

Meeting of the Amherst and Pelham
Regional School District Planning Board

Monday April 9 , 2018 , 9 am

Pelham Library Community Room 2 S Valley Rd, Pelham, MA 01002

1. 9:05 a.m. Call to order by member Peter Demling

2. 9:05 - 9:22 a.m: Organization

a. Tom Fanning volunteered to take today's minutes.

b. Welcome & introductions c. Officer selections

i. Chair: Peter

i. Vice-Chair: Emily Marriott

iii. Secretary-Treasurer: Cara Castenson

3. 9:22 am: Meeting Norms

a. Robert's Rules - modified: Balance the meeting structure between formal adherence to RR for meetings with members of the public to allow for the Chair's control of proceedings, to more informal structure during working meetings to allow detailed discussions to proceed to their logical conclusion. At the beginning of each meeting the Chair will explain to those present what the rules of order for the meeting will be.

b. Minute taking will be on a rotating basis.

c. Open meeting law

i. email communication: no quorum on the recipient list is allowed; no chain emailing

ii. Op-Ed columns in news media: not allowed because it could violate the quorum rule.

iii. Minutes will be distributed for comments from the note-taker to other members. Minute taker will decide if suggested changes are appropriate. Minutes will capture the general content of discussions - no need to produce verbatim transcript. Minutes will be discussed & approved at the next meeting. Chair will send approved minutes to Debbie Westmoreland for public posting on the Regional website under >About Us >School Committee> Regional School District Planning Board.

iv. Public communication: Refer the media to the Chair. In some instances the Chair will allow an individual member to speak with the media. v. Agendas: Set at the Committee

Planning portion of the previous meeting; the Chair will then send out copies to members and have it posted on the Regional website.

4. RSDPB: broad overview of work and timeline Pathway to Regionalization flow chart and outline template: we are at Step 2b. Step 1 was completed by each town's School Committee and approved by the Town Meetings. Suggestion was made to invite an expert (Mass Assoc of Regional Schools?) to give us the rundown on the pitfalls of the process. Suggestion was made that we establish trust among the reps of the two towns by putting each town's challenges and strengths on the table in the hopes of producing a team effort.

5. 10 am Selecting/working with the consultant Discussion with Mike Morris, Supt. We received the \$21.5k Community Compact Grant to help us deal with this process by hiring consultants experienced in this field. The money is disbursed by the Dept of Revenue. The money must be spent by June first, 2019. The Collins Center at Umass-Boston is a governmental agency that we could hire. However, their strength is more community relations rather than technical stuff. Some local citizens have not been impressed by the performance of the Collins Center as they consulted on other local projects. Other possible sources of consulting are: The Donahue Center, Umass-Amherst, and Mass. Association of Regional Schools. For non-governmental entities, we cannot hire unless we put out a Request for Proposals (RFP). If we do an RFP, we must accept the lowest bid. We should try to get our consultant hired within about 2 months. The RFP process would require us to set detailed criteria, and maybe we are not ready to do that yet. It might be best to continue collecting info on the process and consultants before we hire or put out an RFP. Mike Morris added that the challenges for us were governance, finance, and the effects of possible school closings. Our consultant should be able to engage enough to help the Board to create an agreement that addresses our local governance, finance, and the status of our school buildings. Also, Supt. Morris advised that we should keep our school staff out of this process to avoid the possibility of some members of the public seeing that as providing an advantage to one town over another. We should use the consultant for these services. Chair Demling offered to do research on consultants, especially the Collins Center. He will also investigate other communities that have recently regionalized to gather insights from their experience.

6. 10:38 Committee Planning - Our next meeting will be on April 24th, from 9:30 to 11 am, at the Pelham Library Community Room.

7. Meeting adjourned at 10:40.