

SAD 5 / SAD 50 REORGANIZATION PLANNING COMMITTEE
February 7, 2008 – Rockland City Hall

Present: Committee Members

SAD 5

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

SAD 50

Jamie Doubleday, Thomaston
Bob Worthing, Cushing
David Cobey, Cushing
John Falla, St. George
Bill Reinhardt, St. George
Terry Driscoll, St. George

Superintendents – Judy Harvey, SAD 50
Business Managers – John Spear, SAD 50

Facilitator – Mary Jane McCalmon

Recorder – Ann Matlack, St. George

Members of the Public – Chris Rector, State Representative, Thomaston

1. Co-Chair Jamie Doubleday opened the meeting at about 6:30 PM.
2. On a motion by Dick, seconded by David Cobey, the minutes were approved as presented.
3. **Public Comment** – Representative Chris Rector distributed a Comparison of the Three LD 1932 Proposals as prepared by Steve Bowen of the Maine Heritage Policy Center. He told the Committee the Legislature was still working on the fixes for the reorganization law, but that the tinkering would end April 16 with the close of the Legislative session. He also said the Rural Caucus had presented the concerns of their RSU Committees to the Legislature.
4. **Old Business** –
 - a. Mary Jane told the Committee there was a lot of frustration with the way LD 1932 was being handled in the Legislature. She also said that each RPC would be receiving an additional \$2,500 for expenses incurred through what has become a lengthy and complicated reorganization process. She said some Reorganization Planning Committees had decided to postpone any further meetings until the Legislature had completed its work on LD 1932. The greatest concerns of the RPCs were how to handle the funding formula problems and the budget validation referenda

Eric asked how the law would handle individual communities that wanted to spend more on their schools than was budgeted. Mary Jane said Mount Dessert's Plan had been rejected because the RSU Board gave away too much authority to local communities.

Jamie asked about penalties for not meeting deadline, since it appeared the Committee would not have finished its work in time to meet the deadlines. All work would have to be completed by April 1 in order to meet the June deadline. Mary Jane said that very few plans statewide would be completed on time and that the Committee should be prepared to submit a preliminary plan as they had in November.

- b. Jamie explained that the Committees Plan had been accepted by the Department of Education, although parts had been rejected; for example, under Governance, the new Board structure was sent back. Additionally, some parts of the Plan had not been completed when it was submitted; for example, the Cost-Sharing Formula.

5. Sub-committee reports

- a. **Governance** – Paul said he was not sure why the plan had been rejected, since it was within the deviation set by the DOE. Judy Harvey explained that she and John Spear had recalculated the formula based on a correction from DOE and found that the Committee’s one-man, one-vote configuration was outside the total deviation now called for by DOE. While it was suggested that going to Augusta to discuss the problem with DOE might be an option, it was agreed that the Committee would spend the money for a legal opinion from Drummond & Woodsum rather than wait on DOE.
- b. **Finance** – The Finance Sub-Committee has continued to meet and work on the funding formula. It was estimated that the current school districts would need to allocate about \$130,000 in FY 2009 for the “work up period”; that is, the transition period prior to the two districts becoming one. The cost for SAD 5 is estimated to be \$64,193; the cost for SAD 50 is estimated to be \$61,669. These funds would include money for the new School Board; 8 months expenses for a Superintendent, Business Manager, a finance assistant, a part-time technology person; and legal services.

Model staffing for the work-up year and the first 2 years have been developed. Due to the differences in salary scales at SAD 5 and SAD 50, it is estimated that the cost increase for teachers’ salaries alone for the first year, not including benefits or education support personnel, would be about \$210,000. However, because of the effects of collective bargaining, cost-savings elsewhere and budgets to be developed by an as yet to be elected School Board, most of the cost increases/decreases are incalculable. Mary Jane reminded the Committee that while a new School Board could develop whatever budget it felt was best, they would be under great political pressure to follow the plan laid out by this Committee.

Paul wanted to know whether state money allocated for “legal expenses” could be used to offset the expenses of ironing out new contracts. Mary Jane said no, but that the Commissioner was looking for “unspent” funds that could be used to offset some of these expenses.

Jamie told the Committee that a Cost-Sharing Sub-Group had been created to work on the cost-sharing formula. She said there were no easy answers to making the formula fair and equitable for everyone, and that developing a plan acceptable to all communities was harder than anticipated. The Sub-Committee was looking at 3 scenarios, which included both student population and property valuation: a 50/50 split; a 25 student population / 75 property valuation split; or a 100 valuation basis. The problem was that spending for EPS is much higher in SAD 50 than in SAD 5. Another problem was whether or not the Legislature would allow the Committee to develop a cost-sharing formula that was different than currently mandated.

Mary Jane will check on whether the current methods for altering cost-sharing formulas and school board composition will be used in the new SAUs.

- c. **Contracts and Collective Bargaining** – This Sub-Committee has completed its work.
 - d. **Assets and Liabilities** – This Sub-Committee has completed its work.
6. **Element 13, Sections A thru L**
- A. **Plans to reorganize administration, transportation, building and maintenance and special education** – Mary Jane said that the point of this section was to make sure the reorganized district does not adversely affect these areas. David Matthews said there were models on the DOE website.
 - B. **Cost Sharing in Regional School Units** – In progress.
 - C. **Election of initial board of directors** – Done.
 - D. **Tuition Contracts and School Choice** – Does not apply.
 - E. **Claims and Insurance** – Waiting for a closer date to complete.
 - F. **Vote to submit reorganization plan to Commissioner** – Votes will be needed for update and final.
 - G. **Section for RSUs with fewer than 2,500 students** – Done.
 - H. **Collaborative Agreements** – Need narrative on cooperation with SAD 40.
7. **Next Meeting** – To be determined.
8. **Other Business** – Jeff suggested a Communications Planning Committee be set up to deal with planning for public hearings, forums and other informational meetings.
9. **Adjourn** – The Committee adjourned its meeting at 8 PM.