

Education Committee - Town of Arrowsic

Arrowsic Town Hall, February 10, 2015

[Draft by Camille Kauffunger]

Participants: David Howe, Anita Lichman, Wendy Briggs, Camille Kauffunger

Agenda:

1. Approve November meeting minutes.
2. Follow up on action steps.
3. Discuss West Bath School withdrawal.
4. Determine Next Steps.
5. Schedule next meeting.

1. Approve November meeting minutes.

Anita reported that any recommended changes were made and minutes were approved.

2. Follow up on previous action steps.

David followed up with Bill again for clarity regarding **confidentiality limits of RSU 1 student list**. Bill requested that he and David get together in person to discuss further. David agreed to follow up with his request and will get in touch with the Superintendent's office to confirm the earliest time the town can receive the new list. David conveyed that Bill also recommended that all Education Committee members attend the February RSU 1 board meeting on the 26th, which will be a "State of the District" report, and he informed David about the upcoming Annual Report and the committee's responsibility to write a letter/report about Education Committee activities and outcomes.

As agreed Camille attended the November board meeting and made note of **RSU 1 board member changes**. Tim Harkins announced at the meeting that David Barber from District 2 (West Bath and Bath) would be replaced in January by a Meghan Fuller. It isn't clear if the withdrawal of West Bath School will result in any board changes.

Camille discussed her phone call with Veta in the Superintendent's office about important dates related to **RSU 1 school registration**. The deadline for school registration is May 1st and decisions will be made by June 1st. Veta reinforced that Arrowsic students are in a "special category" and "bumped up a bit" for school choice, and she directed Camille to the RSU School Choice Policy (File #JFBB) for more details and policy language.

At Veta's recommendation, Camille also contacted Rosalie Perkins, RSU 1 CHOICES/Pre-K Coordinator, regarding registration for Pre-K for the 2015-2016 school year. The CHOICES program provides subsidized pre school hours for four year olds at certified CHOICES sites. Rosalie placed Camille on a list to receive notification of upcoming family information night to

learn about the program and participating pre-K sites. A lottery for subsidized Pre-K spots will be held in May (Date not yet determined). Although parents may not all get their top choice of sites, there has not been a waiting list to for Pre-K services. Currently there are still openings at many of the CHOICES sites for the current school year. The Education Committee agreed that when the date is set for the information night, an announcement, including a reminder about general RSU 1 registration, should go out to the town.

Camille also followed up with Veta about the RSU-1 student list and inquired how other towns verify the list and report back. Veta shared that we are the only town that she gets a formal response from and recommended that Mike Young, Town Administrator for Phippsburg, may have feedback about their town methods. Camille contacted Mike and learned that they don't have a formal system for tracking families. Mike explained that he reads through the list, and he shares it with the Selectmen and Treasurer for further review. Mike expressed that it's a small town and the town office generally knows all the families. If a name is not recognized, they research and track down the parent primarily through Motor Vehicle Registration, property tax information, and/or the voter registration. He also shared that they have on-line access to state driver license records if necessary but that Motor Vehicle Registrations seem most helpful.

The Education Committee agreed that a formal system of tracking school age children is still desired to eliminate the risk of approving an inaccurate RSU 1 student list and to solve the town's need to maintain an accurate record of all children, not just RSU 1 students. The possibility of holding a working session with committee members and appropriate Selectmen or town staff was discussed. It was noted that it would be helpful to learn who does school registration paperwork for the town and how errors on the list were caught in the past.

3. West Bath School Withdrawal from RSU 1

The number of Arrowsic families attending West Bath School was discussed. Camille believes only her son, a first grader, and one current fifth grader, attend the school. All current non West Bath students (Choice students) will be grandfathered in but families/siblings will not be.

Camille contacted Tim Harkins via email and asked for input on what the Education Committee should be most aware of related to the withdrawal. Tim indicated it's not yet possible to say what the net effect will be to Arrowsic as there are too many other budget unknowns (school district retirements versus new hires, other budget cuts/additions etc) but he suggested Debra in the central office should be able to provide a rough figure of what the district will see in terms of lost revenue and reduced expenses due to the withdrawal of West Bath. David recalled from an October withdrawal related meeting, that the board estimated that the town may see around an 8,000 dollar budget increase.

Camille also shared that Tim encouraged the committee to attend Board meetings, especially the February "State of the District" report. According to Tim, this meeting helps to shape many of the decisions that the board makes during the budget process.

4. Next Steps

David will get a binder for our minutes and other relevant documentation to be added to the town hall row of committee binders.

David will confirm deadline for Annual Report Letter and next steps will be decided at future meeting. The committee wondered if the Annual Report might be a place to communicate our need to track students on the island and learn about education needs.

Camille will follow up with Bill and other recommended parties about having a working session at the next meeting with the goal of deciding how to handle the upcoming RSU 1 student list and problem solving around a process to test moving forward to help proactively capture all school age children moving forward.

Camille will monitor and follow up with Rosalie Perkins as necessary to learn the open house date for pre-school lottery.

NOTE: Since the last meeting, the CHOICES/Pre-K information night for parents was scheduled for 6pm on April 30th, 2014 at Dike Newell School, 3 Wright Drive, Bath. The application process for the upcoming school year will be explained and reps from each of the CHOICES sites will describe their programs.

Wendy reinforced that the Education Committee can help to support parents that may feel isolated. She inquired with Camille whether her family needed the town to help advocate for her younger daughter to be accepted at West Bath in the future. Given Camille's family hasn't made a decision about keeping Ren at West Bath, she expressed being uncertain of their advocacy needs at this point.

Anita suggested that we use future meeting minutes to keep a running list of the monthly/routine responsibilities of the Education Committee as we learn about them, so that we can proactively assign tasks and have a record for the following year.

5. Next Meeting

Next meeting is scheduled for March 9th from 6-7