

**Board of Education
Special Joint Meeting with Horseheads Central School District**

Minutes July 22, 2014

**ELMIRA HEIGHTS CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
ELMIRA HEIGHTS, NEW YORK**

Meeting Location - Multi-Media Center-Horseheads High School

Present (Horseheads): Apgar, Brinthead, Jacobus, Johnson, Lynch, Sadler
(Elmira Heights): Callas(arrived at 7:07 PM), Harris, Lepak, Sullivan, Willard, Wolowitz

Also Present: Bracey, Buzzetti, Fiore, Hillman, Marino, Scaptura

Absent (Horseheads): Boulas, Brinthead, Strollo
(Elmira Heights): Blish

Call to Order:

Horseheads Board President Brian Lynch called the Special Board Meeting of the Horseheads Central School District Board of Education to order at 6:00 PM.

Elmira Heights Board Vice-President Joe Sullivan called the Elmira Heights Board of Education Meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

Agenda - Moved by Harris, seconded by Willard.

RESOLVED, that the Elmira Heights Central School District Board of Education approve the recommendation to approve the Agenda of the July 22, 2014, Joint Meeting with the Elmira Heights Central School District Board of Education and the Horseheads Central School District Board of Education.

Ayes	Noes	Abstained	Absent
Harris			Blish
Willard			Callas
Lepak			
Wolowitz			
Sullivan			
MOTION CARRIED			

Welcome

Horseheads Board President Brian Lynch welcomed the Elmira Heights Central School District Board of Education and the public to tonight's meeting and stated the purpose of tonight's meeting is to hear a Presentation by Western New York Educational Service Council, to discuss SED Requirements and the Purpose of any Consolidation Study and Outline the Process for Soliciting Applications from the Community for Selection to the Community Advisory Committee(CAC). Brian stated that the Boards are really looking forwards to gathering all the information needed as the process progresses and the opportunity to learn and understand the processes involved as this will be a very long and complex Study.

**Presentation By Consultant—Western New York Educational Service Council
To Discuss SED Requirements and the Purpose of Any Consolidation Study**

Robert Christmann and Thomas Coseo, two of the four Consultants from Western New York Educational Service Council, presented the Boards with an overview of the Merger Process consisting of Introductions of the Team, the Timeline, Feasibility Study Report – Essential Question, Key Components, Roles, Responsibilities and Expectations of Western New York Educational Service Council, the Boards of Education and the Superintendents, the Communication Plan and Protocols and the Community Advisory Committee Selection Process. On behalf of Western New York Education Service

Council, Bob expressed deep appreciation to both Boards for the opportunity to work with the Districts and stated, "He has never seen any proposals as comprehensive or clearly thought out, very detailed-orientated and complete as was submitted by both Boards". Bob stated that Western has been very fortunate to be able to maintain the team of four consultants, himself, Thomas Coseo, Douglas Hamlin and Roger Gorhman who will be working with two of the best Superintendents you could find anywhere in New York State. Bob stated that Mary Beth Fiore and Ralph Marino are highly respected by their colleagues and people in the State Education Department.

Tom Coseo stated this is a very involved and complex Study that comprises of an exhaustive review of data with the Community Advisory Committee who will assist the consultants in developing key findings and recommendations. The consultants will present their final recommendations to both Boards upon completion of the Study. The Boards of Education controls the entire process. Tom stated that Doug and Roger were not able to attend tonight but will be prepared and ready to start the process in September.

Tom presented the Project Description, the Project Components, the 11 Tasks which consist of the following: Task 1—March 2014—SEQRA Review conducted by the Districts(Done), Task 2—April-June 2014—Boards of Education Develop Request for Proposals and Hire Consultant(Done), Task 3—July-August 2014—Boards of Education appoint Citizen Advisory Committee, Task 4, 5—September 2014-May 2015—Reorganization Feasibility Study conducted, Task 6—June 2015—Draft Reorganization Feasibility Report submitted to NYSED, Task 7—September 2015—Reorganization Feasibility Report submitted to respective Boards of Education, Task 8—October-November 2015—Public Meetings in the respective districts to review Reorganization Feasibility Report, Task 9—December 2015—Advisory referendum, “Straw Vote,” held in the respective communities. If positive vote in both communities, a letter from GST BOCES District Superintendent to NYSED requesting Commissioner of Education to authorize a new centralized district and Board of Education commencing on July 1, 2016. Bob emphasized that Tasks 4 and 5(September 2014-May 2015) will involve the collection of a tremendous amount of data which will be shared throughout the process with both Boards, the public and will also be put on the website. Bob stated we will be fully transparent so that the community is aware of the entire process every step of the way.

Tom stated that the Timeline is basically the same that was outlined in the RFP, however, it can be adjusted along the way. Tom reviewed the financial and building aid incentives of \$61 million in extra State Aid over the next 15 years if the Districts merge.

Tom reviewed the Essential Question of the Feasibility Study Report, “Would educational opportunities be sustained or enhanced for all students at similar or reduced cost to taxpayers by combining the two districts?” and also reviewed the Project Goals. The Project Goals consist of: Identify Operational Efficiencies, Determine Impact of Educational Opportunities for Students, 3. Provide Estimate of Potential Cost and Savings and Impact on Property Taxes.

Tom reviewed the Key Components of the Feasibility Study Report including Introduction, Methodology, History and Background Information for both communities and school districts, Student Enrollment Projections, Curriculum and Instruction(Analysis of everything we have and possibilities), Extracurricular and Athletic Programs, Fiscal Condition of the Districts(Consists of 3 Parts), Facilities, Support Services(Transportation, Food Service, Information Technology) and Personnel(Staffing, Contracts).

Elmira Heights Superintendent Mary Beth Fiore inquired as to the methodology, what the cost projections increase is and how do you determine how many staff need to be reduced to survive fifteen years out. Tom stated that we have worked in similar situations in the past and have experience in this area and will work with this based on class-size and what you would like to see in the future. We will analyze both Districts’ expenditures for the past five years and will use the average as we go forward. There will be some efficiencies so we will look at the merger to see where the potential savings could be realized. Tom stated the Team will work with both Superintendents to come up with some numbers to estimate the savings.

Tom stated that the Community Advisory Committee may want to take tours of both facilities to have a clear sense of the facilities so that they are able to come up with recommendations of what could go where. Analysis will be done on the Support Services(Transportation, Food Service, Information Technology). We will need to get a sense of distance and how long a student would be on a bus as we need estimated time of all runs for all levels(elementary, middle and secondary).

Tom also reviewed the responsibilities of Western New York Educational Service Council including conducting comprehensive data collection and analysis, organizing and facilitating the work of the Community Advisory Committee, conducting key interviews(superintendents, building administrators, teachers and support staff, town assessors, major employers, GST District Superintendent), serve as liaison to the New York State Education Department, assist in communication planning and education, write reorganization feasibility study report and review with the Boards of Education and communities next fall.

Outline The Process For Soliciting Applications From The Community For Selection To The Community Advisory Committee

Bob and Tom presented an overview of the process for soliciting applications from the community for selection to the Community Advisory Committee and the responsibilities of the Committee. Responsibilities include attending all scheduled meetings, maintain an open mind; actively participate in the process, study information and reports, bring personal ideas and perspective to the discussions, bring stakeholder perspectives to the discussions, work toward consensus decision-making, help draft recommendations and assist in communication planning and execution.

Tom stated that the size of the Community Advisory Committee is decided by the Boards and suggested that 40 is probably too many. Bob reviewed the Selection Process and stated that it should be a manageably-sized group with equitable representation from both communities. Participants should be selected from both internal and external constituencies, participants should be recognized as “Key Communicators” in their respective constituencies, District representatives should include students(Middle/High School), parents(Middle/High), teachers, administrators and support staff, community representatives should include arts, athletics and retired citizens. Tom suggested that the Teacher Union, support staff, a possible representative from Higher Education(Elmira College or Corning Community College), a retiree who is active in the Sr. Citizen Community should be represented on the Committee.

Horseheads Board President Brian Lynch stated that we should err on the high side for the number on the Committee because we may lose one or two per meeting due to conflicts in schedules. Brian suggested that 28 or 32 members would be a manageable Committee. Bob agreed that this would be a good number range of participants as it is expected that the participants will actively engage and will be anxious to speak. He further stated that if the Committee is too large, it will cut down on the dialogue that is necessary. The Committee needs to consist of people who are vocal, who are able to voice their thoughts for the group they represent.

Horseheads Board Member Warren Conklin inquired as to how frequently the Committee will meet. Tom stated that the Team will need to get together with both Superintendents to develop the protocol regarding the CAC meeting dates, time, etc. Tom stated that when working with other school districts the Committee met once a month, from 6:00 PM – 9:00 PM and a report was submitted to the Boards at the beginning, the middle and the end of the process. Tom stated that once they meet with the Superintendents the full year of meetings will be planned which will be very helpful when making decisions that need to be made in a timely fashion. We try to stay away from the school holidays and if a meeting needs to be cancelled due to weather, it will be rescheduled as soon as possible.

Elmira Heights Superintendent Mary Beth Fiore inquired as to what would happen if either District is not able to fill a specific category, also how do you determine residency?

Board Member Warren Conklin inquired if the business has to be in the community or does the owner of the business have to be a resident of the community? He stated there will have to be flexibility as Elmira Heights has less businesses.

Bob stated that both Districts need to have 16 people represent their District, however, if either District is not able to obtain a participant for a specific category that is fine as long as the number still equals 16. It is important that both Districts stay within the parameters that have been discussed. Bob stated that arts could be a parent who has a student in Band, Chorus, and athletics could be someone who organizes a team sport.

Advisory Committee Composition

Moved by Willard, seconded by Harris.

RESOLVED, that the Elmira Heights Central School District Board of Education approve the recommendation that the Community Advisory Committee consist of 16 people from the following categories: Veteran – 1, Student 1, Elementary Parent – 1, Middle School Parent – 1, High School Parent – 1, Teachers – 2, Administrators – 2, Support Staff – 2, Arts – 1, Athletics – 1, Business – 2, Retiree - 1. All need to be District residents.

Ayes	Noes	Abstained	Absent
Callas	Sullivan		Blish
Harris	Willard		
Lepak	Wolowitz		

MOTION CARRIED

Moved by Jacobus, seconded by Apgar.

RESOLVED, that the Horseheads Central School District Board of Education approve the recommendation that the Community Advisory Committee consist of 16 people from the following categories: Veteran – 1, Student 1, Elementary Parent – 1, Middle School Parent – 1, High School Parent – 1, Teachers – 2, Administrators – 2, Support Staff – 2, Arts – 1, Athletics – 1, Business – 2, Retiree - 1. All need to be District residents.

Ayes	Noes	Abstained	Absent
Apgar	Johnson		Boulas
Conklin	Lynch		Brinthaup
Jacobus	Sadler		Strollo

MOTION CARRIED

Application / Letter Forman

Horseheads Superintendent Dr. Ralph Marino stated that the Planning and Development Committee will work on the Application and the Letter that will be sent to the District residents. Ralph stated the letter could be similar to the one that was used in the Fall when recruiting members for the Focus Group. Membership to the Community Advisory Committee will be approved at both individual Board Meetings on August 28, 2014. The first meeting of the Committee will be held mid-September.

Board of Education Work Session

Process: Each Group Identified the Following Specific Questions Representing the Thinking of Individual Board Members

1. Equal representation on the Advisory Committee(Stakeholder Groups Equally Represented)
2. What programs will be added as a result of the Consolidation?
3. How does seniority work for the new District?
4. What does the instructional and non-instructional efficiencies look like? (Word like details)
5. How is new construction determined?
6. How is the size of the Board of Education determined?
7. Impact of tax cap and 10-year tax rate leveling?
8. Positive and negative impact of past consolidations?(For Academics, Arts, Athletics)
9. 100% of Students bussed in Horseheads, walkers in Elmira Heights Central School District
10. Will there be an equitable gain in instructional and/or extra-curricular opportunities for both Districts?(Increased courses for both current districts)
11. How will the impact on taxes benefit both entities? (Increase/Decrease per townships, etc.)
12. Will information include safety measures/security?
13. How are existing policies established?
14. How will we establish a new culture of the District and how will current cultures/atmospheres be impacted?
15. Impact on Staffing
16. Long-term impact when money is gone? Where is the critical point of decrease staff to dealing with finances in the future?
17. All impacts of formulas/ratios advantages/disadvantages of separate versus new.

Adjournment

Moved by Jacobus, seconded by Apgar

RESOLVED, that the Horseheads Central School District Board of Education adjourn from its Special Joint Meeting with the Elmira Heights Central School District Board of Education at 7:35 PM.

Ayes		Noes	Abstained	Absent
Apgar	Johnson			Boulas
Conklin	Lynch			Brinthaup
Jacobus	Sadler			Strollo

MOTION CARRIED

Moved by Willard, seconded by Lepak.

RESOLVED, that the Elmira Heights Central School District Board of Education adjourn from its Joint Meeting with the Horseheads Central School District Board of Education at 7:35 PM.

Ayes		Noes	Abstained	Absent
Callas	Sullivan			Blish
Harris	Willard			
Lepak	Wolowitz			

MOTION CARRIED

Minutes prepared by Clerk Pro-Tem
Candy L. Maine, District Clerk Horseheads

District Clerk