

**Regional School District 13
Utilization Study Committee
December 17, 2015**

Committee members present: Kerrie Flanagan, Victor Friedrich, Merrill Adams, Norm Hicks

BOE Members present: Jeremy Renninghoff, Francis Willett, and Bob Moore

Staff Members present: Dr. Veronesi, Mr. Melnik

Guest: Mr. Ed Arum, Consultant

The meeting was called to order at 4:07 p.m.

Public comment: None

On a motion by Mr. Nicks, second Mrs. Adams, agenda was unanimously approved.

On a motion by Mr. Hicks, second Mrs. Adams, the minutes of the meeting of December 3, 2015 were unanimously approved.

Mrs. Flanagan thanked everyone for attending, and introduced Mr. Ed Arum, Consultant, to give information regarding guidance and support on closing Korn and possibly Lyman schools. Mrs. Flanagan also stated that Dr. Veronesi recommended Mr. Arum, and worked with him in Hebron. Mr. Melnik also worked with him, and stated that his scope of work is beyond their expertise as far as what building projects need to get done before the closing of any school.

Mr. Arum informed the committee that he just closed a school in New Milford, CT. He mentioned that he had seventeen focus groups with parents and staff. Mr. Arum suggested that questions be put on the district website in a separate section specifically designated to the district steps and changes.

Mrs. Flanagan asked Mr. Arum what arrangement works best to firm up a time frame. Dr. Veronesi also asked Mr. Arum how he would go forward. Mr. Arum suggested that a walk-through of the schools be done in order to evaluate what needs to be done to accommodate changes.

Dr. Veronesi stated that a timeline has to be constructed, and stated that they are looking at Brewster to be a K-5 school. Mrs. Veronesi also stated that a recommendation needed to be made to the Board to close Lyman.

Dr. Veronesi stated that if the timing is worked correctly, the closing of Lyman would accommodate the moving to Memorial.

Dr. Friedrich stated to Mr. Arum that these questions would need to be answered, "...at what point do we need to make a decision...", "...what needs to be done before the closing of Lyman goes before the Board...".

Mrs. Adams stated that not everyone knows about the closing of Lyman.

Mrs. Flanagan stated that she is not comfortable with the closing of Lyman, and that a lot of work would need to be done to make the community comfortable. Mrs. Flanagan also stated that a decision would need to be made soon. Mrs. Flanagan suggested that the committee get a package of information together to have the confidence to move forward.

Mr. Arum stated that he could help write the RFP for an architect, and suggested making a list of what needs to be updated at Memorial and Brewster.

Mrs. Adams asked Mr. Arum if we would save money on an architect if the DRA report was used. Mr. Arum stated that it would be a cost savings.

Mr. Arum stated that he would show in his estimates a column of cost to “renovate as new”, and a column reflecting “renovate as needed”.

Mrs. Flanagan stated that steps would be to develop a timeline and work on the RFP.

Mr. Willett stated that people need to understand what the steps are and be able to have questions answered.

Dr. Friedrich suggested that the timeline be posted on the district website.

Dr. Veronesi asked Mr. Arum, “Where do we go from here, after this meeting, and what do we need to do as a committee”?

Mr. Arum suggested that the committee look at the school and assess the needs.

Dr. Veronesi stated that the critical part was to draft a timeline for the community.

Mrs. Flanagan asked Mr. Arum to work on proposals.

Mr. Hicks stated that in regard to the relocation, he wanted to make sure that everything was done right for the students.

Mrs. Flanagan stated that the changes would mean that students would be better serviced.

Mr. Willett stated that he met with both Selectmen to look at and gather “what if” information on Lyman and Korn to make it a simultaneous event.

Mrs. Flanagan stated that would make the Board’s decision easier.

Mr. Willett suggested writing a letter to the Board once they have all the information they can gather.

Dr. Veronesi stated that time is of the essence to meet the projections in the Milone & MacBroom report.

Mr. Melnik suggested that three appraisals be acquired. Mr. Willett stated that more than just an appraisal for the building would need to be done; a title search would also need to be done.

Mr. Melnik presented and discussed a Debt Capacity chart showing operational savings. Mrs. Flanagan asked Mr. Melnik to send the chart to the Board before the next Utilization Committee meeting scheduled for Tuesday, January 19, 2016.

Mr. Melnik stated that money has been allocated for the move for boxes, movers, pods, and any additional moving costs. Mr. Melnik also stated that the Korn budget would remain open.

Mrs. Flanagan asked Mr. Melnik to find out if the cafeteria can remain usable with the \$100,000 allocated to keep the Korn building usable. She also stated that the Board would want to know this information.

Dr. Veronesi stated that it would be beneficial to put something on the district website. Mrs. Adams suggested developing a Q & A for the district website. Mr. Willett stated that a designated section would be beneficial.

Dr. Friedrich and Mr. Willett suggested that Mrs. Flanagan and Dr. Veronesi go to Lyman PTA meetings, and Mr. Willett also stated that he has been working with the principals.

Mr. Willett suggested that the facts presented to the Board and the talking points of the true vision be posted on the website.

Dr. Veronesi and Mrs. Flanagan confirmed their attendance to the Lyman PTA meeting on Tuesday, February 2, 2016 at 6:30 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

Mrs. Flanagan asked Dr. Veronesi to get some PTA dates for Brewster.

Mrs. Flanagan confirmed the next BOE meetings on February 17, 2016 and February 24, 2016.

Mrs. Adams stated that she could assist with the Q & A for the website. Dr. Friedrich stated that it should be easily accessible, and suggested that Powerschool possibly be used.

Mr. Willett suggested that the information also be posted in the messages from the Superintendent.

Mrs. Flanagan stated that the information communicated to the parent community should be very specific.

Dr. Friedrich also stated that the information should be posted on the town website.

Public Comment: None.

The committee unanimously approved to adjourn at 5:45 p.m.