

Peacham School Community Meeting
Sunday March 25
3:00 – 5:00 PM

UNAPPROVED

Present: School Board members-Jo Anne Post, chair, Wynne Browne, Jean Dedam; Community Members - Tom Glavin, Betty Glavin, Matthew Langham, Wendy Mackenzie, Mark Clough, Neal Gombas, Jane Woodhouse, David Magnus, Martha Evangelista, Dave Stauffer, Hilary Smith, Julie Hansen, Marceya Roy, Judy Chypre, Kathy Schauer, Wendy Morgan, Susan Kiley, Debra Vogini, Bruce Courtot, Cathy Browne, Christina Fearon, Marie Phillips, John Phillips, Raymond Young, John Mackenzie, Jenny Mackenzie, Dart Thalman, Karen Joyce, Jock Gill, Diana Senturia, Mary Ellen Griffen

Jo Anne opened the meeting at 3:05 with a statement about the purpose of the meeting. The School Board was initiating this process as a result of the discussion at town meeting regarding the need to research options for educating the town's children. The goal is to have completed the work in time to have feasible options ready for presentation to the voters at the 2008 town meeting. Jo Anne emphasized the serious nature of the decisions to be made as they could have profound effects not only on the school but also on the community for many years. She said the process would be open, transparent and factual and noted that the chairs had been placed in a circle to make the discussion inclusive.

Jean asked that everyone introduce themselves and then make a short statement about why they had come, why this issue was important to them. Jo Anne emphasized that this process was to look at all options and not to judge the choices made by parents now or the relative quality of education at the Peacham and Stevens Schools.

Jean followed the introductions with a statement about what the board wanted to accomplish in the meeting, identify topics to be researched, establish committees, time frames, communication methods and meeting times. This was followed with a discussion of a desired end product and process.

Jock Gill said he wanted to see trend data (enrollment, annual costs, town economic data, etc.) compiled to help give direction to the investigation of options.

Mark Clough asked what had happened to the results of the January meeting. Wendy Morgan said she had prepared a typed report that compiled the information. Jo Anne said that meeting was the basis of this process. Marceya Roy noted that there had been committee investigations of options 5 years ago and suggested the information compiled at that time should be used now so work already done would not be repeated. Jo Anne said the work of the prior committees could be shared with the new committees.

Wendy Morgan said she would like to have the proposals fleshed out including costs so that the community could begin to discuss them in August or September.

Kathy Schauer said she would like a separate town meeting to discuss only this issue and not have it included with the annual meeting where there would not be adequate time for discussion.

Jo Anne said she would like to have a large public meeting that would look at the big picture in the community perhaps with a facilitator and with the selectmen, planning commission, conservation commission, and others.

Diana said that she could put the information from the January meeting on the website if she had an introductory statement that explained the color coding and the dots. Jo Anne said she would get that to her.

Dave Stauffer said he would like the meetings to be held once a month so that everyone stays involved and informed. He suggested asking the legislators to a meeting to discuss the legislation under discussion at the statehouse. Jean suggested that they should be invited in April while the legislature is still in session. Jo Anne said there would be a public hearing on VITC this Thursday from 7-9 PM. Contact Jo Anne if interested in more information. A sheet was circulated for email addresses for folks who want to receive announcements. Jane Woodhouse suggested a friend from the Midwest who is now living in Randolph but had researched the private/public options and costs of small schools vs. consolidation into bigger schools.

Regular meeting times will be the 4th Sunday of each month except July from 3-5 PM. The dates will be April 22nd, May 20th, June 24th, August 26th and September 23rd.

Brainstormed a list of options to research:

- School remains as is
- Merger with another school
- Close Peacham School
- Privatize the school
- School choice with or without the school
- Expand the school two options K-8 or K-12
- Arrange shared school/teaching resources with a neighboring community
- Tuition in students
- All students attend the closest school not matter which community they live in
- Keep the school building open but add other uses such as day care or a senior center
- Look at external changes we can make such as family housing or economic development and other sources of funds such as grants
- Practice zero based budgeting which starts a clean sheet, identifies what is needed and associated costs rather than working from an historical budget.
- Establish a home school center at the school with resources for families
- Designate a middle and/or high school
- Secede from the CCSU

Suggested speakers are

- District legislators
- Jane Woodhouse's contact Martin Strange
- Listers or someone from the Vermont tax department
- Planning commission on affordable housing

Discussed the pros and cons of having a list serve and other means of communicating with community members.

- ❖ Email list will be used for notices and reports, not for dialogue.
- ❖ All reports must come to the large group before being published and must be available in both electronic and written form
- ❖ All facts presented in committee reports must be sourced.
- ❖ A mailing to the checklist will be prepared to inform the whole community of the process that has begun, the schedule of meetings and contact information for the committees and Jo Anne
- ❖ All committee meetings will be posted at least one week in advance at the town hall, library and school with date, time, place and subject.

Wendy Morgan said she felt the items that had been researched could all fall under one of 5 different headings. They are as follows with the individuals who volunteered to serve on each. More volunteers are needed for each group.

Data

Jock Gill
Dianna Senturia
Wynne Browne

Variations of School As Is

Cathy Browne
Neal Gombas
Debra Vogini

School Choice

Mark Clough
Wendy Morgan

Merger/Union with other District

Jane Woodhouse

Expansion Options

Marceya Roy
Jean Dedam

Legislative Committee (additional)

Bruce Courtot
Jo Anne Post

Diana Senturia (diana@peacham.net) will post all approved reports and minutes on www.Peacham.net. Jo Anne will be the central communicator eeeyore@vtlink.net All requests for data from CCSU should be funneled through her.

Respectfully,
Jean Dedam