

Regional Advisory Board Meeting
8/6/21
Minutes

Members present: Bill Anton, WCSU; Alex Beck, Brattleboro Development Credit Corp.; Anne Beekman, BUHS Board; Anne Frietag, Hinsdale High School; Chloe Learey, Winston Prouty Center; Chris Pratt, WNESU; Frank Rucker, WSESD; Mark Speno, WSESD; Bob Woodworth, Chair & Community Member, Jennifer Stromsten, Brattleboro Development Credit Corp. and Nancy Wiese, WRCC.

The meeting was called to order at 10:05 am

1. Welcome

2. Accept the Agenda

Nancy requested the topic of going to the school board for approval to sell three WRCC properties at Whetstone Village be added to the agenda. Request approved.

3. Accept the Minutes

Minutes were accepted as written.

4. Discussion of State Board Rule 2397

Nancy put the board rule 2397 before the RAB board. Needs decision of the RAB board regarding use of the bank space within WRCC. Nancy explained the request to use the space for something else. Frank Rucker put together the history of the bank space and reviewed it with the board. Frank explained that it has been a collaborative process. Everyone has been working closely together. The space was constructed in early 2000's as a satellite branch for the Brattleboro Savings & Loan Bank. In 2014, the director worked with the RAB to initiate a BioMedical program. The space was used for this for a short period of time. The teachers indicated it was not adequate for instructional space - it didn't lend itself to instruction. Space became vacant in 2015-16. The Special Education Director worked with Mike Burnett, WRCC Director at that time, to use this space for a group of students in their transitional program. This program is to help students adjust to BUHS and some WRCC programs. The unique space offers an exit to the outside without going through the high school. Special education gave Frank the background info that began the sharing of the space that serves about 12 students. Currently the program does not have any career center students enrolled in it. The decision for Special Education to use this space did not go through a formal process. Need a vote from RAB and then on to the BUHS Board and then to the state. This is a one year request. Wasn't a compliant process. Nancy wants to address all non-compliant issues. Will move ahead in accommodating space for the future. Bob W. asked if this was just for one year? Nancy explained that she wants to use the space for adult education. This would provide a work space and classroom space with an office for the adult ed. coordinator. The space has a self-contained bathroom. Adult students would not have to enter and go through the entire building to reach the space.

Reduces stress on maintenance. Bill Anton made the motion to approve the use of the space be released to general education purposes for one year. Bill said that it just makes sense. The board was unanimously in favor. Nancy has crafted a letter stating that the RAB Board is in favor of this.

Added item to agenda-Whetstone Properties

Nancy explained to the RAB board that WRCC owns lots 14, 16 & 17 at Whetstone Village. Would need to pull some staff to clean up the property to sell. Last year we started paying dues of \$550. per lot/per year. Assessment has been reduced from \$30,000. to \$15,000. each. These pieces of property can be developed. Do have proper footage. Would like to take advantage of the housing boom and list with a realtor. If they don't sell, we'll drop the price. Nancy has spoken to John DiMatteo and he feels we should be building tiny houses that can be completed in two years. Chloe Leary made the motion to sell the three Whetstone properties. Anne Beekman seconded the motion. Bob W. was on the BUHS board when it was purchased and stated that it is a pretty tight space. Good to move them along. Frank added that if anyone is interested, they would probably want to buy all three. There is septic and water. Have tried to see and/or give away three times. Discouraged by taxes. Alex B. asked if there is any value to the career center? Nancy said she really objects to the career center paying the association dues. Frank added that they did look into generating money with other income and have explored a number of options. The association is not working with us on any of these options. Jennifer S. said to take the money and run. Water and sewer is worth something. The Regional Advisory Board was unanimously in favor. Approval from the Windham Southeast Supervisory District Board is also required. Would be great to see this resolved.

6. Other Business

Nancy has built the school's recovery plan. Will access to obtain services for students through their own districts. Our resource coordinator will assist. We have a new attendance policy which focuses on getting students here. This has gone through state approval. Review in October. Numbers are looking better than we thought. Working hard to make sure the first weeks are about bonding and relationships. We know the kids that are returning. The tragedy in Hinsdale will affect our community. Students may need extra support. Nancy will be working with Frank R. on some ADA issues. Statewide career centers are attempting to fix funding for ourselves and sending districts. Windham Southeast gets hit twice. Should improve opportunities. We could not do a summer program this year. Everyone was so exhausted from COVID. Looking forward to having kids back full-time. Thanks to RAB and their support. We are close to being back in compliance. Nancy's goal is not to be out of compliance anywhere. RAB meetings have to be warned.

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Mark S. thanked Nancy for being proactive. Thanks for working with Steve P. and Shelley. The career center will benefit in the future.

Ann Frietag introduced Hinsdale's new Assistant Principal, Chris Ponce.

Upcoming dates - Nancy and Joyce will get proposed dates out to everyone.

Bob W. thanked everyone for taking the time out of their busy schedules to be present for this meeting.

Anne B. made the motion to adjourn the meeting. Nancy W. seconded.

Meeting adjourned at 10:50 am