Matthews reported he had re-calculated the apportionment without the "Institutionalized Population" and found that neither an 11- nor a 13-member board would be in compliance once this population was removed from the formula.

The Committee discussed using weighted votes for the new school board, where a mathematical formula would be used to determine the amount applied to each board member's vote. By overwhelming sentiment, the Board chose to not use weighted voting.

The Committee agreed to use the data available (the SPO's 2006 estimates) and to proceed with a 13-member board, as originally recommended by the Governance Sub-committee. It will be left to the new RSU board to re-visit the issue of apportionment once the 2010 census results are available or to the petition process if members of the public chose to undertake such an effort. David Cobey, David Matthews and Connie Russell agreed they could live with this decision.

Paul also asked for guidance on when to hold the referendum. It was agreed that it would be best not to hold the referendum in conjunction with either SAD 5's or SAD 50's budget vote; that the Committee would like the opportunity for better public awareness and understanding of the issues involved with regionalization. Therefore, the vote will be held whenever the Plan is completed and not wait until May or June.

Asset & Liability Redistribution – Eric reported the Sub-committee recommended all assets and all liabilities become the property of the new RSU. The only exception was summer salaries and benefits. Each district appropriates funds in 2 budgets to cover these expenses. Therefore, each district will provide funds to the new RSU to cover whatever the district has budgeted. The Sub-committee also recommended that general fund balances be passed along to the new RSU with the recommendation that the new school board credit

back to the individual municipalities their portion of the fund balance and apply it to the first RSU budget.

David Matthews questioned the forwarding of local only debt to the new RSU. As Eric reported, SAD 5 had \$1.6 million in local only debt, SAD 50 had \$2.5 million and the level of other debt was very similar (\$3.1 million for SAD 5 and \$2.9 million for SAD 50). John Spear also pointed out that, with the State's funding formula, payments on the local only debt would impact SAD 50 more than it would SAD 5: the local only debt payments for 2007-2008 are \$557,070 for SAD 5 and \$339,000 for SAD 50, while the payments would become \$511,000 for SAD 5 and \$385,000 for SAD 50 in the new RSU.

It was noted that while the new RSU would be taking on these debts, it would also be taking on ownership of the facilities. It was agreed that local only debt would also be passed along to the new RSU.

Eric requested consensus on the 3 issues.

1. Passing along all debt, including local only debt, to the new RSU. The Committee agreed by consensus, with Bill, Jamie and David Matthews agreeing they could live with it.
2. Passing along summer salaries and benefits, with the districts providing funding. The Committee agreed by consensus.
3. Passing along the general fund balance to the new RSU, with credit back to each municipality. The Committee agreed by consensus.

Contracts & Collective Bargaining – Nancy reported the Sub-committee had prepared 2 lists of employees: a non-aligned group which is not covered by collective bargaining, and a list of collective bargaining units for each district, which employees are covered by the different units and when the contracts expire.

Finance – Bill reported the Sub-committee had completed most of the transition plan; however, they were still working on a dollar figure for Boards to budget for the new RSU and a dollar figure to budget for the interim.

He also reported the Sub-committee and the Business Managers were still working on cost savings.

Also yet to be determined was the reorganization of the administration, transportation, building and maintenance and special education areas of the new RSU.

Cost-sharing group – The group is awaiting information from the State. However, all agreed that the referendum for the new RSU would not pass if there were vast cost-shifts. The Business Managers have found that a great deal of the cost-shift lies in the elementary education costs, specifically in "specials"; that is, art, music and extra-curricular activities. There is also a less dramatic cost-shift in secondary education. They continue to review whether it would be easier to develop a phase-in plan over 1-3 years and whether this would be acceptable to the State.

b) Next meeting – Due to scheduling conflicts, the Joint Board Meeting will take place Tuesday, November 27, at 6:30 PM in the Rockland District High School Auditorium.

7. **Other Business** – The Friends of Many Flags will hold their final public form, followed by a straw vote, on Thursday, November 16, at 7 PM at Rockland City Hall. Also, the Co-Chairs, group leaders, Mary Jane and Ann will meet on Tuesday, November 20, at 6:30 PM at Rockland City Hall to go over the draft Plan.

10. **Adjourn** – The Committee will meet again Tuesday, November 27, at 6:30 PM in the Rockland District High School.

Respectfully submitted,
Ann Matlack, Recorder