



**BOARD OF SELECTMEN
Minutes**

July 31, 2018

Immediately Following the 6:00pm
Special Town Meeting

Broadcast Studio
423 Webbs Mills Road

Resolution: We, the Raymond Board of Selectmen, recognize our individual and collective responsibilities as leaders and representatives of our community. To this end, we pledge to conduct ourselves in a manner befitting these roles and duties. We pledge and encourage others to "Be the Influence" and to recognize that decisions matter.

Select Board members in attendance: Rolf Olsen, Teresa Sadak, Samuel Gifford, Lawrence Taylor, and Marshall Bullock

Select Board members absent: none

Town Staff in attendance:

Don Willard – Town Manager
Sue Look – Town Clerk

1) **Called to order** at pm by Chairman Sadak.

2) **Public Hearing**

The Town of Raymond Board of Selectmen will hold a public hearing on Tuesday, July 31, 2018, for the purpose of receiving public input on the proposed referendum question to be included in the Town Warrant for the Special Town Meeting Election on August 14, 2018:

ARTICLE 2: Vote by secret ballot the question: Do you favor filing a petition for withdrawal with the Board of Education, authorizing the withdrawal committee to expend \$50,000 over 2 years and authorizing the Select Board to issue notes in the name of the Town of Raymond or otherwise pledge the credit of the Town of Raymond in an amount not to exceed \$50,000 over 2 years for this purpose?

There were 2 PowerPoint presentations – one from Chairman Sadak and one from attorney Dan Stockford.

In 2014 a withdrawal process was begun and was halted due to the RSU 14 Board of Directors proposing a new cost sharing agreement where Raymond would pay based on enrollment. It also said that major capital costs would belong to the municipality where the building would be located.

In 2018 Windham wants to build a new garage which would be owned by Windham and leased by the RSU for bus maintenance. Raymond voters were not allowed to vote on this. The RSU Board and Town of Windham were contacted by the Raymond Select

Board and they would not sit down and talk about this issue. Also, the RSU Board voted to approve a lease of a modular classroom for their middle school and for Adult Education. There is plenty of room at Jordan Small Middle School and Raymond Elementary for either of these.

The RSU has \$6.5 million in their undesignated funds, but the playground at RES had to be put off another year because of budget cuts.

Raymond's student count is diminishing. The withdrawal process is a 22-step process.

Attorney Stockford – I have been practicing school law for more than 25 years and have represented more than 20 towns who have withdrawn from RSU and some RSUs who have had towns withdraw, so I have seen it from both sides. I will simplify the steps.

Basic Steps:

- A petition has been filed to initiate the process.
- A secret ballot, simple majority vote to authorize the expenditure of monies to begin the process.
- This hearing fulfills the requirement of a public hearing prior to the vote.
- The Town Clerk notifies the DOE
- The DOE will direct the BOS to form a Withdrawal Committee, made up of:
 - 1 from Select Board
 - 1 from general public
 - 1 from group filing petition
 - 1 from RSU Board
- Meeting of Withdrawal Committee to elect Chair.
- Negotiating the Withdrawal Agreement – this is the bulk of the time and expense
- DOE requires that the withdrawal agreement be submitted for conditional approval by June 30th a year before the withdrawal date.
- Withdrawal Agreement is sent to the DOE for feedback/approval.
- Public hearing prior to final DOE approval.
- DOE sets date for Raymond's vote (must have a turnout of at least 50% of the votes cast in the previous gubernatorial election).
- Public hearing for the secret ballot vote.
- The Town Clerk notifies DOE.
- DOE sends a certificate of withdrawal.

We would need to have in the agreement:

- An agreement for a 10-year period from a school that would guarantee to take our students.
- Address transportation
- The withdrawal must not require new construction
- Who is responsible for outstanding debt?

- Division of property owned by RSU
- Obligations to Employees – contracts, collective bargaining, etc.
- Transition of Administration & Governance
- Undesignated Fund Balances – usually apportioned according to the cost sharing agreements

Opening a new school:

- Elect a School Board
- Decide to continue as a municipal school unit, join a different RSU or join an AOS
- Hire:
 - Superintendent – would not need to be full-time
 - Special Education Director
 - Principal
 - Federal Projects
 - Tech Director
 - Business Services
- Develop initial budget
- Adopt policies
- Staffing, Food Service, Maintenance, Transportation all need to be addressed

Sheila Bourque – Were around how much this will cost and what will the education of the children look like. Why do we want to do this other than we are being ripped off and being treated badly.

Selectman Olsen – Where were we? We had a K-8 school and we tuitioned out our high school kids. Now, because Windham will not send any kids here, Raymond has a K-8 school and we, through the budget, tuition our kids to high school. If we separate, we will have a K-8 school and we will tuition our kids to high school. To the kids there will not be much of a change. When we were on our own we had schools of national excellence. That is not where they are right now. We will have to do some work to get there, but that would be our goal. Raymond had a concept a few years ago of “One Raymond” where we would look for areas where we could share responsibilities between the town and the school. We would be looking to do this again. We thought they would look at the RSU as a consolidated unit and that did not happen.

Grace Leavitt – There is consternation that the Select Board should not be speaking in the “Public Hearing” and that there was bias in the presentation and may not have been factual. Issue was taken with the disparaging remarks about the RSU Board and with the thought that we could get back to “national schools of excellence”. Windham has a great facility and programs. \$50,000 is too much to spend. Why are we having this vote when the fewest people will here.

Peter Leavitt – We got our savings for the town with the last attempt at this. Is there not a better way to do this? Negotiate rather than threaten withdrawal. What is a “substantial increase” to the \$9,600 leasing cost? We do not need to spend all \$50,000, how much of the money was spent last time? Quality has not been talked about at all here. The primary reason it was unsuccessful last time was that it did not make common sense.

Chairman Sadak – Everything that was on that presentation was taken from the video, minutes and agenda from RSU 14 Board of Directors meetings.

Selectman Bullock – The issue for me is that the building they are building is the top of the line that could survive a nuclear attack. It is \$310 per square foot. A building on Enterprise Drive that would be sufficient for this use is \$65 per square foot. I asked Superintendent Sandy Prince if due diligence was done to look at other options, his answer was, “No, we trusted the RSU.” That makes no sense. The difference in the lease cost is from \$9,600 to \$63,000 for 20 years.

Chairman Sadak – We did look into going to court and it would cost \$50,000 to begin a court proceeding. I found that Sebago spent \$56,000 for their withdrawal. The last time we stopped the withdrawal process (it did not fail) because it was the best thing at the time. We got the change in the cost sharing agreement and spent less than \$5,000. What people do not know is we have been working with an attorney to send letters to Windham and the RSU. One response was that they do not plan to answer the email because they did not plan to talk to the school board until mid-June.

Frank McDermott – If this is not about a better education and building a better school system for the kids of Raymond, then it is not worth it. I would like to see what a school system could look like in the Town of Raymond with ballpark figures. Could we attract kids from outside if we had specialties? Mark Eastman was the best superintendent in the State of Maine and should have been Commissioner of Education. I want to see a presentation on the kids and how we can benefit them.

Selectman Olsen – That is part of the process. All this does is start the process. The final plan

Frank McDermott – Before I commit to spending \$50,000 I want commitment from the Town that we are going to build an excellent school system. We had a wonderful technology program which the RSU threw out of Raymond because Windham does not have it. Are we going to reinstate that? Are we willing to spend the money?

Selectman Bullock – I do not see any major staff changes. What I do see is a better morale. I understand there are some morale issues because of the way Windham is treating Raymond and their school. A good example is the RES playground. We recognize it may cost some money in the beginning to get a school up and running the way we want. In the long term we will get a better education and better morale for the teachers.

Sheila Bourque – Why aren't we studying what we want to be before we get out of what we are?

Chairman Sadak – I have so much faith in our teachers. It is not the Select Board's job to come up with the plan for the new school, that will come out of the withdrawal process after the Withdrawal Committee is formed and will be voted on by the Town.

Attorney Stockford – Ultimately it is up to the voters of Raymond.

Joe Bruno – 1989 we negotiated with surrounding schools to take our kids and they were offering 10% to 15% discounts because they all wanted our kids. We had over 700 kids at the time. Now we are under 600, a 20% drop and is continuing to drop. I was a part of the negotiations to form the RSU, then I was a chair for the withdrawal. What started all of this was an “end run around” of the process to have the RSU pay for a garage. Our share in Raymond is \$9.2 million, that is a lot of money per student. We can negotiate a better cost per student with Windham. If they came to the Select Board, we would not be here right now. There was never a discussion.

Selectman Olsen – DOE will not approve this unless there is a guaranteed receiving school.

Selectman Bullock – A part of the problem is our lack of representation on the RSU Board, especially when our 3 vote with the 6.

Public Hearing closed by Chairman Sadak. There is a all day vote on August 14th. Please vote.

3) Adjournment

Motion to adjourn at 8:04pm by Selectman Bullock. Seconded by Selectman Taylor.

Unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan L Look, Town Clerk