

TOWN OF EGREMONT, MASSACHUSETTS  
MEETING OF THE SELECT BOARD  
MINUTES

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Date: July 6, 2022

Time: 10:00am

Place: Egremont Town Hall & Via Zoom

Present in-person were Selectboard Chairman George McGurn, Vice-Chair Lucinda Fenn-Vermeulen, Board member Mary Brazie, RSDPB Project Manger Jake Everwein, Frank Cote, Finance Committe members Laura Allen and Tom Berkel (also RSDPB member), Moderator Steve Cohen, Chairwoman RSDPB Lucy Prashker.

Others participating via zoom: Mary McGurn, Egremont School Committee member James Dipisa and Finance Committee member Daniel Blitzer.

It was announced that the meeting is video and audio recorded.

Selectboard Chairman George McGurn, also a member of the RSDPB, introduced the members of the Regional School District Planning Board (RSDPB) who were present to give a summary update report to the Board and Finance Committee on the role and work of the RSDPB and the reasons behind and data supporting the RSDPB's vote regarding merging of the Berkshire Hills Regional School District (BHRSD) and the Southern Berkshire Regional School District (SBRSD). It was noted that Egremont's third member of the RSDPB, Danile Jordan, was not able to attend. The purpose of this meeting was to hear from the Chairwoman and Project Manager of the RSDPB on the merger vote taken and the data supporting that vote.

RSDPB Chairwoman Lucy Prashker distributed to the Board a written summary update report (attached). She described the formation of the RSDPB in March of 2020 and it's work which resulted in the vote to present to the 8 town's of the two school districts the preferred model that the two districts merge to form a single K-12 regional school district among the either towns, maintaining all existing elementary and middle schools, but creating a new merged 9-12 high school to be built on the campus of the current Monument Mountain High School. Chairwoman Praskher and Project Manager Jake Eberwein presented information, data and answered questions.

The RSDPB representatives reported that data shows that enrollment in both districts is and will continue to decline. Both districts facilities are under utilized. Savings of \$1.5 to \$2.1 million will be seen by the member towns annually. The cost to Egremont each year for 25 years for the construction of the new high school facility is estimated at \$42,000. The cost was based on the town's of SBRSD paying 10% of the cost offset by the 6% school building assistance funds so the SBRSD town's were only payinig 4% fo the cost of the new building.

There are still months of work to be done by the RSDPB in regards to governance of the new district, assessment methodology, and drafting the regional agreement. A new advisory group will be formed consisting of people from all 8 town's who have not been members of the RSDPB. Community outreach will be a huge need.

The RSDPB has spent about \$350,000 to date and has about \$52,000 left in its budget. There are currently no regionalization funds in the State's FY 23 budget. The RSDPB may have to seek further funds from the town's to continue its work.

The RSDPB vote for the preferred merger model was a 16-6 vote. The RSDPB is heavily weighted to SBRSD as each member town of the two district gets 3 members on the RSDPB. SBRSD has 5 member towns while BHRSD has 3 member towns.

Detailed information and resources are available on the RSDPB's web page [www.8towns.org](http://www.8towns.org). The site also has an area for comments and questions to be presented.

Concern was expressed by Board members over the planned closure of the Mount Everett High School campus as it is fairly new, about 30 years old, currently under utilized, and future uses, as it connects directly the elementary and middle school would be limited. The Board sees this as a stumbling block to acceptance of the 8 town merger by the SBRSD towns.

Teachers from both districts will soon have the opportunity to speak with the RSDPB, hopefully in small groups to allow open debate.

Superintendents from both of the districts have been involved in the process to date and will continue to be. Personnel from both districts will be displaced - preferable through attrition.

Meeting adjourned at 11:29am.

Mary Brazie,  
Office Administrator

minutes.22/jul6

*The recording of the minutes is on record at the Town Hall for 90 days. Anyone who wishes to may obtain a copy or listen to the recording at Town Hall. Attachments are on file at Town Hall.*