

BRIDGEWATER, HEBRON & GROTON STEERING COMMITTEE

297 Mayhew Turnpike
Bridgewater, NH 03222

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Terence Murphy
Bridgewater Selectman

Patrick Moriarty
Hebron Selectman

John Rescigno
Groton Selectman

Erick Piper
Bridgewater Representative

Jennifer Larochelle
Hebron Representative

Virginia Parker
Groton Representative

Derry Riddle
BHVD – Ex Officio

William White
BHVD – Ex Officio

August 23, 2023: Meeting called to order at 6pm

Committee Members Present: Erick Piper, Jennifer Larochelle, Terence Murphy, Patrick Moriarty, John Rescigno and Virginia Parker

SAU #4 Board Members Present: Kimberly Bliss, Alexandria; Joseph Maloney, Bristol; Robin Reinhold, SAU #4 Business Administrator; and Steven Nilhas, Interim Superintendent.

After calling the meeting to order, Terry Murphy noted that the Agenda distributed by SAU #4 incorrectly stated this was a meeting of Bridgewater-Hebron Village District (BHVD). He stated that clarification needs to be made that BHVD, although that is the commission that built the Bridgewater-Hebron Village School and currently maintains the facility that is not the entity conducting these School District organization meetings.

Mr. Murphy stated the reasons for this initial meeting are: to come to an agreement with SAU #4 to move forward cooperatively. HB349 states that the three towns appoint two members to perform research and setup our SAU/Cooperative School District.

Items to Create:

1. Budget – Necessary to propose to towns prior to March for town meetings, due to the amendment of a two year limit.
2. BHVS – Agreements to continue to have students from other communities. Transition to 6th, 7th, or 8th grade then Newfound Regional High School for 9-12 grade.
3. Superintendent Services

A discussion ensued regarding the teacher contracts and the fact that the contracts are with SAU #4 currently and teachers would have to choose to leave SAU #4 and sign a new contract with the new SAU.

Mr. Murphy and other committee members chimed in to make it clear, we want the teachers to have the choice, and we will mirror their current contracts, so that there isn't a disruption for any of the teachers.

Committee members also wanted to clarify if students want to stay at a certain school, they should be allowed to do so, and we need to work out agreements that will allow this.

Ms. Larochelle stated that she would like everyone to be clear on what is currently happening and go over some history, so that it is understood. When Bridgewater and Hebron came together to build a new school, the superintendent at the time was all for it.

Having more options would draw more individuals to the district. It is not a new idea that Bridgewater-Hebron Village School transition to K-8.

Middle School is not for everyone, after teaching for 14 years, I've realized some children flourish in a K-8 design.

Mr. Murphy stated that it is his belief that with smaller cooperative districts, it will allow each town to have more say, although it may make a Business Administrator's position more burdensome.

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It can work to have smaller boards so that each unit can be heard. Currently having seven towns is not working. It seems as though each town is pulling in its own direction.

The bill has been signed by the governor and we are now tasked with moving this forward. The items we would like to currently accomplish with this first meeting are.

1. We're asking that you confirm the School Boards willingness to work with us to find common, mutually beneficial opportunities we've outlined in our discussion paper prepared for this meeting.
2. The next step would then be to provide us with points-of-contact so we can assign individual folks from our committee to enter into discussions with you on items outlined in items 3 to 7. The goal would be to develop DRAFT agreements prior to the adoption vote.

We would like this transition to be seamless, and therefore it would be foolish if we didn't work together and we tried to recreate the wheel.

Mr. Piper stated there seems to be a certain level of confusion regarding HB349. Now is the opportunity to ask questions.

Ms. Bliss stated the bill is outlined well and Mr. Maloney stated yes it is pretty specific.

Ms. Bliss mentioned that there was an original agreement signed. Mr. Murphy noted that HB349 now provides us the ability to do what is best for ALL and we need to form a group that will work together.

Mr. Rescigno brought to the attention of all those present that the bill has passed. Let's move forward. Let's work together and move forward.

Ms. Reinhold mentioned that this will put an added burden on the BA.

Mr. Nilhas said that the full School Board will need to review the documents and possibly expand beyond based on other committees, etc. The full board meets Monday August 28, 2023 and we will present this in our report.

Ms. Bliss mentioned that the SAU currently does not provide any SAU services to any other district. Hill gets their own money from the state and is only included in adequacy aid. They are on a tuition agreement and we are trying to find out what Hill wants now. They may want to join SAU #4, but that will be up to their voters.

The group came to a consensus that the SAU #4 School Board will need to review the committee requests at their meeting on Monday August 28, 2023. Mr. Murphy asked for a timeline for a decision of whether or not the SAU #4 is willing to work cooperatively with the committee.

Mr. Nilhas stated that the committee report is on the agenda for the August 28th meeting, so they will address it at that time and hopefully have a decision shortly.

Mr. Murphy mentioned that we would like for attorneys to be able to communicate with each other.

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At that time the current lease agreement was brought up and Mr. Murphy stated that at the end of the lease which is June 30, 2024, the School District will become tenant at will.

Ms. Bliss stated that an amendment to the lease agreement would be necessary. But Mr. Murphy said that wouldn't be necessary as the lease term ends June 30, 2024.

Ms. Larochelle suggested the meeting be opened to public comment.

Kathleen/Paul Connor – What is this? What does the end product look like? What would be unique? Will they have the same if not more? Personally concerned about classes per grade and students staying together. They need more social interaction – it's hard for us to know.

Ms. Larochelle – Totally appreciate all of your questions and concerns. At the present time some of these cannot be answered as this is the reason this committee was formed. By the time the March vote comes around all concerned individuals will be well informed and have all their concerns answered.

Ms. Connor – This is putting the responsibility on the SAU for building your new school district.

Discussion ensued around the above statement and the meeting was brought back to a decision needs to be made by SAU#4 whether or not they agree to work cooperatively with the committee over the next few months so that each of the towns can make an informed decision at the Town meetings.

Alizia Boswell 5th grade teacher BHVS – What will leadership look like? Teacher contracts?

Ms. Larochelle – That's what the contracted services would be for.

Mr. Rescigno – Pay scales would stay the same. We are looking to maintain current contracts.

Ms. Bliss – You could only mirror contracts as the current contracts are between the unions and the SAU.

Mr. Murphy – ultimately we are looking to parallel all contracts. We did not do this to save money or spend more money

Ms. Boswell – Is there room for curriculum change?

Ms. Larochelle – We cannot answer that question at this time.

If there are no further questions we can adjourn this meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 7pm.

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September 6, 2023: Meeting called to order at 6pm

Committee Members Present: Erick Piper, Virginia Parker, Jennifer Larochelle, Terence Murphy, John Rescigno, Derry Riddle, William White and Amy Cunningham (BHVD – Alternate).

Absent: Patrick Moriarty

Ms. Larochelle called the meeting to order.

Mr. Murphy requested that agenda item #3 – Legal update, be moved to the last item as it will be a non-public item. All committee members voted in the affirmative.

Ms. Larochelle asked for any updates to the minutes of the August 23, 2023 meeting.

Ms. Parker stated that Joe needs to be changed to John.

Mr. Murphy moved to accept the minutes as amended. Mr. Rescigno seconded and all committee members present approved.

Ms. Larochelle requested that individuals volunteer for the following Sub Committees and individuals were chosen as follows:

- A. Education Planning Committee – Jennifer Larochelle. Other committee members may assist Ms. Larochelle as needed.
- B. Budget Planning Committee – Virginia Parker and Erick Piper
- C. Contract Negotiations Committee – Virginia Parker and Erick Piper. They may request other committee members to assist as needed.
- D. Teacher/Staff Contracts Committee – Terence Murphy with assistance from Julie Converse (administrative assistant). Virginia Parker will assist as needed.
- E. Facility Planning Committee – John Rescigno and Jennifer Larochelle.

Ms. Larochelle asked if it would be a good idea to receive public input on the committees.

William Luti, consultant to the Steering Committee stated it would be a good idea, but by invitation only.

Mr. Rescigno agreed and said we do not want these sub committees getting too large.

Ms. Parker asked if these invited members of the public would actually become members of the sub committees.

Mr. Murphy & Ms. Larochelle both stated that they could.

Ms. Riddle asked this would allow them on the subcommittee only with voting rights.

Ms. Larochelle said yes, but not on the Steering Committee.

Mr. Luti stated that is correct. The only committee members with voting rights are the current members of the Steering Committee.

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Mr. Murphy moved to discuss the notification that was just received regarding Newfound Area School Board's HB349 Work Session meeting on Monday September 18, 2023 at 6pm.

Mr. Murphy should we attend and is it necessary to have our attorney present.

All members of the committee voted in favor of going to this meeting as members of the public from their respective towns, but making themselves available if any questions can be answered at that time.

Mr. Luti is assisting the committee in formulating a Myth Fact sheet or an FAQ, to be available to the public at the meeting on September 18th.

All members of the committee will receive draft handout and be able to review and comment prior to meeting on September 18th.

Ms. Larochelle moved to go to the next agenda item being to have small group meetings in each town to field questions from our constituents.

Ms. Larochelle did mention it can be difficult to get individuals out to meetings. Usually 100 might show up, but there are 550 voters.

Mr. Murphy stated the goal is to just get the facts out there for the questions the public have.

Ms. Larochelle stated that neighborhood meetings could possibly work.

Mr. Rescigno suggested the most important point to get across is simply to educate yourself prior to voting.

Ms. Riddle suggested that it may be beneficial to attend PTO meetings.

All agreed.

Mr. Murphy moved to go into executive session at 7pm. Mr. Piper seconded and all committee members present approved (Ms. Larochelle left the meeting).

Ms. Parker voted to exit executive session at 7:30. Mr. Rescigno seconded and all committee members present approved. Mr. Murphy moved to seal the executive session minutes and Mr. Piper seconded and all committee members present approved.

Mr. Murphy suggested that the next meeting be on Wednesday September 13, 2023 at 6pm, to review the handout for the September 18th meeting. All members agreed.

Mr. Murphy moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Piper seconded and all members approved.

Meeting adjourned at 7:35pm.

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September 13, 2023: Meeting called to order at 6pm

Committee Members Present: Jennifer Larochelle, Terence Murphy, Patrick Moriarty, Virginia Parker, Erick Piper, John Rescigno, Derry Riddle, and William White.

Ms. Larochelle called the meeting to order.

Ms. Larochelle asked for any updates to the minutes of the September 6, 2023 meeting.

Ms. Riddle and Ms. Larochelle requested a couple of changes to the executive session minutes.

Ms. Larochelle asked for a motion to accept the public meeting minutes as presented.

Mr. Rescigno moved to accept the minutes. Mr. Murphy seconded.

5 approvals and 1 abstention

Ms. Larochelle asked for a motion to accept the executive session minutes as amended.

Mr. Murphy moved to accept the executive session minutes as amended. Ms. Parker seconded
4 approvals and 2 abstentions

Roll call to seal the executive session minutes of the 9-6-23 meeting. All approved.

Ms. Larochelle requested Committee Reports from the sub committees.

A. Education Planning Committee – Ms. Larochelle stated she will have an update at the next meeting.

B. Budget Planning Committee – Mr. Piper stated that they have begun gathering figures and will have more to present in the weeks to come.

C. Contract Negotiations Committee – Ms. Parker stated that it is early on in their research and they will have a report in a couple weeks.

D. Teacher/Staff Contracts Committee – Mr. Murphy stated that a sample Tuition agreement has been drafted and collective bargaining agreements have been downloaded and are in the process of being reviewed. Additionally, there was a call with the attorney today to review some of these items and the attorney confirmed that we would be bound by the current contracts of the teachers and other professionals at the Bridgewater-Hebron Village School. What this means is; our newly formed SAU would mirror the current SAU #4 contracts in place.

Mr. Piper stated for further clarification. We need to write new contracts with all the teachers and staff. The only change would be the SAU name/number.

Mr. Murphy let the committee members know that within his research over the past week, he submitted a couple items in the committee members meeting packets. Those being the 2022 SAU 4 schools report cards from the NH Department of Education and newspaper articles from the 1960's for the original formation of the Cooperative School District.

Ms. Larochelle moved to discuss communication in each of the three towns to update the public/tax payers.

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Mr. Murphy stated that we have created a web page on the Bridgewater website specifically for the Bridgewater-Hebron-Groton Steering Committee. It is under the schools drop down on our main menu bar and we have sent a link to Hebron and Groton and they are putting links to the web page on their websites.

Mr. Moriarty stated that Hebron is planning to have a special town meeting for the vote.

Debbie Hart from Hebron asked, Will we know when this meeting is in March?

Mr. Piper stated it is the second Tuesday in March.

Mr. Murphy added that it would typically be a warrant article, but could be a ballot vote.

Debbie Hart informed the committee that she went into the Hebron Town Hall and they told her that you need to go to the Town of Bridgewater website.

Ms. Converse explained that Hebron and Groton will be adding links on their websites to the new web page on Bridgewater's website. So you will be able to access the information from any of the websites.

Mr. Moriarty suggested that we devise a timeline/outline of what will happen between now and voting in March.

Mr. Murphy suggested that all of the area meetings for public questions should happen prior to Thanksgiving. He also explained that we need to get the message out that the students will be able to finish out their schooling in the middle school or high school if they so choose, due to laws that have been put in place from other cases like ours.

Mr. Piper continued that there is even an RSA that dictates the amount that we could pay for tuition per pupil.

Mr. Murphy said our ultimate goal is to allow school choice. Currently we have 71 students from other areas.

Mark Coulson asked for the timeline and meetings, if money is involved will we have to have a capital budget meeting in Hebron.

Mr. Moriarty answered that would not be necessary for the first vote.

Mr. Murphy offered further clarification that the first vote would be yes or no. Then we would need to have another meeting to set up budget etc.

Mr. Moriarty reiterated that all the towns need a timeline to follow.

Discussion ensued around what the timeline would presently entail and when meetings would need to take place in each town. Another item was whether to have small meetings with parts of each town and whether or not to set up an email for tax payers/public to submit questions which could be answered after each meeting (if we are able to answer the specific questions at that time).

Debbie Hart asked if all the town residents in the three towns would receive email updates.

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Discussion ensued on having individuals sign up for an email list for the committee. All agreed that one repository for communication would be a good idea.

Mr. Piper stated that we have some sample agreements and contracts at this time, but we need to create an RFP for various services. All committee members agreed.

Ms. Larochelle opened the meeting up for public comment.

Debbie Hart asked for the committee to state their names and the towns they represent.

Mark Coulson stated that the nuts & bolts are import to all community members.

Debbie Hart asked if there was currently somewhere the public could send questions to.

Mr. Piper stated we will set up an email and put it on the web page. We will answer questions once a week after the committee has had time to review.

Mr. Larochelle requested a motion to go into executive session at 7:15pm. Mr. Murphy moved and Mr. Moriarty seconded and all committee members present approved. (Ms. Riddle left the meeting).

Ms. Parker voted to exit executive session at 8:00. Mr. Larochelle seconded and all committee members present approved.

Mr. Murphy suggested that the next meeting be on Wednesday September 20, 2023 at 6pm.

Mr. Parker moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Rescigno seconded and all members approved.

Meeting adjourned at 8:05pm.

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William White
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September 20, 2023: Meeting called to order at 6pm

Committee Members Present: Jennifer Larochelle, Terence Murphy, Patrick Moriarty, Virginia Parker and John Rescigno

BHVD Ex-Officio Representatives Present: Derry Riddle, and William White.

Ms. Larochelle called the meeting to order.

Ms. Larochelle asked for any updates to the minutes of the September 13, 2023 meeting.

Ms. Larochelle asked for a motion to accept the public meeting minutes as presented.

Mr. Moriarty moved to accept the minutes. Mr. Murphy seconded.

5 approvals

Ms. Larochelle asked for a motion to accept the executive session minutes as amended.

Mr. Murphy moved to accept the executive session minutes as amended. Ms. Parker seconded
4 approvals and 2 abstentions

Ms. Larochelle moved to discuss communication in each of the three towns to update the public/tax payers.

Mr. Rescigno stated that the Groton Community meeting will take place at their town hall and they will finalize their meeting date at their next selectman meeting.

Mr. Murphy stated that the town of Bridgewater will need to have at least a River Road meeting and a meeting for the Whittemore Point and Lakeside individuals. He will discuss meeting dates at their next selectman meeting.

Mr. Moriarty stated that their selectmen meeting is tomorrow night and he will confirm dates then.

Ms. Larochelle moved to open the meeting up for public comment. She stated that they will answer questions that they are currently able and obtain answers for other questions.

Christina Reynolds said that she has many close relationships throughout the towns and that she had a hard time finding anyone that is for this.

Ms. Larochelle stated that we continue to update information constantly. Individuals should view the webpage and continue to come out to meetings as we will present updates as they become available. But currently we are awaiting a response from SAU #4 as to whether or not they would like to continue a cooperative relationship.

Britta Matthews exclaimed that if Executive sessions are going to be sealed, they need to state 91-A and they shouldn't be executive session as the current contract would only be for current contract year. Not to mention that such a small group may not be able to form a collective bargaining unit.

Ms. Larochelle made a clarification that whatever contract is in place at 7/1/25 must be honored by the newly formed special purpose school district, till that contract's end date. At that time the

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new special purpose school district will negotiate the new contract. We do not want to compete with contract and all contracts will be negotiated in good faith.

Britta Matthews said we do not want rumors. A Groton selectman told me that our taxes will double if we do not vote for this.

Mr. Murphy said the Article 5 committee wanted to change from ADM to some combination of ADM and property valuations. We will provide more information on that as soon as we can. Currently each town pays based on the number of students from their town enrolled in the school district. The other four towns in the district wanted to change to more of an equalized value method. In those calculations our town would go to between \$49,000 and \$60,000 per student, from our current \$21,000 per student. The remaining four towns would go down significantly and one town would be approximately \$13,000 per student. How is that cost equally shared. This has been put forth a few times and can be attempted every five years. We have moved forward with forming the special purpose school district in order to prevent the huge disparity in per student costs.

Mr. Rescigno added you must realize the Article 5 committee worked that summer completing various methods of calculating the per student cost and in each scenario our three towns always suffered.

Deb Hart mentioned that she remembers seeing an item that showed the actual numbers.

Mr. Murphy assured that we will locate the document and show the current method and the other methods discussed.

Sharon Nelson stated that from the beginning some years ago during one of the other attempts, she remembers reading that SAU #4 could close the BHVS. I thought they rented, if that is the case, then how could they vote to close the school.

Mr. Murphy offered the clarification that the Bridgewater-Hebron Village District owns the school and performs all of the required maintenance on the building. The building is also fully furnished by the Bridgewater-Hebron Village District. Whereas SAU #4 leases the Bridgewater-Hebron Village School, they have the say in schooling. The only item in the agreement is that students from Bridgewater and Hebron come first for enrollments at BHVS.

Ms. Parker stated further discussions at SAU #4 state they would have an independent campus style which hosts concerns for children from Groton that will travel on buses for over an hour.

Mr. Murphy said we should not get involved in what the school district does. We will have our own school board and would have the say of what happens in our new school district. BHVD will form a new lease with our new school district.

Sharon Nelson asked who said they can do whatever they want with that school.

Mr. Murphy explained some history from back when John Davis came to Bridgewater and Hebron

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looking to have a new school built in our area. That is when we formed Bridgewater-Hebron Village District and built the school.

Ms. Riddle added that was in 1999.

Tom Edwards let everyone know that he is currently a member of the SAU #4 building committee and stated that the current thinking has not discussed closing of BHVS. He then proceeded to state that he like to go back and state that they are making all of this out of **IF** it's going to happen.

Ms. Larochelle requested that Mr. Edwards please curb his sarcasm.

Tom Edwards asked why it hasn't happened before.

Mr. murphy stated they have brought it forward before and they keep bringing it forward. We can only win so many times.

Tom Edwards let everyone know that he was pivotal in stopping the current try. Then he stated that the committee is comparing everything as it will fully go through. You don't know what it costs to run a district. You need to educate yourself.

Mr. Rescigno asked Tom to let's start talking facts. Have you ever attended the Article 5 committee meetings.

Tom Edwards asked why so I can listen to people argue.

Mr. Rescigno added the four towns were pushing to change the formula. The calculations presented were evident that they were pushing that hard.

Tom Edwards continued but that was only a maybe. IF it will happen.

Jim Koch stated I didn't see what is happening. Isn't that what this committee is focused on.

Mr. Rescigno answered we need stabilization and we are focused on the greater good for the children.

Jim Koch said at the other meeting, some mentioned you are going to research budget numbers.

Ms. Parker said that was me and I am a current member of the school board budget committee. We are talking to other school districts, the department of education and we would be foolish to say we know all the answers. We have developed sub-committees and you are watching the process as it is happening. The legislation was only enacted a little over a month ago. Let's work together.

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Rick Alpers – Thank you for having us. First you have stated four towns. This hasn't happened in Bristol. Second I find it odd that you are not meeting at a school or town building. Lastly I find a conflict in the steering committee that some of their members are budget committee members of SAU #4 and they will have to wear two hats with two different motives. I am trying to be professional.

Mr. Murphy said a member of the Bristol select board told me it would happen. There is no harm in having two groups do the same thing.

Rick Alpers then asked why are you always working on the past.

Mr. Rescigno said the past repeats itself.

Ms. Larochelle stated we need to move on.. We are rehashing something that cannot be rehased anymore. We have signed legislation that formed this committee and have tasked us to review the possibility of separation and will bring forth at the town meeting for the three town to vote.

Tony Desmarais asked Will this be on the town ballot or as a warrant article.

Mr. Murphy stated that he has been told it will need to be a warrant article.

Tony Desmarais asked if it could be on the ballot as a separate vote. Can we have the RSA that states warrant article. We need more information so that we have a sufficient amount to vote and it needs to be a ballot vote.

Ms. Larochelle expressed thank you for your concern. We will reinvestigate and consult with our attorney and let you know.

Deborah Rangel introduced herself and her husband Paul Rangel. She stated concerns that the date chosen for the meeting conflicts with the open house at BHVS. Due to that, family members had to choose to go to open house or come to this meeting. Why couldn't the date be changed.

Ms. Larochelle stated that this committee meets every Wednesday evening and will for a while. We only change the venue between the towns so that everyone can come to some of the meetings.

Ms. Parker added that the meetings are posted in advance and it was too late to change the date when we found out on Monday night.

Mr. Rescigno added that each of the selectman also have their selectman meeting dates.

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A discussion ensued around the meeting date and time and Ms. Larochelle had to request order in the room.

Ms. Riddle also added that they will have additional meetings with teachers and parents.

Britta Matthews asked is there could be a group email.

Mr. Rescigno stated that it was attempted to collect emails in Groton, but only a handful of individuals signed up. It has worked better in the other two towns and they do communicate with the individuals that have signed up.

This prompted a request regarding social media. The committee does not choose to use social media as that tends to be an avenue of opinions and rumors.

Ariel Maloney asked is it true that you are hoping to separate for tax purposes and then everything else would remain the same. If SAU #4 doesn't pan out, what other districts have you talked with . . . like Plymouth/Mascoma/Franklin.

Ms. Larochelle stated that the committee isn't comfortable going to others prior to an answer from SAU #4.

Discussions ensued around which other school districts the committee could possibly reach out to. The committee ensured the public that one of their main concerns is to minimize disruption and provide school choice for the students and parents.

Janice Barnard expressed her concern about the staff at the Bridgewater-Hebron Village School.

Ms. Larochelle ensured her and the public that the committee is in direct communication with the teachers and staff at BHVS. The committee is currently answer questions and concerns and will have meetings in the future and had meetings throughout the course of HB349. We are excited to work with all the teachers and staff.

Another discussion ensued regarding what should be public and what should be executive session. The committee stated that while we are discussing financial numbers and negotiations, these items will remain in executive session until we have answers for the public. Once items are finalized, or when we require input, we will discuss during the public session. At this point Ms. Larochelle thanked everyone for their questions and comments. She stated that the committee feels they owe it to SAU #4 to see if they are open to negotiations in any formal way and until we hear from SAU #4 we are merely discussing options.

Ms. Larochelle requested that we stop accepting questions. This is a standing weekly meeting and we will accept questions/comments at every meeting. She moved to enter executive session at 7:30pm.

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Mr. Murphy moved and Mr. Moriarty seconded and all committee members present approved. (Ms. Riddle left the meeting).

Ms. Parker voted to exit executive session at 8:08. Ms. Larochelle seconded and all committee members present approved.

The next meeting will be on Wednesday September 27, 2023 at 6pm. At the Groton town hall.

Ms. Larochelle requested a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Moriarty moved to adjourn and Mr. Murphy seconded. All committee members present approved. Meeting adjourned at 8:10pm.

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September 27, 2023: Meeting called to order at 6pm

Committee Members Present: Jennifer Larochelle, Terence Murphy, Patrick Moriarty, Virginia Parker and Erick Piper

BHVD Ex-Officio Representatives Present: William White.

Ms. Larochelle called the meeting to order.

Committee members introduced themselves and stated what position they hold and the town they represent.

Ms. Larochelle asked for any updates to the minutes of the September 20, 2023 meeting.

Ms. Larochelle asked for a motion to accept the public meeting minutes as amended by email and the corrections stated by Ms. Parker.

Ms. Parker moved to accept the minutes as amended. Mr. Moriarty seconded. 4 approvals and Mr. Piper abstained.

She announced that the Groton informational meeting will be held at the Groton Town Hall on Tuesday October 17, 2023 at 7pm.

Dates for Hebron and Bridgewater informational meetings will be finalized in the near future.

Ms. Larochelle reminded the public that was present to continue going to the webpage for the BHG Steering Committee for informational updates. Links are provided on Hebron & Groton's websites and the page can be found on the Bridgewater website under the schools drop down menu.

Ms. Larochelle moved to receive committee reports.

Education Planning Committee – Ms. Larochelle stated that we have received questions from the teachers. Answers were drafted, reviewed by our attorney and sent to Kelly McLane. The committee will follow up with the teachers and hope to schedule a meeting with them soon.

Budget & Contract Negotiations Committee – Ms. Parker noted that they are in discussions with the Department of Education. Mr. Piper added that they have reviewed a food service contract and will need to interface with the federal government for this. The Department of Education has sent us training modules and we will review those over the next few weeks.

Teacher/Staff Contracts Committee – Mr. Murphy stated that the contract that teachers and staff are in with SAU #4 at the inception of the new Special Purpose School District on 7/1/2025 will be fulfilled by the new Special Purpose School District. The teachers would be able to choose whether they take on a new position with SAU #4 or whether they supply SAU #4 with a resignation and choose employment with the newly formed Special Purpose School District.

Dave Darlington asked if the teachers could choose to walk out.

Ms. Larochelle confirmed that they can do that at any time, even now. Teachers and staff change schools and school districts all the time.

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Facility Planning Committee – Mr. Murphy mentioned that current maintenance is going on at the Bridgewater Hebron Village School to include upgrades to the existing chimney.

Ms. Larochelle moved to open the meeting up for public comment. She stated that they will answer questions that they are currently able and obtain answers for other questions. She also mentioned that the public comment will be limited to 20 minutes so that the committee can move forward with their tasks to be ready to present residence with materials so that they can make an informed vote in March.

Ann Hardy asked where are we on this. Are we going forward?

Ms. Larochelle answered that the three towns will need to vote in March. We are gathering information, contracts, pricing and everything so an informed vote can be made in March.

Mr. Moriarty noted that the only towns voting will be Hebron, Bridgewater and Groton.

Ann Hardy continued – how will the three towns form a district and afford this?

Mr. Murphy answered same way we do now, ADM – number of children times a predetermined cost per student. A tuition agreement would need to be worked out for middle school and high school to start. The articles of agreement for the three towns have already been drafted and are being reviewed by counsel. We did need to set a floor in the formula so that each town will need to maintain a certain level of contribution. But maintenance or expansion of the school would be the responsibility of Hebron and Bridgewater.

David Hardy asked if we could do school vouchers?

Ms. Parker answered that the present model is for BHVS to become K-8, High School would be a tuition agreement. There could be an opportunity for other high school's willing to accept a tuition agreement. There could also be a possibility of choosing a different school and paying the difference between the allotted tuition and the actual cost of that school.

David Hardy stated that he likes the ability to choose as not all students are able to attend the chosen high school and may require a specialized school.

Ms. Larochelle stated that is part of the reason for implementing a K-8 model.

Tracy Steenbergen asked if the committee is looking to SAU #4.

Ms. Larochelle stated that we would like to work cooperatively with them, but we have not receive a decision from them and they just decided on Monday to begin talking with us. We have been told by the Department of Education that there are other SAU's that are willing to provide the services we are looking for.

Ms. Parker stated that if SAU #4 decides that they are only able to have a tuition agreement with us, then we will have to go elsewhere for the other services.

Mr. Moriarty stated that there are all kinds of models and all kinds of options for us to review.

Mark Coulson stated bottom line is between now and March is research to present to voters. March we vote. Throughout this nothing will change until July 1, 2025 if this is voted in.

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Ms. Larochelle answered Yes that is correct, but we want the voters to have a much information as possible to make an informed vote.

Mr. Murphy stated you will hear more and have more say in a three town district than you do in a seven town district.

Mr. Moriarty said you all need to understand this is the second largest school district in the state of NH when it comes to the square miles that the district encompasses.

Kathleen Connor asked the towns will cover the same schools even if agreement is with Mascoma, Plymouth or Newfound? Will there only be one school to choose from?

Ms. Larochelle as stated previously, we would like to negotiate with SAU #4 for tuition and the Department of Education has a formula for this. If a family chooses to see if they can go to say Plymouth and it is more than the standard tuition, then we would need the family to be involved. But that is all part of the research and negotiations.

Mr. Moriarty added as I said before, there are all kinds of models. In fact there are students from VT going to school in NH bordering towns. There is also Pinkerton Academy that was private and is now public and accepts students from a lot of towns.

Kathleen Connor added with this choice will the students have a say? Can they be part of these negotiations?

Ms. Larochelle stated there will be a tail out agreement in the tuition agreements.

Ms. Parker added that we appreciate everyone's input, but most of these questions are still items we are researching and haven't begun negotiating yet.

David Hardy asked if there are special needs students for K-8, how will handle and will that be in our school.

Ms. Parker stated that we are required to provide those services and that is one of the items that we are researching at the current time.

David Hardy added if the three towns vote in the affirmative, could we reconsider if SAU #4 makes a deal with the three towns with a new allocation formula.

Mr. Piper said as an independent town you can join any SAU. Once we vote to leave, we are exiting.

Mr. Murphy added once you have exited the district, you would have discussions on how to move forward by forming agreements with other districts.

Ryan Lord stated I homeschool and I would like to know how that will affect my children.

Ms. Larochelle answered you would just need to file your paperwork with the new SAU. Nothing would change. Your child would have access to all features of the school if you wanted, and those would including music, gym etc.

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David Hardy continued, if the other town wants us to stay, can you change your mind before March.

Ms. Larochelle ensured Mr. Hardy that nothing has changed and we would like to provide local control and have a K-8 model for our children. This is what we have wanted to do for years.

Deborah Hart added that the point individuals are missing here is that if we separate from SAU #4, we do not have the threat every five years that they can change the contribution formula.

Mr. Moriarty stated they have made it clear they will do it again.

Mr. Piper said that throughout the Article 5 committee discussions the SAU representative proposed 100% valuation which would have approximately doubled the tax rate for our three towns. That made us explore other options.

Deborah Hart continued lots of individuals do not understand this this funding method could change.

Discussions continued around the funding method and when a new method could be brought forward.

Ms. Larochelle requested a motion to move into executive session. Mr. Moriarty moved to go into executive session and Mr. Murphy seconded. Roll call all in favor.

Executive session was entered at 6:45pm

Motion was made to exit executive session by Mr. Moriarty and seconded by Mr. Murphy. Roll call all in favor. Executive session was ended at 7:35pm.

Ms. Larochelle moved for a motion to seal the minutes of the executive session. Ms. Parker motioned to seal the minutes of the executive session and Mr. Murphy seconded. Roll call all in favor.

Ms. Larochelle moved for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Piper made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Ms. Parker. Roll call all in favor. Meeting adjourned at 7:40pm

BRIDGEWATER, HEBRON & GROTON STEERING COMMITTEE

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COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Terence Murphy
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Patrick Moriarty
Hebron Selectman

John Rescigno
Groton Selectman

Erick Piper
Bridgewater Representative

Jennifer Larochelle
Hebron Representative

Virginia Parker
Groton Representative

Derry Riddle
BHVD – Ex Officio

William White
BHVD – Ex Officio

October 11, 2023: Meeting called to order at 6pm

Committee Members Present: Jennifer Larochelle, Terence Murphy, and John Rescigno.

Ms. Larochelle called the meeting to order.

Ms. Larochelle informed the public that was present that unfortunately there isn't a quorum present and therefore we cannot proceed with reviewing minutes and providing committee reports.

Ms. Larochelle continued what we could do is open the meeting up to the public for a question and answer session.

Robert Brooks asked Why are you leaving SAU #4.

Ms. Larochelle went through the history of the building of the Bridgewater-Hebron Village School and the original intent of the school was to have a K-8 option within the school district. Every time they attempted to increase the grades the school board voted against it. Then there is always the threat of the current ADM method being changed and this increase in the three town's tax base would not be for the betterment of the student's education. She then went on to compare us to the Ashland school district. They are a K-8 and then tuition to High School. They are part of SAU #2 which also includes Inter-Lakes School District. Having their own meetings and own decision making for their individual school districts within the SAU.

Robert Brooks added Are we approving of the way SAU #4 is currently run.

Ms. Larochelle answered we are looking to work with them and continue to have students from the other towns attend BHVS. Currently Alexandria has the most students attending BHVS.

Mr. Murphy added that he attended the SAU #4 HB349 Sub Committee meeting the other evening and they agreed to begin forming a tailings agreement. This would allow students currently in BHVS from the other towns to continue and would also allow students currently in the NMMS or NRHS to continue their schooling there. This is something parents have requested.

Only issue is the discussions came to an end when superintendent services were brought up.

Our goal is to have our own school district so our three towns will have the voting rights of what happens at BHVS. Right now, all seven towns vote, and school board can make some decisions without a vote.

Bridgewater-Hebron Village District completes all of the maintenance at the BHVS and owns all of the furniture and fixtures. The current lease contract does not allow the village district to interfere with the school in regards to education.

Recently the Bridgewater-Hebron Village District submitted a grant for \$185,000 for a new playground to include handicap access.

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Deborah Rangel asked what is the cost going to be. I have heard it's going to be double.

Ms. Larochelle informed Ms. Rangel that statement is referring to when the Article 5 committee was formed and they couldn't reach an agreement on what the formula should be. She went on to say the last formula presented would've increased the tax rate to nearly double.

Currently if we form our own special purpose school district, we can operate everything on our current contribution amounts that each town contributes to SAU #4.

Mr. Murphy stated it could increase maybe \$1 that would be just to make sure we can have added services.

Currently we have two wings in the school and we could have them be the older and younger students. In fact the west wing was constructed so that we can add two more classrooms on if necessary.

Tom Caldwell asked what the tuition amount could be and what does superintendent services cost.

Mr. Murphy answered the NH Department of Education governs what the maximum tuition amount can be.

We have been in a holding pattern waiting on SAU #4 since HB349 was approved. We are attempting to convince the school board to work together.

Tom Caldwell asked why there isn't a steering committee member that is a parent.

Ms. Larochelle answered that there have been discussions of possibly appointing a parent representative.

Mr. Rescigno stated that the current committee exists of a selectman from each of the three towns and a representative from the HB349 committee.

Tom Caldwell asked What happens if SAU #4 says no. Why haven't you sought out any other SAU's for these services.

Ms. Larochelle stated that the committee wanted to give SAU #4 a good chance. But we have recently had other school district reach out directly to us.

Mr. Murphy added although the Department of Education has been wonderful, we are still in a holding pattern.

Caitlin Simula asked have you talked to staff at BHVS or done any surveys.

Ms. Larochelle responded that we have been in communications with the teachers.

Deborah Rangel stated that being new to the community, I do not know how to take the recent handout. Is this someone's opinion or what is this.

Mr. Murphy replied that it is a local article written by a local newspaper reporter.

Joe Wilkas asked do we know where the high school students will go.

Ms. Larochelle answered that SAU #4 has recently agreed to negotiate a tailings agreement which would allow students to finish through Newfound. Otherwise there may be other options.

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Rebecca McFarland asked what are the other options.

Ms. Larochelle stated that we cannot comment at this time.

Mr. Murphy replied there used to be 1,500 students enrolled the counts are a lot lower now. Schools are looking for tuition students.

Caitlin Simula asked if SAU #4 takes an agreement does that mean they would stay in SAU #4 and finish school there. Do they need to stay with SAU #4 or will there be a choice.

Mr. Murphy & Ms. Larochelle both answered we would like to provide multiple options.

Mr. Murphy further explained that the original concern came from the parents. They want students to continue we can work out an arrangement there and others want options for High School so we like to make other arrangements available.

Ms. Larochelle expressed that she taught at the Middle School for many years and it does not work for everyone and that is why we would also like to provide choice of a K-8 model.

Deborah Hart stated by voting time everyone will be well aware of what we are facing and what the monetary impact will be. Because the current FB rumors are ridiculous.

Discussions ensued around the resident meetings that will be held over the next few weeks and ongoing communications with residents.

Additional discussions were had around voting and when that may happen in the town of Hebron. The three towns voters need to vote in person and it cannot be a ballot vote and submitted by absentee ballot.

Mr. Murphy explained that it would be a warrant article, but once the warrant article is read, the towns voters could request that a secret vote be taken by yes or no votes being entered in the ballot box.

Kathleen Connor asked if the Steering Committee would be reviewing their committee reports this evening.

Ms. Larochelle answered that at the beginning of the meeting that they found out one member would not be able to attend and therefore we do not have a quorum. We chose to at least answer some questions from the public.

Mark Coulson asked the question what happens if one of the 3 towns votes comes out no. Does that mean it's done and doesn't move forward.

Ms. Larochelle stated you are correct and that is why we are attempting to educate our voters.

Mr. Murphy stated once the vote takes place, if the vote is yes, then there are additional steps we need to go through. We will need to elect a school board, create contracts, agreements, etc.

Ms. Larochelle asked if there were any more public comments or questions. There being none she adjourned the meeting at 7:05 pm.

BRIDGEWATER, HEBRON & GROTON STEERING COMMITTEE

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COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Terence Murphy
Bridgewater Selectman

Patrick Moriarty
Hebron Selectman

John Rescigno
Groton Selectman

Erick Piper
Bridgewater Representative

Jennifer Larochelle
Hebron Representative

Virginia Parker
Groton Representative

Derry Riddle
BHVD – Ex Officio

William White
BHVD – Ex Officio

October 18, 2023: Meeting called to order at 6pm

Committee Members Present: Jennifer Larochelle, Patrick Moriarty, Terence Murphy, Erick Piper and John Rescigno.

Absent: Virginia Parker

Ex Officio Members Present: Derry Riddle

Ms. Larochelle called the meeting to order.

Ms. Larochelle asked for any updates to the minutes of the September 27, 2023 and October 11 meeting.

Ms. Larochelle asked for a motion to accept the public meeting minutes as presented.

Mr. Rescigno moved to accept the minutes as presented. Mr. Murphy seconded. All members present approved.

Ms. Larochelle asked for feedback on the community meetings.

Mr. Rescigno stated that 30 to 40 individuals attended the Groton meeting. It was all positive and the town's people would like a pro-forma budget before voting in March.

Mr. Murphy stated that Bridgewater received about the same turnout for their River Road area meeting. He said it was overall positive with one parent voicing some concerns that will be answered.

Mr. Moriarty stated that the Hebron area meeting will take place tomorrow at 6pm.

Education Committee updates:

Ms. Larochelle stated that they recently toured the school and the goal will be to add grades 6 through 8. This will not be done all at once and students will be tuitioned into the middle school until we are able to transition BHVS through 8th grade.

Budget and Contracts Committee updates:

Mr. Piper stated that there has been discussions with the School Board HB349 Sub Committee regarding Superintendent Services, Tuition Agreements and Tailing agreements. Although we have yet to receive most answers, we did receive a positive response recently that they are willing to work through a Tailing Agreement. There would be a bridge period and this would go through 2029 presently.

In addition, we would like to work cooperatively on keeping the Pre-K program going.

Our committee has also been in conversations with food service companies and transportations companies. Not to mention that the NH Department of Education has provided a wealth of knowledge and are will to assist us through this transition.

Teacher Contracts Committee updates:

Ms. Larochelle let everyone know that there aren't any new updates at this time due to the honor agreement per statute.

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Facilities Committee updates:

Mr. Murphy stated that a grant for playground equipment is in process and the playground equipment is specialized for children with disabilities.

Ms. Riddle added that there is a meeting scheduled with the playground equipment company tomorrow afternoon.

Mr. Murphy added that the current chimney will be repaired in a couple of weeks.

Ms. Larochelle opened the meeting up to public questions and comments.

Mr. Moriarty reminded individuals that tomorrow is the Hebron area meeting.

Paul Hazelton asked in regards to superintendent duties, are there districts that do a hybrid?

Mr. Murphy answered that there are a number of different models. Ashland sends its high school students to Plymouth, but Inter-Lakes handles some of the superintendent services.

Mr. Piper asked for clarification of the question. Are you asking if we will have some of the services completed in-house and outsource the remainder?

Yes, we can complete some services in-house and outsource others.

Christina Reynolds stated she would like to know when the public can expect to receive numbers. SAU 80 has Canterbury doing the same and they have already provided everything.

Mr. Murphy stated that we just started this as we needed to wait until HB349 was approved. Now we are attempting to work through certain items with SAU #4.

Mr. Piper added we could not proceed until the governor signed HB349, which just happened in August.

Then we needed to form the Steering Committee and sub-committees

The next piece was engaging with others and we have had multiple issues with getting responses from SAU #4. They have responded that they are reviewing our requests.

We want to meet all of our resident's expectations.

Christina Reynolds said Thank you . . . I just want to make sure when you say that the meetings went well, does that mean everyone is onboard.

Mr. Piper replied we originally had others telling SAU #4 not to provide any services to us because they didn't want us to leave. As you all know, change can cause disruption and that is not our intent.

John Dunklee stated you were on the radio today on local reporting on what is happening although it was very neutral, I am impressed where you are at now.

Mr. Moriarty remarked that it is still good to have meetings with residents to hear what you want and to tell you where we are at.

Mr. Murphy stated that this is very similar to Ashland and their operating budget is \$4M.

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Mr. Moriarty added that SAU #4 should be open to the new revenue stream because they will be losing a lot if we succeed in forming our own school district.

Ms. Larochelle asked if there were any more questions or comments from the public.

Seeing none, she asked for a motion to enter executive session.

Mr. Rescigno made a motion to enter executive session and Mr. Moriarty seconded. All members present were in favor at 6:29pm.

Executive session adjourned at 7:50pm.

Ms. Larochelle asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Mr. Rescigno made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Mr. Moriarty seconded. All members present were in favor and meeting was adjourned at 7:52pm

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COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Terence Murphy
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Patrick Moriarty
Hebron Selectman

John Rescigno
Groton Selectman

Erick Piper
Bridgewater Representative

Jennifer Larochelle
Hebron Representative

Virginia Parker
Groton Representative

Derry Riddle
BHVD – Ex Officio

William White
BHVD – Ex Officio

November 1, 2023: Meeting called to order at 6pm
Meeting Location: Groton Town Hall

Committee Members Present: Jennifer Larochelle, Patrick Moriarty, Terence Murphy, Virginia Parker, Erick Piper and John Rescigno.

Ms. Larochelle called the meeting to order.

Ms. Larochelle asked for any updates to the minutes of the October 18, 2023 meeting.

Ms. Larochelle asked for a motion to accept the public and executive session meeting minutes as amended to list Ms. Parker as absent from that meeting.

Mr. Moriarty moved to accept the minutes as amended. Mr. Murphy seconded. Five in favor with one abstention from Ms. Parker.

Members had a discussion regarding the previous executive session minutes. A Motion to unseal executive session minutes from September 6, 2023 through October 18, 2023 was made by Mr. Piper and seconded by Mr. Rescigno. All were in favor.

Mr. Piper stated that until we hear otherwise from SAU #4, it may not be necessary to have executive sessions.

Ms. Parker stated that it will still be nice to have it on the agenda in case it is needed at any of our meetings.

Ms. Larochelle asked for feedback from the recent community meetings that were held in Hebron and Bridgewater.

Mr. Moriarty stated that the Hebron area meeting was well attended with 40-50 individuals and had positive results. The public now understands what the next steps are.

Mr. Murphy stated that the Bridgewater area meeting at the town hall had 75-80 individuals in attendance. Mostly positive. Few questions, but the public now understands the next steps in the process.

Discussion around moving forward instead of waiting.

Discussion of town meeting voting dates.

Education Committee updates:

Ms. Larochelle stated that they she recently met with the teachers at BHVS along with the principal and superintendent. The concern of the teachers is their current contracts will end 6/30/2024. In the current contract there is a summer work stipend that pays the teachers \$30 per hour. In addition, the school year calendar with vacations, early release, etc. would need to be discussed.

They were told we would follow up with our attorney and the committee.

The other common question is will we be able to provide the same salaries and step plans along with the same benefits.

In addition, questions were asked regarding middle school and whether it should still exist. I stated we would be moving to a k-8 model.

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Ms. Parker mentioned that we cannot help the fact that there will be change.

Mr. Piper stated all we need to provide are the answers. It may not be the same individual providing the education, but it will be the similar form of enrichment.

Mr. Rescigno said they could be positive role models showing the children how to deal with change.

Transportation updates:

Ms. Parker stated that we have received an initial outline of the number of buses that will be required and the transportation company has indicated there all set to negotiate. They have mentioned possibly parking buses on site at BHVS.

Discussions ensued regarding lack of meetings with the school board subcommittee. Ms. Parker stated that her and Mr. Piper have reach out and have had no response. Yet we still need answers regarding tailings agreement, Alexandria students and pre-K.

Mr. Piper reminded Ms. Parker that in principle they have agreed to a tailings agreement.

Mr. Murphy stated that presently the attorney has sent the following to their attorney; Tailings Agreement, Tuition Agreement and the amendment. The expiration of leas notification has been presented to the principal and the superintendent.

Discussions were made regarding moving forward or waiting on SAU #4. Consensus was to explore other options.

Mr. Piper provided some clarification that the current school board has stated that they do not budget the money. Therefore, they do not understand it will be a loss of revenue for SAU #4.

Ms. Larochelle asked for a motion to release all items to our website and forward to SAU #4 attorney and superintendent.

Ms. Parker made said motion and Mr. Rescigno seconded. All were in favor.

Facilities update:

Mr. Murphy stated that BHVD has just received the draft agreement on the two playgrounds and it is for \$220,000. They are presently waiting on a grant and will provide updates at a future meeting.

Recently finalized the work on the chimney. Have not been able to meet with the architects yet.

The open items are superintendent services, which a draft agreement is currently being drafted and a proforma budget for the new school district. We will be working on these over the next couple months.

Deborah Hart stated it's a once in a lifetime opportunity. They could submit another petitioned warrant article.

Ms. Larochelle asked if there were any other questions or comments. Seeing none she made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Mr. Rescigno seconded. All in favor.

The meeting adjourned at 7:27pm.

BRIDGEWATER, HEBRON & GROTON STEERING COMMITTEE

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Virginia Parker
Groton Representative

Derry Riddle
BHVD – Ex Officio

William White
BHVD – Ex Officio

November 15, 2023: Meeting called to order at 6pm
Meeting Location: Bridgewater Town Hall

Committee Members Present: Jennifer Larochelle, Terence Murphy, Patrick Moriarty, Virginia Parker, Erick Piper and John Rescigno

BHVD Ex-Officio Representatives Present: Derry Riddle, and William White.

Ms. Larochelle called the meeting to order.

Ms. Larochelle asked for any updates to the minutes of the November 1, 2023 meeting.

Ms. Riddle made the suggestion that the location of the meetings be added for all future meetings.

Ms. Larochelle made a motion to accept the public meeting minutes as amended. Mr. Piper seconded. All in favor. No abstentions.

Ms. Larochelle requested to contact the PTO and schedule a meeting.

Ms. Parker replied that is a good thought.

Mr. Piper said make it happen. Where should the meeting be? You could always use the Town Hall.

Ms. Larochelle stated that she would like the logistics of the meeting to offer babysitting. Therefore at the school would be ideal.

Education Committee Updates:

Ms. Larochelle brought up a question that the teachers are concerned about. Their current contract ends 6/30/25 and their negotiations for a new contract will happen in the fall of next year. Can they negotiate with Newfound and the New SD at the same time?

Discussion ensued around the timing of the new contract and how the new SD contract should mirror the existing contract.

Budget Committee Updates:

Ms. Parker stated that the proposed budget was presented Monday evening at the School board meeting and that she should receive an excel spreadsheet in the next week and can prepare something for the committee to review.

Mr. Piper stated that in the budget there are 11 teachers and 17 support staff. It was stated that there may be 5 less. 80% of our costs will be salaries.

In addition if we do a lease back for pre-k we may arrange that the school district lease the classroom for \$1 but provide the teacher and then our students attend for free.

Contract Negotiations Committee Updates:

Ms. Parker reviewed the meeting with the subcommittee of the school board. She explained that the current goal is to work out a tailings agreement. Other contract services, we will most likely look elsewhere.

**BRIDGEWATER, HEBRON & GROTON
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Mr. Piper added that reciprocity for Alexandria students coming to our school will be included in the tailings agreement.

Mr. Murphy stated that the tuition agreement and tailing agreement MOU's will come from the attorney. The agreement will have an opt in clause and basically nothing will be signed until after the vote.

We have been contacted by SAU #48 and they would like to discuss tuition agreements.

SAU #2 will be discussing admin and superintendent services.

A discussion ensued regarding superintendent services.

Hillary Coles asked wouldn't superintendent services be a revenue item for SAU #4.

Multiple individuals responded yes it would.

Facility Committee Updates:

Ms. Larochelle stated that Ms. Riddle is being added to this subcommittee as an ex officio member.

Mr. Murphy supplied an update that the grant for the playground in the amount of \$182,000 has been approved and we may receive the funds shortly.

Ms. Parker asked is we are at the point to reconfigure classrooms etc.

Mr. Moriarty asked if there will be pre-k negotiations.

Ms. Parker responded that they have been laser focused on an MOU for the tailing agreement.

We did discuss that if we do not hear back by a certain date, we may not have space for the pre-k.

Mr. Rescigno said we need to focus on where our students can and will go.

Ms. Parker stated that the tailings agreement is a brief interjectory for a shorter period of time which will provide for transition until our school is up to k-8.

Mr. Piper replied that the tailings agreement is through 2031 and we may also have other options prior to that.

Mr. Moriarty mentioned that when speaking with the DOE, there hasn't been an instance when a tailings agreement hasn't happened.

Ms. Parker stated that they would like to have a tailings agreement and we would like it to be reciprocal.

Ms. Larochelle brought up the need for a parent representative as part of our committee. The focus should be an individual with children in the school system.

A discussion ensued regarding possible candidates.

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Ms. Larochelle asked if the superintendent and admin services will be turned over to Ms. Parker and Mr. Piper.

Mr. Murphy replied that he would like to stay involved.

Mr. Moriarty asked if we should be looking at other school districts for the services.

Mr. Murphy stated that he has a couple others in mind.

Mr. Piper stated it would be nice to find one with grant writing.

A discussion ensued regarding the specific types of services we should be looking for.

Mr. Murphy noted that as things progress we will need to engage with the public.

Ms. Larochelle requested a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Piper made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Mr. Rescigno seconded. All committee members were in favor.

The meeting adjourned at 6:59pm

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COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Terence Murphy
Bridgewater Selectman

Patrick Moriarty
Hebron Selectman

John Rescigno
Groton Selectman

Erick Piper
Bridgewater Representative

Jennifer Larochelle
Hebron Representative

Virginia Parker
Groton Representative

Derry Riddle
BHVD – Ex Officio

William White
BHVD – Ex Officio

November 29, 2023: Meeting called to order at 6pm

Meeting Location: Union Congregational Church, Hebron NH

Committee Members Present: Jennifer Larochelle, Patrick Moriarty, Terence Murphy, Virginia Parker and Erick Piper. Absent: John Rescigno.

Ex Officio Members Present: Derry Riddle

Ms. Larochelle called the meeting to order.

Ms. Larochelle asked for any updates to the minutes of the November 15, 2023 meeting.

Ms. Larochelle asked for a motion to accept the public meeting minutes as presented.

Mr. Moriarty moved to accept the minutes as presented. Mr. Murphy seconded. All members present approved.

Ms. Larochelle asked for committee updates.

Education Committee updates:

Ms. Larochelle stated that she has shared the answers to the questions regarding the contracts. She is also in process of scheduling the meetings with the PTO.

Budget and Contracts Committee updates:

Mr. Piper and Ms. Parker will begin piecing together a proforma budget. They have not received the budget from the school board yet and do not currently have a date that they will be able to present a projected budget for the new school district.

Contract Negotiations Committee Updates:

Discussions ensued regarding the current MOU's that are being negotiated with the different school districts.

Currently we have an agreement with SAU#4 for a tailings agreement that will bring the current students through high school. Students will also have the option to attend high school in Plymouth.

Teacher Contracts Committee updates:

Ms. Larochelle let everyone know that there aren't any new updates at this time due to the honor agreement per statute.

Facilities Committee updates:

Mr. Murphy made an announcement that \$182,000 was received as a grant for the new playgrounds at BHVS. He also explained that the cost for the equipment is in excess of \$220K and there will be additional costs to take down and dispose of the current equipment and then to prep the grounds for the new equipment. He mentioned it would be nice to receive other donations from community members.

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Mr. Murphy stated that the chimney project is underway and final repairs will be completed shortly.

Ms. Larochelle opened the meeting up to public questions and comments.

Discussion ensued regarding voting and when and how it will happen.

Mr. Moriarty reminded individuals that Hebron town meeting is in May. The selectmen were not successful with the request to have the voting for this item at the same time as Bridgewater and Groton.

Mr. Murphy reminded individuals to watch their emails and town websites for future committee meetings and community meetings. We hope to have at least one more community meeting prior to the voting in March for Bridgewater & Groton and May for Hebron.

There will be future documentation available to the public prior to town meetings.

Ms. Larochelle requested a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Moriarty made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Mr. Piper seconded. All committee member present were in favor.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:55pm

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Hebron Selectman

John Rescigno
Groton Selectman

Erick Piper
Bridgewater Representative

Jennifer Larochelle
Hebron Representative

Virginia Parker
Groton Representative

Derry Riddle
BHVD – Ex Officio

William White
BHVD – Ex Officio

December 13, 2023: Meeting called to order at 6pm

Location: Groton Town Hall

Members of the Committee Present: Jennifer Larochelle, Terence Murphy, Virginia Parker, John Rescigno, and Erick Piper

Ms. Larochelle calls the meeting to order and announces there are no minutes to approve because the committee's minute-taker has been sick. Hilary Coles agrees to take minutes for tonight's meeting.

Ms. Larochelle and Mr. Murphy discuss plans and intentions for the next meetings leading up to the vote in March.

The committee notes the need for a written fact sheet for BHVS teachers and staff. Budget planning and teacher contracts also need to be discussed.

Ms. Parker updates the committee on the SAU 4 HB349 subcommittee meeting, which occurred before tonight's meeting. A draft agreement was reviewed and will be shown to the school board at the meeting on January 8. The draft is a broad stroke document owing to the fact that the Newfound Area School District isn't able to access their budget information after the ransomware attack. Overall, the steering committee is hopeful that the school board is more open to working with them.

SAU 2 has declined to offer superintendent services. Mr. Murphy offers to reach out to his contact to see if there is another option for working with SAU 2. Regardless of which district the three towns contract with for superintendent services, the steering committee should explore using the same student management software for better efficiency.

There is also potential for the three towns to handle superintendent services themselves, but there is still an interest in exploring all avenues. It is noted that some BHVS teachers have indicated they like having other peers to reach out to. The committee discusses having other alternatives to this.

The committee also discusses SAU 4's space needs and how the committee can trade space for access to things that the new school district will need. There are opportunities to collaborate so that no one is losing resources.

Overall, relations between the steering committee and SAU 4 school board feel comfortable. As far as budget information, the 2022 data will be useful in moving forward.

The committee discusses when they should have the new school district's budget information ready for release. They note the need to give voters of the three towns enough time to review the information. It will be important to note that the budget is more of a proof of concept, then something set in stone.

Mr. Piper and Mr. Murphy discuss upcoming payments to the village district and note that there

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are no major maintenance needs coming up soon. Mr. Murphy shares updates on the playground project and how it is connected to the Pre-K program.

The committee moves on to discussion about a parent representative to join the steering committee since Bridget has declined. There is discussion about Hilary Coles joining, but she ultimately declines. The committee will continue to look for a parent representative.

The committee discusses plans such as mailing, social media, and word-of-mouth campaigns to encourage more residents to attend meetings as well as come out and vote. At this point, the committee is focused on reaching parents of students.

A resident from Hebron notes that renters don't feel invested in this decision. There are parents among this group and it could be valuable to find a way to reach out to them.

Ms. Coles shares that many of the parents she has talked with in Groton appear to be in favor of voting to form a new school district but there are some that are still undecided.

Mr. Murphy discusses the merits of Plymouth schools that could help persuade parents.

Ms. Larochelle initiates a discussion on how best to reach people in order to host a public hearing and when the hearing should occur. With a lack of email lists, publicizing it is a challenge. Ms. Parker suggests holding the public hearing in February in consideration of the deliberative session for the Newfound Area School District.

Ms. Larochelle moves to end the meeting at 7:01pm. Mr. Piper makes the motion, Mr. Murphy seconds the motion and the committee unanimously agrees.

Respectfully submitted by Hilary Coles.