

AOA Committee Meeting Hot Topic Articles – 2/8/2021 Follow up request

Actions Item

1a. Change how School Board Representatives are nominated and elected. We have an amendment proposal. Intention is that each town will nominate and elect their own representative.

STATUS: Approved by board and on special ballot for both Rochester and Stockbridge.

1b. Article 11 is confusing and conflicting. Is the warned document the legal document and does Article 11 contradict that? Can we get legal clarification on this? Do the voted-on articles stand-alone if article 11 is removed?

STATUS: RSUD Board discusses with legal council present. Concerns have been resolved.

2. Set in process regular Evaluation of Merger and Evaluation of the Articles committee (s) that creates standards and questions and has a report due to the public on a regular basis (one year, three years, etc.)

STATUS: The RSUD Board has decided this will be handled by holding an annual special meeting in January to conduct this self-evaluation.

Advisory

1. Problem: Majority vote is always unfair to the smaller town. Transparent mechanism: Is weighted voting legal?

LOGIC: Is there a way to make the voting equalized when the two towns do not have a proportionate balance of registered voters? Intention is to limit the feeling that Stockbridge will always be outvoted by Rochester.

STATUS: Based on direction from legal council there is not a known legal mechanism to change this situation.

2. Can the public have a vote/say in re-alignment of grades between buildings?

LOGIC: Both towns have expressed desires to keep resident children local to their campus. As a show of good faith can an agreement be made to allow the voters to be actively involved in any change that would alter the current Pre-k thru 6 structure being maintained at each campus.

STATUS: Based on advice from legal counsel this is a discretionary responsibility under the control of the RSUD Board. The RSUD Board agreed and felt it would maintain communication with the communities in advance of any such change being considered but would maintain control of such actions.

3. Amendment that board must propose only budgets that stay under the threshold.

LOGIC: The AOA contained a clause for the first year only to have the budget stay below the per pupil threshold. This was suggested as an effort to promote long term, fiscally responsible budget practices.

STATUS: Based on advice from legal counsel this is a discretionary responsibility under the control of the RSUD Board. The RSUD Board agreed and felt this would be an overly restrictive action that could lead to unknown complications should the state change any portion of the budget process in the future.

4. In lieu of a more equitable voting process can we prevent a one-sided large bond vote? Legal question. Is a moratorium voted by the board a solution?

LOGIC: Due to the impending vote presented to Stockbridge voters to dissolve the RSUD, can there be a freeze of all large spending. The intention is to limit additional debt being incurred within a union with an uncertain future.

STATUS: The RSUD Board felt that it is with in their responsibilities to present and communicate with the public any intention to enter a Bond without restrictions that could limit the capacity to address unexpected financial needs.

5. This may already be happening, but could there be Budget Coded (at the expense level) to reveal accounting at each campus. Intent: To reveal spending equity in real time at both campuses.

LOGIC: To create a mechanism that will allow financial information to pre presented to the Board, Public, Administrators..., that can help identify efficiencies, deficiencies, and trends.

STATUS: Coding is already happening in order to allow for this to happen.

Suggestions were presented to the Business Manager and Superintendent to enhance the reporting that is currently being presented.

6. How does a tie vote get broken in a school board vote? What if a board member Missing? Proxy vote?

LOGIC: How does a tie vote get resolved in order to avoid an issue being stalled from action?

STATUS: Legal counsel has stated that there is no option for a proxy vote or mechanism for resolving a tie outside of someone changing their decision within a re-vote.

Pending List

1. What are the consequences of the property disbursal article on the HS transfer to Town of Rochester? Pending

STATUS: It is unclear if the language differences have been evaluated to determine if there is a conflict, but there was a verbal understanding that all parties understood the intent of the situation.

2. Can we vote by percentages in each town as opposed to majority? Pending
With legal advisory.

STATUS: This is not a legal option.

3. Can the conditions of the merger that were mentioned in the planning period but not voted on be reviewed to see if there are important elements to re-introduce to the agreements.

LOGIC: The ratified Articles of Agreement, the BOE Presentation Document, and the video of the BOE presentation meeting captured only a portion of all the subject matter from the study phase. Is there subject matter that should be reconsidered in order to move the merger and longevity of the RSUD forward with positive progress for all.

STATUS: The consensus was that due diligence had been given to past initiatives and progress should move forward without the need to look back at old approaches.