

**CALEDONIA CENTRAL SUPERVISORY UNION  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS SPECIAL MEETING  
BARNET, PEACHAM, AND WALDEN BOARDS  
AND  
MEMBERS OF THE WATERFORD SCHOOL DISTRICT  
Tuesday, May 31, 2016, 6:00 p.m., Barnet School**

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**Attendees:**

Barnet: Board Chair Louis Bushey, Board Members Robert Farlice-Rubio, Sue Roberts, Jim Schenck, and David Warden; Principal Shawn Gonyaw

Peacham: Board Member Jess Philippe

Walden: Board Chair Ray Lewis; Board Member Judy Clifford; Principal Liz Benoit

Waterford: Board Chair Heather Gonyaw; Principal Kelley Brooks

CCSU: Superintendent Dr. Mathew Forest, Consultant Peter Clarke

Members of the Public: Margaret McLean

**Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 6:06 p.m. by CCSU Board Chair Louis Bushey.

**Review of Financial Projections**

Consultant Peter Clarke reviewed the data from the financial model. Numbers used are not set in stone and a lot can happen with them. The model was designed to predict trend lines. The trend lines for making no change and for becoming a merged district were discussed. Making no change would result in loss of small school grants and hold harmless where applicable.

Becoming a district would result in some incentives (8,6,4,2), retaining small schools grants and hold harmless. All education spending and all equalized pupils would be used for a combined homestead rate. The difference between the two trend lines are the savings if there are any. The yield number is what the state is willing to pay per pupil. The yield number this year is 9,701. The lower the yield number goes, the higher the local taxes are. The model cannot predict the yield number for future years, so the same rate was used throughout. The local rate will be different depending on CLA. The model is set for a CLA of zero. The current grand list information was used for each town. If the list changes, the numbers will change. The model uses the same grand list throughout. What happens with equalized pupils and to education spending effects the tax rate. The changes in equalized pupils over the last five years was discussed. Barnet has remained fairly flat. Waterford on average has lost 1% a year. Walden has lost 3% a year and Peacham has lost close to 4% a year. For education spending, Barnet has averaged 3.6% increase each year, Peacham has averaged 2.11% increase, Walden has averaged 3.66% increase, and Waterford has averaged 3.87% increase each year over the last five years. The figure used in the model for the new district is 3%. FY2019 is the assumed date the new district comes into existence. \$16,681 is the estimated per pupil education spending and \$1.6395 is the estimated homestead rate. The law says a rate can only go up or down 5% from the current homestead rate. In the model, Barnet and Waterford are at the estimated rate. Peacham cannot drop to that rate. Walden is below the rate and can only go up by 5%. By FY2023, all the incentives are gone and everyone is at the same rate.

If nothing changes, the rate for Barnet over the next six years goes from 1.56 to 1.93; Peacham goes from 1.86 to 2.8058; Walden goes from 1.43 to 2.24; and Waterford goes from 1.55 to 2.103. If the district is formed, the small schools grant stays in place and hold harmless if applicable. Barnet's rate would go from 1.56 to 2.03 and shows no benefit by merging. The other three towns do show a benefit from merging.

Because Peacham is still unclear on their direction, numbers were put together without them as well. The new district ends up with a lower equalized pupil rate; Barnet is close to this number for equalized pupils. If all four schools want to stay together, the importance of 7/8 grade choice for the Peacham community needs to be decided. If Peacham decides to stay in the process, the model can be changed to factor in Peacham's 7/8 grade students.

There was a question whether the model could be run including the K-12 side to see what the impact would be. The data from the K-12 model was shared but Mr. Clarke said there would not be any impact from that. Mr. Clarke cautioned everyone not to look at the model and decide that is how the final numbers will be. The numbers can change and there may be an end result where everyone benefits a little or at least breaks even.

There was a question if the State at some point could make Peacham become part of the new district. Mr. Clarke said they could but could not force Peacham to give up 7/8 grade choice. They could possibly be put in the district with one Board for Peacham, one for the K-8 side, and one for the K-12 side. The State might also put them into Hardwick with other K-6 schools. Without Peacham, what happens on the K-12 side is very important. Mr. Clarke has met with Cabot and Twinfield, and they voted to form a 706 committee with three districts. Danville has new Board members so it might be awhile before they decide what to do. Danville might decide to move ahead with Cabot and Twinfield on the 706 committee. If Barnet, Walden, and Waterford do the same, Mr. Clarke recommended that Peacham be invited to that 706 committee as advisable. Two out of three towns on the K-12 and the K-8 side would need to vote in favor to come together to form the new district. If everyone is necessary, they have to vote yes. If everyone is advisable, only a certain percentage need to vote yes. Those voting no would have to make an alternate plan to present to the Agency of Education (AOE). The AOE could still place them into the new district. If Danville says no to Cabot and Twinfield, it is possible the K-8 group would be asked to join them to form a side by side and leave Danville to do their own alternate plan. If Peacham, as advisable, decides to give up 7/8 grade choice and decides to join and have a vote, the K-12 side does not have to be included. Barnet, Peacham, Walden, and Waterford could move ahead and form a Regional Education District (RED) with Cabot and Twinfield. Depending on what Danville decides to do, there may be another option to discuss. This cannot be discussed until Danville decides on the direction they want to go. There was discussion regarding keeping the four CCSU schools together and not leaving Danville out of the district.

There was discussion regarding forming the 706 committee and if there were reasons not to do it now. Mr. Clarke recommended moving ahead with the committee because there is still more information needed that can be gathered through the 706 process. Even if at the end, everyone decides it does not make sense, the information would be available to present to the State to show why it would not be right for the district. It may be that the best thing is some alternate

structure that might not have any incentives but is the best thing for the students. Having all data in hand will help make a case for an alternate structure that would work for students.

Jess Philippe asked if Peacham could be informally part of the 706 committee and not be necessary or advisable. Mr. Clarke said Peacham can be invited as an informal participant but not a voting member and change later. Peacham can be advisable to one or more committees but can only be a voting member of one. Until a decision is made, Peacham can be an informal member. Jess Philippe said a survey has been sent out to the community to get an idea on what might be decided. Mr. Clarke suggested the continued presence of Peacham on the committee would be worthwhile.

Ramifications of forming a 706 committee were discussed. Representation on the committee is based on current per pupil counts of the schools involved. Once that decision is made, a representative committee of all districts will make the decision whether forming a new district with Articles of Agreement is advisable. Once that process is underway, and everyone is a formal member, the 706 committee is in charge of the process until the end. They have to submit the Articles of Agreement back to the School Boards for review and comment, but not review and changes. The decision of who is necessary and who is advisable to the process needs to be made. Once the 706 team makes a district advisable, Articles of Agreement could go to the Boards and a Board could decide not to present the Articles of Agreement to their voters and would not have to act on the Articles of Agreement. If a Board votes no, 10% of the voters in that district could vote to move ahead. If an advisable district says no, 20% of voters could force the vote.

Once the committee is formed, who is advisable or necessary is decided. The committee generally has one Board member from each district. All representatives could be Board members but that is not generally the case. There are 12 or 13 items the need to be in the Articles of Agreement, including Board representation in the new district, an analysis of what every district owns, assets and liabilities, renovations to buildings, reserve funds, the closing of a school, and the final report. Some districts have spelled out what the possible new structure will be.

### **Discussion of Community Engagement Plan**

Mr. Clarke said everyone should be thinking about making sure their community understands what is going on and start thinking about the best way to engage the community.

### **Review of Exploratory Findings and Next Steps for the Committee**

The three core districts need to have the School Boards vote to form the 706 committee.

Representatives need to be appointed and agreement on a budget needs to be done.

Superintendent Forest will apply for a grant to cover consulting and legal pieces. The \$20,000 grant covers \$15,000 for consulting, \$1,500 for the Act 56 project, and \$3,500 for the final legal piece. None of this covers cost for outreach, websites, mailings, etc. The amount applied for can be as high as \$25,000 and the \$5,000 left would be spent evenly between the formal members of the committee. Superintendent Forest needs to know if the committee would like to retain Mr. Clarke as consultant for this process. The breakdown for the committee for all four districts would be 35% Barnet, 30% Waterford, 13% Peacham, and 22% Walden. A formal vote needs to be taken at each Board to form the committee. Mr. Clarke suggested each district should have at

least two representatives on the committee. There could also be alternates if necessary. It was decided that the breakdown for the three districts would be 43% Barnet, 34% Waterford, and 23% Walden. There could be nine or twelve members. If Peacham decides to join, they would get two representatives.

Superintendent Forest and the Board members thanked Mr. Clarke for his work on this committee.

The next meeting date will be set once all the Boards have done the formal vote to form the 706 committee.

**Adjourn**

A motion was made by Ray Lewis and seconded by Robert Farlice-Rubio to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed unanimously and the meeting was adjourned at 8:26 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

*Ellen Hinman*

Ellen Hinman, Meeting Recorder