

Meeting Minutes

Vocational Education Options Working Group (VEOWG)

January 20, 2016

Members in Attendance:

Peter Braun, *Selectman*

Laura Sander, *Finance Committee*

Patty Mostue, *Lincoln-Sudbury School Committee*

Becky McFall, *Superintendent – Lincoln Schools*

Tim Higgins, *Town Administrator*

Mr. Higgins convened the meeting at 8:00 a.m. and introduced the VEOWG. Mr. Higgins then reviewed the agenda for the meeting which was focused on completing the three sections of the intended report: 1) The Frequently Asked Questions document 2) the educational quality assessment matrix, and 3) the financial comparison spreadsheet.

Visiting Selectmen

Mr. Braun introduced Selectmen from Carlisle, Wayland and Sudbury who were in attendance: Lyn Lemaire from Carlisle, Lea Anderson from Wayland, and Len Simon from Sudbury. Each shared their community's respective analysis of the central question regarding whether to remain a member of the Minuteman District or to explore other options. There is clear consensus among the leadership boards in all three towns that Minuteman Regional High School is the most expensive Vocational High School in the state and that a number of high quality, more cost effective vocational high schools are available. The leadership boards in Wayland and Sudbury have already voted to recommend withdrawal and are in the final stages of preparing for their early-February special town meetings. Lyn Lemaire of Carlisle was less certain as to the position that her Board and the other Carlisle leadership boards intend to take. All three Towns invited Lincoln's attendance at upcoming public forums. Mr. Simon described information he learned from his recent visits he has made to the three vocational high schools that Sudbury is considering as an alternative to Minuteman (i.e., Nashoba, Assabet, and South Middlesex/Keefe). Questions from the public focused on the concern that the VEOWG verify that these other schools are truly available and that they will not be faced with the same changing governance and finances that Minuteman is currently confronting.

FAQ Document Draft

The VEOWG agreed to review the latest draft developed by Mr. Braun, modeled on those prepared by Sudbury and Wayland, with additional perspective reflecting Lincoln's unique history and perspective. The VEOWG's goal is to finalize the FAQ when it meets next during the week of January 25th.

Educational Quality Matrix

Ms. Mostue is working on adding the South Middlesex/Keefe information to the spreadsheet that was developed by one of the other Towns, offering a side-by-side comparison of curricula, test scores and other standard measures for Minuteman, Assabet and Nashoba. The VEOWG noted that the comparison is a useful due diligence step, but that it appeared that all three of the alternative schools offered quality programs at a substantially reduced price as compared with Minuteman.

Cost Comparisons

Mr. Higgins and Ms. Sander updated the Board on their work to create a cost comparison model. They noted that they are endeavoring to create an apples-to-apples comparison, based on data that can be verified. This is proving difficult to accomplish due to the fact that Minuteman's projections seem to be continuously evolving. The VEOWG agreed that Minuteman's cost projections for FY 20 appear to provide the most solid basis for comparison. Mr. Higgins and Ms. Sander will update the financials and will recirculate for review in advance of next week's meeting.

Town-wide Mailing

The VEOWG intends to prepare the FAQ and other documents/s for mailing in advance of the February 23rd Special Town Meeting, likely in advance of the public forum.

Visits to Other Schools

Several members of the VEOWG are scheduled to visit with the Superintendents of Assabet, Nashoba and South Middlesex/Keefe over the next two weeks. The group will submit notes on these discussions and any conclusions that might inform the FAQ and discussion for special town meeting. The VEOWG also confirmed its desire to have a formal visit to Minuteman. Superintendent McFall agreed to take the lead on scheduling.

Meeting Schedule

Mr. Higgins agreed to send out an e-mail to establish dates for the next few VEOWG meetings, a target date for mailing the FAQ and related materials, and a date for a dedicated public forum. The VEOWG is still holding to the February 8th date for a presentation to the Board of Selectmen.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:30 a.m.