TIMELINE:

- Notices went out looking for members to be on a Middle School Facility Advisory Committee to investigate possibly building a new consolidated middle school.
- Meetings were held with this committee.
- Letters were sent questioning the whole process and "What could they be thinking."
- Catriona Sangster was invited to come to the Selectboard meeting to answer questions and explain the whole process
- Catriona Sangster was invited to the Revitalization Committee meeting to answer questions to the Business Group.
- There were 11 options that were formed. These were narrowed down to 7 and then 3.
- On June 4, Catriona, as the MSFAC Chair, recommended 3 options to the School Board on behalf of the Committee:

At this time, the Committee recommends that the School Board Consider three possible options moving forward:

1. *Renovate JSMS and build a new 6-8 Windham Middle School on the current Windham Campus*

1A. Renovate JSMS and build a new 5-8 Windham Middle School, making Manchester grades 3-4 and WPS PreK-2

2. *Build a new consolidated Middle School on the current Windham Campus (grades 6-8)*
3. *Renovate RES to be grades PreK-6, WPS PreK-2, Manchester grades 3-4, New consolidate Middle School on current Windham Camps with grades 5-6 Windham only pod and grades 7-8 Windham Raymond pod*

QUESTIONS ASKED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, PAULA GRAVELLE:

- Will Windham be able to out vote us if we want to separate? *No, because the split is treated like a divorce. "husbands can't tell wives what to do during a divorce."*

- Will there be any penalties if we divorce? *No, Governor LePage dropped all fees at the current time.*

- Do we have to consolidate with another School if we divorce from the RSU we are currently in? *No. We can stand alone but we need a 10 year contract with a high school for our high schoolers.*

- How do we know the amount to set aside for the divorce? *It is a crapshoot. Every school is different. Some spend a lot and some not so much. It all depends on how much you want to do yourselves as a town and how much you want an attorney to do. (*Saco spent close to $30,000. Dixfield put aside $50,000 but only spent $7-8000.)

  Article: "Do you favor filing a petition for withdrawal with the board of directors of regional school unit (name of regional school unit) and with the Commissioner of Education, authorizing the withdrawal committee to expend $ (insert dollar amount) and authorizing the (municipal officers; i.e., selectpersons, town council, etc.) to issue notes in the name of the (name of municipality) or otherwise pledge the credit of the (name of municipality) in an amount not to exceed $ (insert dollar amount) for this purpose? Yes No"

- How hard would it be to set up a budget for the town without actual numbers? *Since your consolidation was only a couple of years ago, take that budget and try and bring it as current as you can.* (Norma has back up discs of school information).

- If we divorce, do the buildings in Raymond (RES/JSMS) automatically come back to the town/does the town own them? *They are the property of the RSU and will need to be negotiated. I have seen 16 withdrawals in 2 years and there has never been a problem with the town getting the buildings back BUT it is something to be aware of.*

- What would the subsidy from the State be like? *Once you vote to establish a committee to separate, request a form 279 from me (Paula) and it will show you what subsidy you will be getting. I will send you the current RSU 14 279 to see what the RSU is getting for subsidy.*

CURRENT CONCERNS:

- New school costing approximately $32-$42 million. NO STATE FUNDING. Major tax increase to residents of Raymond. On a $250,000 home, a possible $397 could be added to their taxes.

- Not if, but WHEN they close JSMS, families with kids will have their middle schoolers leaving their houses before 6:00 a.m. to ride the buses to get to school in Windham. Families have concerns now about how long their kids are on the buses just in Raymond.

- Lack of say/control. If Raymond does not take a step now, then the school board is going to take it as we don't care if they build a new school. We will have NO say in the Millions more dollars they will be spending of Raymond's money.

- Because this school would be 100% over EPS, the school will be split at the 65/45% ratios.

- We are currently using 2006 figures and should be using 2010 figures. I sent a letter to Catriona Sangster on March 25 asking for new numbers to be ran.

    - Good Morning Catriona!
    - I had a conversation with Department of Education and one of the things that was brought up was the breakdown of the way Windham and Raymond are paying for the RSU is based on 2006 numbers (and valuations). She suggested that we request new data run and update the way the towns pay. The year we should currently be using is 2010, I believe.

      Therefore, I am requesting that new data be run and presented to both towns. I am requesting this information because I feel Raymond is paying an unfair share (paying more than they should be). Over EPS numbers show we are paying 44 ½% and Windham paying 55 ½%.

      Thank you, Teresa

- Because there was no response, I sent another letter to Catriona on May 22:
-

    Good Morning Catriona!

    On March 25, I sent you a request to have new numbers ran based on what Windham and Raymond pays (we are paying based on 2006 figures). It has been pretty much 2 months with no response. Could you please give me an update?

    Hi Teresa

    I'm sorry, I thought I had responded.

What I believe you're referring to is the funding formula which was created at the time of consolidation. The board will be voting on the funding formula at the June 4th meeting.

We have had a very busy year negotiating 3 professional contracts, among other things. In addition, it has been a year of transition, with three new board members, including one joining late - after the Nov election. As such, we have not had time that is necessary to devote to the funding formula.

The plan is to retain the formula as it stands in June. (we are required by law to vote on the formula by June 30th). This does not preclude us from reviewing the formula thereafter, and we have already put the wheels in motion for a board workshop in August/September to focus on this.

Hope this helps. Best, Catriona

- On June 4, the School Board voted to not review cost sharing plan by June 30, 2014. It is now August and we still do not have the new valuation figures.

On a motion by Marge Govoni, Seconded by Catriona Sangster, the Board voted 6-0 to approve the decision to not review the RSUs cost sharing formula prior to June 30, 2014:

"In accordance with Section 13.B.9 of the RSU14 Reorganization Plan, the Board of Directors for RSU 14 hereby decides not to review the RSUs cost sharing formula prior to June 30, 2014."

POSSIBLE IMPACT ON RAYMOND IF NEW SCHOOL IS BUILT:

- Higher taxes
- JSMS will close and Raymond kids will be bussed to Windham.
- Raymond will lose future families moving into Raymond because of lack of schools and high taxes.
- Business won't want to build in Raymond. This will cause lack of revenue for Raymond, loss of Economic Development and defeats the whole Revitalization Purpose.
- Businesses will start to relocate out of Raymond.
- House values will drop without schools.
- Huge loss of Revenue coming into Raymond;

NEXT STEPS:

- I have the required signatures (we needed 227 and I have 352) on a Petition to Start the Withdrawal procedure. It is step one of the required steps.

- I am asking the Selectboard to call and hold a Special Town Meeting to take a vote on whether to move forward with the Petition to Withdrawal. Please see Step #2 below.

- Many people stated many reasons for wanting to sign the Petition and withdrawal from the RSU. The main reason that I believe we should withdrawal is the fiscally irresponsibility of the school board by wanting to build a new facility and not use the current buildings the RSU has, and therefore putting a huge financial burden on the people of Raymond.

Thank you!!!

Procedures for Withdrawal from a Regional School Unit

Title 20-A MRSA §1466: Withdrawal of a single municipality from a regional school unit. - Link to Statute

Important Deadline:

In order for a town to withdraw from a Regional School Unit, the final referendum vote to approve the withdrawal agreement must have been completed by January 31 of the year in which the town hopes to withdraw effective July 1.

Any referendum vote on a withdrawal agreement held after January 31 would not be effective until July 1 of the following year.

Steps to be followed in the Withdrawal Process:

A town that wishes to withdraw from a Regional School Unit shall do so in compliance with 20-A MRSA §1466: Withdrawal of a Single Municipality from a Regional School Unit.

A Withdrawal Agreement cannot be executed unless there is documentation that each of the 22 steps has been followed in the specified order. This document is intended to assist in the interpretation of statute, but not replace statute.

Step 1: A petition requesting withdrawal from a regional school unit signed by at least 10 percent of the number of voters in the municipality who voted for Governor in the last gubernatorial election is presented to the municipal officers.

- Link to General Election Tabulations dated November 2, 2010
- Link to Sample Petition

Step 2: The municipal officers shall call and hold a special election (article) to vote on whether or not to officially start the withdrawal process.

- The article must specify a dollar amount to be raised to support legal and other withdrawal process costs.

- The article to be voted upon must be in substantially the following form per 20-A MRSA §1466 (2):

Article: "Do you favor filing a petition for withdrawal with the board of directors of regional school unit (name of regional school unit) and with the Commissioner of Education, authorizing the withdrawal committee to expend $ (insert dollar amount) and authorizing the (municipal officers; i.e., selectpersons, town council, etc.) to issue notes in the name of the (name of municipality) or otherwise pledge the credit of the (name of municipality) in an amount not to exceed $ (insert dollar amount) for this purpose? Yes No"

Step 3: At least 10 days before the election, the municipal officers shall hold a posted or otherwise advertised public hearing on the petition (article).

Step 4: The petition (article) must be approved by secret ballot by a majority vote of the voters present and voting before it may be presented to the district board of directors and to the Commissioner of Education.

Step 5: If the vote is favorable, the town clerk shall immediately give written notices, by registered mail, to the secretary of the regional school unit (in a regional school unit the Superintendent of Schools serves as the secretary per 20-A MRSA §1055) and to the Commissioner of Education, which shall include:

A. The petition (article) adopted by the voters, including the affirmative and negative votes cast; and

B. An explanation by the municipal officers, stating to the best of their knowledge the reason or reasons why the municipality seeks to withdraw from the regional school unit.

Step 6: The Commissioner shall direct the municipal officers of the petitioning municipality to establish a Withdrawal Committee to develop a Withdrawal Agreement in the format specified in the "Required Elements of a Withdrawal Agreement," per 20-A MRSA §1466(4).

The Four Member Withdrawal Committee shall include members appointed as follows:

A. One member from the municipal officers.

B. One member from the general public.

C. One member from the group filing the petition.

D. One member of the regional school unit board who represents that municipality.

Step 7: The chair of the regional school unit board shall call a meeting of the withdrawal committee within 30 days of the notice of the vote in Step 5. The chair of the regional school

unit board will open and preside over the first meeting of the withdrawal committee until the committee elects a chair.

Step 8: The Withdrawal Committee shall negotiate a Withdrawal Agreement with the regional school unit board and shall submit the proposed agreement to the Commissioner within 90 days after the Committee is formed. The Commissioner may grant extensions of time upon the request of the withdrawal committee. See "Required Elements of a Withdrawal Agreement."

Step 9: Within 60 days of the receipt of the Withdrawal Agreement, the Commissioner shall either give it conditional approval or recommend changes.

Step 10(a): If conditional approval is given, the Commissioner shall notify the regional school unit board and the municipal officers by registered mail of the time and place of a public hearing at least 20 days prior to the date set for the hearing to discuss the merits of the proposed Withdrawal Agreement. The chair of the regional school unit board shall conduct the hearing.

Step 10(b): If changes are recommended, the Commissioner shall send the agreement back to the withdrawal committee for necessary corrections; establish a maximum time within which to make the corrections; and indicate that the corrected agreement must be returned to the commissioner for conditional approval before it goes to public hearing as set forth in Step 10(a).

Step 11: At least 10 days prior to the public hearing, the regional school unit board shall post a public notice in each municipality of the time and location of the hearing.

Step 12: Within 30 days following the public hearing, the Withdrawal Committee shall develop and forward the final Withdrawal Agreement to the Commissioner.

Step 13: On receipt of a final Withdrawal Agreement, the Commissioner may recommend changes. If the Commissioner recommends changes, the Commissioner shall send the final Withdrawal Agreement back to the Withdrawal Committee, establish a maximum time frame, and indicate the steps to be followed by the Withdrawal Committee.

Step 14: On receipt of a final Withdrawal Agreement for which the Commissioner recommends no changes, the Commissioner approves the final Withdrawal Agreement and determines the date upon which the municipality proposing to withdraw will vote on the Withdrawal Agreement. The vote shall be held as soon as practicable, and the Commissioner shall attempt to set the date of the vote to coincide with a statewide election.

Step 15: At least 35 days before the date of the vote as determined in Step 14, the Commissioner shall give written notice of the date by registered or certified mail to the town clerk or city clerk of the municipality petitioning to withdraw.

Step 16: The town clerk or city clerk shall immediately notify the municipal officers upon receipt of the notice under Step 15, and the municipal officers shall meet and immediately issue a warrant for a special town meeting or city election, as the case may be, to be held on the date designated by the Commissioner. No other date may be used.

- The municipal officers shall direct that the polls are to be open at least from 10:00 a.m. and remain open until 8:00 p.m.

Step 17: At least 10 days before the special town meeting or city election, the municipal officers shall hold a posted or otherwise advertised public hearing on the withdrawal question.

- The article to be voted upon must be in substantially the following form per 20-A MRSA §1466 (7):

Article: "Do you favor the withdrawal of the (name of municipality) from the regional school unit (name of regional school unit) subject to the terms and conditions of the withdrawal agreement dated (insert date)? Yes No"

- The withdrawal agreement need not be printed on the ballot. Copies of the agreement must be posted in the municipality in the same manner as specimen ballots are posted under Title 30-A MRSA §2528.

Step 18: The special town meeting or city election on the Withdrawal Agreement shall be conducted in accordance with Title 30-A MRSA §2528-2529 or Title 21-A MRSA, as applicable.

Step 19: The town or city clerk shall, within 24 hours of determination of the results of the vote on the Withdrawal Agreement, certify the total number of "yes" and the total number of "no" votes on the article to the Commissioner.

Step 20 [Effective for a municipality of a school administrative unit (SAD) that was reformulated as a regional school unit (RSU)]: If the Commissioner finds that a 2/3 majority of the voters voting on the article have voted "yes", the Commissioner shall notify the municipal officers and the regional school unit board to take steps for the withdrawal in accordance with the terms of the agreement for withdrawal.

Step 20 [Effective for a municipality of a regional school unit (RSU)]: If the Commissioner finds that a majority of the voters voting on the article has voted "yes", and the total number of votes cast for and against the article equal or exceed 50% of the total number of votes cast in the municipality for Governor at the last gubernatorial election, the Commissioner shall notify the municipal officers and the regional school unit board to take steps for the withdrawal in accordance with the terms of the agreement for withdrawal.

- Link to General Election Tabulations dated November 2, 2010

Step 21: When the district board of directors and the municipal officers of the town proposing to withdraw have executed the Withdrawal Agreement, they shall notify the Commissioner by certified mail.

Step 22: Once all of the above steps are completed, the Commissioner shall immediately issue a Certificate of Withdrawal to be sent by certified mail for filing with the regional school unit board and shall file a copy in the office of the Secretary of State, Corporate Division.

Please direct any questions to:

Paula Gravelle

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23 State House Station, Augusta, Maine 04333
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