

**TOWN OF WALPOLE
MEETING OF THE SELECTBOARD
CHARLESTOWN WITHDRAWAL INFORMATIONAL MEETING
FEBRUARY 13, 2020**

Selectboard Present: Steven Dalessio (Chair); Peggy Pschirrer; Cheryl Mayberry

CALL TO ORDER: Mr. Dalessio called this Meeting of the Selectboard to order at 5:55 PM. This is a Charlestown Withdrawal Informational Meeting. They plan to look at the Town of Walpole only. It is all about "IFs" at this time.

Mr. Dalessio opened the meeting to comments on this subject. They want to hear all the opinions that are out there from the people attending this meeting. He would like to talk about the pre-K and special ed. They will be using the same curriculum that the SAU establishes; however it probably will change. The Withdrawal will allow teachers to move around the district. Some Charlestown teachers could bump Walpole teachers. That is a possibility and could have an impact on the elementary school. We will see the biggest impact at the high school. If Charlestown elects not to send their students to FMRHS, there would be significant changes and an impact. Walpole will continue to pay their fair share of improvements. Walpole has always held their elementary and high school students in high regard and will continue to do so. In the first (transition) year, \$825,000+ will be added to Walpole's School taxes. Members of the five district towns met with Mr. Jim Fenn of the SAU for about four hours and went over the budget line-by-line. Mr. Fenn took some costs out and put some costs in. The 2nd, 3rd, 4th years costs are unknown. If Charlestown forms their own SAU, costs will probably change again. We will go from a single district SAU to a multi-district SAU. Right now we are doing one audit for the entire district but it would go to two audits. Additional reporting has to be done including reports to the State. There are some items in the budget that cannot be reduced if one town leaves. It would get divided by four towns. We do not know what will happen if this withdrawal is successful. The first thing that has to happen is that Charlestown has to pass this by a simple majority of 50%. If Charlestown fails, it does not matter what the other towns do. If it fails in the other four towns but passes in Charlestown, they have the right to have another vote taken; Appeal the first vote. No one has looked at the second year which is a big "IF".

Mr. Dalessio opened the meeting to comments and/or questions.

Mr. Steve Varone said there is a lot to discuss about this. Fall Mountain is a one district SAU. He referenced RSA Chapter 194-C – Section 194-C:9, School Administrative Units – Budget and RSA Chapter 194-C – Section 194-C:8 – Weighted Voting. They are subject to State law. Charlestown is paying about one third of the SAU costs. He spoke about the formula currently being used and how voting is done within the SAU.

Mr. Bill Stahl, Walpole's representative to the FMRSB Board, spoke about the FMRSB Board voting to not accept tuition for the Charlestown high school students. Charlestown students currently in the high school will remain but no new students will be accepted; no freshman in the next school year. Mr. Dalessio wanted everyone to know that the Town of Walpole is billed every month by the SAU. It is currently paying \$615,232/month.

A resident asked why the Articles of Agreement are not changing. Mr. Dalessio replied that if this vote passes, a change will have to be made to the Articles of Agreement. It will have to pass by 2/3rds majority vote.

Jackie Ronning, teacher at the FMRHS, pointed out that they have a huge investment in the FMRSD. All of this is being done by a small group of Charlestown residents with an agenda. There are a lot of concerned Charlestown citizens. The concern is for the children and their education which is critical.

Mr. Phil Shaw has been around the FMRSD since it was formed. This Withdrawal does not represent all of the Charlestown residents. They do want a formula that they will be happy with and can live with but that has not happened. Maybe set up a cooperative district? He thinks this is what Charlestown is looking for rather than a withdrawal from the district.

A resident questioned what changes will there be at the high school for Walpole students if Charlestown withdraws. Mr. Dalessio said there will be significant cuts at the high school but he does not know what they will be. The School District Board would have to decide.

Mr. Dalessio advised the Walpole Selectboard has talked about options. This would include running their own elementary school – Pre-K through 8th grade and then tuition out the High School student. No official research has been done.

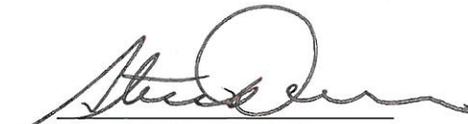
Mr. Stahl stated that if Charlestown stays in the district, he feels the FMRSD Board will do a complete study to get input from everyone and look at options with an open mind. Our accreditation will be affected.

Mr. Kevin Hicks feels everybody's taxes will increase. We need to open up lines of communication to solve everybody's issues. The State is not giving us any more money for education but they keep mandating more improvements /changes. We need to take this to the State to get them to help fund education. All this will not be fixed tomorrow but we will not know until we try. Let us work together to get this going.

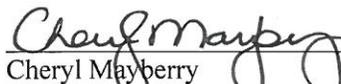
Mr. Craig Vickers said getting together and communicating with the State is great. The culture will be different if Charlestown leaves. We will not have the same education. A good education attracts people to the Town. This is all about the kids.

ADJOURNMENT: Mr. Dalessio thanked everyone for attending this meeting. He closed this Public Informational Meeting at 6:40 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Regina Borden, Recording Secretary


Steven Dalessio, Chair


Peggy L. Pschirrer


Cheryl Mayberry

(**Note:** These are unapproved Minutes. Corrections will be found in the Minutes of the February 20, 2020, Selectboard meeting.)