MEETING MINUTES – FY2017

Rowe School Committee
Wednesday, November 9, 2016 – 7:00pm
Buckland-Shelburne Elementary School – Shelburne Falls MA

Present: Susie Zavotka (SZ) and Ellen Miller (EM)
Absent: Janet Cowie (JC)
Also Present: Mohawk: School Committee members Lark Thwing (Chair), Martha Thurber (Vice Chair), Emily Robertson, Glenn Cardinal, Evelyn Locke, Joe Kurland, Nina Martin-Anzuoni, Suzanne Crawford, Budget Litchfield, Ken Rocke, Heather Davis, Leslie Rule and Jason Cusimano, and Secretary Patricia Donahue; Superintendent Michael Buoniconti and Business Administrator Mike Kociela
Audience: Several unnamed persons

Call to Order: SZ called the meeting to order at 7:00pm.

Presentation by Rowe:
Chair Susan Zavotka addressed the Mohawk School Committee by disseminating and reading aloud the following statement:

The Rowe School Committee requested to be on the agenda in order to inform the Mohawk School Committee about their process of making the decision to rejoin Mohawk. There are some items that need to be resolved before Rowe can vote. We are not expecting a resolution at this meeting, but simply want the entire committee to understand the situation and why Rowe has not yet scheduled a date to vote.

August: Rowe School Committee met jointly with Rowe BOS and Fin Com to review the primary issues related to the vote to rejoin MTRSD. The intent was to prepare accurate and meaningful information for Rowe residents. November 16th [2016] was tentatively set for the vote. During this meeting, the group raised questions about information provided by Mohawk related to the current Rowe tuition calculation formula and the subsequent figures used to show financial comparisons of rejoining the district vs. remaining on a tuition basis.

September: Representatives from Rowe SC, BOS, and Fin Com. met with Michael Buoniconti and Mike Kociela to seek clarification. There were no clear answers.

October 20: Rowe School Committee created an alternative tuition calculation formula based on their interpretation of the Regional Agreement. The Committee sent a letter to Lark Thwing requesting a review of these new tuition calculations and subsequent alternate financial comparisons (to join or not to join). The letter also requested a meeting with the Mohawk School Committee.

October 26: Rowe School Committee met with representatives of the Mohawk School District to discuss and hopefully resolve the question of how to legally and accurately calculate Rowe's tuition according to the regional agreement. Information was shared, but no resolution was reached.

November 2: Rowe School Committee met with Rowe BOS and Fin Com to present information. The group determined to delay the vote to rejoin Mohawk until questions related to the tuition calculation could beresolved.

Current Plan: The Rowe School Committee, Rowe BOS, and Rowe Finance Committee have requested to meet with representatives from the Mohawk Trails Regional School Committee to come to an agreement on the correct way to calculate the Rowe tuition and the most accurate way to present a financial comparison of Rowe being a member of the district or paying a tuition. We are asking that this meeting be held during the month of November.

It was agreed that members of the Mohawk School Committee Budget Subcommittee and school administration would meet with Rowe officials (SchCom, BOS and FinCom) to discuss the tuition calculation and assist in developing financial information. Supt. Buoniconti's secretary Karen Totman will set up the meeting for some time in the next week or two. A town meeting vote in Rowe will need to be taken by May 2017. If Rowe does vote to rejoin Mohawk, it would not take effect until the 2017-2018 school year. Chair Thwing thanked the Rowe officials for attending their meeting.

Adjournment: At 9:11pm EM made a motion to adjourn the meeting. SZ seconded motion and the vote was unanimous (2/0/0).

Signature: _____

Susan Zavotka, Chair

Date Approved: _____

Information presented at the MTRSD School Committee Meeting
November 9, 2016
Susan Zavotka, Chair, Rowe School Committee

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