

MEMORANDUM

TO: Homer District Advisory Committee

FROM: Alan Pole

RE: Meeting Notes-Meeting of November 17, 2009

DATE: November 24, 2009

Present:

Committee Members-Nancy Cavellier, Sara Earl, Michael Falls, Christina Hartnett, Ruth King, Darlene Latten, Korinne L'Hommedieu, Beth Mercer, Karen Shirley, Doug Stafford, Kevin Williams, and Stuart Young

Consultants-Phil Martin and Alan Pole

Advisor-Doug Larison

Observers-Gary Lawrence, Karen Keefe, Katie Dwyer, Tom Hartnett, Judy Hartnett, Alison Mastroe, William Mastroe, Ellen Garrett, Tracey O'Donnell, Cathie Heath, Kathie Williams, Suzanne Case, Diane Nachtrieb, and Linda Llewelyn

1. The meeting was held at the Homer Intermediate School. Visitors were welcomed to the meeting.
2. The meeting notes from the meeting of November 3, 2009 were reviewed and found to be appropriate.
3. Discretionary spending in the school budget was briefly discussed but found not to be very germane to the topic at hand.
4. The logistics for the December 8 community forum were discussed. Some of the committee members expressed reservations about filling the role of small group facilitator but further explanation on the role was provided. Further discussion will take place at the December 1 meeting.
5. The revised cost impact for closing Hartnett was distributed to the committee. The change from the document that was shared at the last meeting is that the salary of the principal is now shown at half time because that individual is also a half time grant writer for the district. The total savings for closing Hartnett is now estimated at \$562,235.

6. It was noted that the options for the utilization of Hartnett Elementary School were not listed on the district web site. The committee asked that the options be posted. I have since checked the web site and the options are posted with the November 3 meeting notes.

7. The options for the utilization of Hartnett that were generated at the November 3 meeting were reviewed by the committee. The revised listing of options with advantages and disadvantages are appended to these meeting notes.

8. The next meeting of the committee will be on Tuesday, December 1, 2009 at the Homer Elementary School beginning at 7 pm.

C: Doug Larison

Kelli Yacavone

Option 1-Keeping Hartnett Open K-6

Advantages:

1. Would keep class sizes at their current level
2. Would preserve smaller building environments
3. Hartnett kindergarten students get to interact with a greater range of age groups
4. Honors the history and culture of Truxton
5. Recognizes the state aid enhancements of the merger between Homer and Truxton
6. Hartnett building serves as a community center
7. Transportation time to school might be less for Hartnett students
8. “School house” format-K-6 enhances student-teacher relationships
9. Parents have a close relationship with the school
10. Easy for Hartnett students to get to school and school activities
11. More opportunities for Hartnett students to participate in school activities
12. Greater opportunity for K-6 vertical curriculum alignment
13. Provides greater opportunity for students to contribute to and appreciate their community
14. A greater number of K-6 classrooms enhance classroom capacity and flexibility
15. Maintains district credibility for possible future mergers
16. Provides greater flexibility for considering other grade level and building configurations within the district having three K-6 buildings or having three K-5 buildings with a 6-8 middle school
17. Adding Pre-K or BOCES STAR programs to Hartnett

Disadvantages:

1. Operational cost
2. Long term maintenance and capital improvement costs

Option 2-Closing Hartnett

Advantages:

1. Cost savings
2. K-6 is a broad age range for elementary students
3. Greater potential for curriculum consistency with all sections of each grade level in the same building
4. Greater accessibility to more clubs for Hartnett students
5. Using Hartnett for school purposes other than academic....such as offices
6. Using Hartnett for non-school functions such as town and village offices

Disadvantages:

1. Larger class sizes for grades 3-6
2. Loss of sense of community
3. Lesser classroom capacity and flexibility
4. Would increase the difficulty in accommodating additional students should district enrollment increase
5. Long term costs of maintaining an empty building
6. May increase the travel time for Truxton students to get to school activities
7. Greater travel time to school may reduce Truxton students' participation in school activities
8. Closing Hartnett may reduce Truxton property values
9. Present growth of Truxton community would diminish without a school
10. Inconsistent with nationwide trend of smaller schools
11. Loss of opportunity to make close friends in a small community
12. Loss of jobs

Other Options: For further discussion on December 1

3. Reconfigure K-6 attendance zones

4. Reassigning K-6 students to other schools when class size maximum is exceeded