MEETING MINUTES – FY2017

Rowe School Committee
Wednesday, November 22, 2016 – 5:00pm
Mohawk Regional High School – Buckland MA
Superintendent's Conference Room

Present: Susie Zavotka (SZ), Janet Cowie (JC) and Ellen Miller (EM)

Also Present: Mohawk SC: Lark Thwing and Martha Thurber; Rowe: Dennis May (BOS), Ray Wilson and Wayne Zavotka (FinCom); Mohawk Supt. Michael Buoniconti and Mohawk Business Administrator Mike Kociela; Rowe Elem School Principal Bill Knittle

Audience: None

Call to Order: SZ called the meeting to order at 5:03pm.

The group discussed the November 10, 2016 letter sent by the Rowe School Committee to the Mohawk School Committee asking for concurrence on Rowe's interpretation of the tuition basis stipulated in the Regional District Agreement (RDA). The below information was included in that letter:

Item	*RDA Ref*	*Tuition Basis for Rowe 7-12 Pupils per RDA*	*Current Tuition Basis Being Used*
1	Sec. IX(A)	Rowe SPED education will be provided	Rowe SPED education is provided
2	Sec. IX(B)	Rowe Transportation will be provided	Rowe Transportation has not been provided since FY2010
3	Sec. IX(C)	Tuition will be based on total Maintenance & Operations budget defined in Subsection VI(D)*, reduced by the following:	Tuition is based on total M&O budget defined in Subsection VI(D)*, reduced by the following:
		- Anticipated CommMA receipts to be used to defray such budget,	c.70 and c.71 aid are being used to reduce the M&O budget
		- Anticipated surplus revenue [E&D] to be used to reduce the budget, and	Not being used
		- Tuition income received in prior year	Not being used (last used in FY04?)
4	Sec. IX(C)	The net O&M budget is to be divided by total member town high school enrollment as of Oct 1st of previous FY.	Total enrollment of all towns (incl. Rowe) is being used as the denominator.
5	Sec. IX(D)	In the event MSC reduces the net M&O costs assessed to member towns by budget reduction or application of add'l revenue—irrespective of the source—that reduces M&O costs assessed to member towns, Rowe's tuition shall likewise be reduced. *[Such sources would incl. general revolving funds, Medicaid, Charter, interest]*	Not being used

*Should be Subsection VI(C). There is no Subsection VI(D).

Mohawk SC Chair Lark Thwing did state that the *Tuition Basis for Rowe 7-12 Pupils per RDA* listed above was the correct interpretation. There was no explanation as to why that basis is not currently being used. Mike Kociela did state that using that basis, Rowe's tuition for this year (FY17) would be $13,022 instead of the current rate of $13,275 [very similar numbers]. However, using that basis Mohawk would also be paying Rowe's FY17 transportation costs of $56,084.

Rowe officials did state that the purpose of this meeting was not to revisit what had happened in the past, but to get agreement on the tuition basis so that meaningful financial comparisons could be developed for presentation to Rowe voters. The general feeling of many that spoke was that the 33 year old tuition basis in the RDA probably does not reflect current costs to educate Rowe students, and that it would be appropriate to develop a tuition rate that fairly reflected those costs. This could be used as an additional option for Rowe voters. Options could then be: 1) rejoin Mohawk and delete all RDA references to Rowe tuitioning to Mohawk, or 2) remain on a tuition basis, but use a rate that fairly reflects Rowe's actual education costs. If neither option passes, the current RDA wording would remain in effect. Rowe's town meeting needs to be held by May 2017.

EM made a motion that as there have been changes in school finances since the 1983 inception of the tuition basis, that a subcommittee be formed to investigate a more relevant tuition rate for the future; which subcommittee will be made up of representatives from the Rowe School Committee, Rowe Selectboard, Rowe Finance Committee, Mohawk Budget Subcommittee, and Mohawk administrative staff. JC seconded the motion and it passed unanimously (3/0/0). The first meeting of the subcommittee was set for Thursday, Dec 15th at 2:00pm in the Mohawk superintendent's conference room.

Adjournment: At 6:24pm EM made a motion to adjourn the meeting. JC seconded motion and it passed unanimously (3/0/0).

Signature: _____

Susan Zavotka, Chair

Date Approved: _____

Attachments:

- Agenda
- Ltr to Mohawk SchCom dated 10 Nov 2016