

TOWN OF TEMPLE, NEW HAMPSHIRE
PLANNING BOARD
September 19, 2018
MINUTES OF PUBLIC MEETING

Board members present: Brian Kullgren, Tedd Petro, Bruce Kullgren, Jr., Allan Pickman, Randy Martin, and Ted Sartell

Call to order by Pickman at 7:02 p.m.

Future of Temple Elementary School: Gail Cromwell had asked to speak to the Planning Board about an impending situation, and distributed several sets of school district related paperwork to board members. Before her presentation began, Petro asked about a letter previously sent from the Temple Selectboard to the Conval School Board. Cromwell clarified that the letter actually was mailed to state officials regarding the need for more funding for education.

Cromwell stated there needs to be a broader discussion of what is going on in the school district, and suggested a town-wide discussion about a proposal to consolidate schools that has been put forth by the School Board. She said both she and Niki McGettigan, who is Temple's representative on the Conval School Board, feel the proposal will not go anywhere. Cromwell explained where the different grades would be moved and which schools would be closed. She indicated the plan being put forth is incomplete, with no idea of any actual cost savings or estimated costs to implement the plan, and that the proposal is basically being driven by Peterborough. Cromwell said Temple should take this move seriously, and also needs to consider the broader future for Temple.

An enrollment data chart was discussed, and it was noted enrollment is still trending downward. Next, an implementation planning list was reviewed, as well as attached School Board minutes from September 4th. Cromwell said the minutes reveal how unclear and incomplete the plan is at this stage. Board members noted one suggestion for a closed Temple school was to provide "senior housing". Others ideas included turning the school building over to the town, or selling it outright, or just "mothballing" it. Cromwell asked the board to consider an alternative future for Temple. She stated one possibility would be to withdraw from the district. Another could be to keep grades K-6 in town, with grades 7-12 being left in the Conval system or they could tuition them out to other schools.

A cost estimate table showing equalized rates and apportioned taxation by dollars and percentages was then reviewed. Cromwell said it currently costs over \$19,000 to educate one child in the Conval system, and Temple could face an increased contribution of more than \$221,000 this year, which would cause a big hit to the tax rate.

Extensive discussion followed. Petro asked what position the Selectmen's Advisory Committee (SAC) is taking, and Cromwell said they are creating a study committee, and she feels SAC will not support the proposal. Sartell asked about motive, and Cromwell responded the superintendent is being pushed by School Board members from Peterborough. She also said Niki McGettigan will combat the notion it takes a big school to provide a good education. Petro stated he felt the other small schools should fight. Sartell said the "best defense is offense" and Temple should form an attack to keep K-6 in town and tuition the older kids out. Cromwell said she had spoken with John Jordan from Hancock about how to proceed to keep K-6 in town, and a petition warrant article with just 25 signatures could start that process.

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Petro mentioned a previous warrant article from years ago that had a better plan, preserved everything, and showed cost savings. He thought this new proposal appears too radical. Bruce Kullgren said if the town is offered the TES building for free, they should take it and mothball it if necessary, instead of having to build a new school building in the future.

Cromwell asked the board for ideas for a plan forward. Sartell stated a competing petition should be offered to bring the 5th and 6th grades back to the elementary schools and have the small towns keep their schools. Pickman asked about what super-majority is necessary to change the Articles of Agreement, and was told 66%. Sartell suggested going into attack mode and putting in obstacles to protect the town.

Pickman summarized the plan as putting forth a petition warrant article and holding a public informational forum. He indicated a sense of the meeting as follows: "All are in agreement that the Planning Board is opposed to any plan that causes Temple to lose its own elementary school, and would like to explore options, from returning 5th and 6th grades back into town, up to and including exiting the school district."

Cromwell asked board members to get involved and consider attending school board meetings, although she will attend and can report back. She encouraged the board to find ways to enlarge this discussion within the community. Pickman inquired about the deadline to submit a petition warrant article, and was told sometime in January.

Approval of minutes: The minutes of 09/05/18 were reviewed. Motion by Petro to approve as written, second by Martin, and so voted.

Other business:

Pickman advised he has updated the tax maps with regard to the Quinn property issue, and given them to Bill Ezell.

Martin said he has spoken with Jeanne Whitcomb and told her that Health Officer Pete Caswell is okay signing off on the Mylars as he is familiar with the property.

Martin has talked again with Lisa Murphy of SWRPC and she emailed the current version of the three Master Plan Chapters to him, which he has just forwarded to all board members for review. If there are no further questions or noted problems the chapters will be considered ready to print out. (Note: details of requested changes were documented in PB minutes of 4/4/18).

Move to adjourn by Petro, second by Sartell, and so voted at 7:51p.m.
Minutes submitted by Betsy Perry