

Minutes Of the Community Meeting December 13,2021

Hawlemont School 6PM

Selectboard Present: Dan Girard, Bill Harker, Marguerite Willis

Finance Committee: Rich Filoramo, Lynn Hathaway, Jay Healy, Ron Smith.

School Committee: Beth Flaherty, Hussain Hamdan, Mike Walsh

Also present were Hawlemont Parents and community members.

The handout provided by the selectboard was discussed. While the budget has been growing, enrollment has been declining. The numbers are showing that the school budget is increasing and becoming too hard to sustain on their current path and with the loss of \$368,000 and the Heath students the selectboard and finance committee felt the need to act.

It was asked by the audience what happens if the town does not vote the budget. It was explained that the school committee could come back with another one, and if still not voted than DESE would become involved. The budget they would provide is what they call a 1/12 but it is no longer truly a 1/12 it would depend on assessments.

Numbers of students were questioned Choice numbers from Ken Rocke's report were read as well as home school numbers that Mohawk office had given. It was explained that with all the numbers there is a decline in the enrollments.

It was explained that school of choice numbers should not be relied upon when doing budget numbers as they are not reliable and also that the school choice is \$ 5,000

The school committee explained that Mohawk has relayed that they do not want to renew the two-district agreement and they will need to develop an interim agreement for management services, office administration, superintendent, and facilities management. TMS who they currently use for the accounting service does offer a business type of management and superintendent so they can pursue that. The committee will also have to look at Special Ed services.

The school committee relayed that they feel they could do a budget that was a 2.5 increase to the towns. It was also mentioned that they did agree with the selectboard about the cost and enrollment, and it may be time to look at the cost to keep open and look at some of the broad trends.

It was also brought up that the school committee does have a difference in "philosophy" from Mohawk and some examples were given including the return to learn plan messaging to families.

At this point it was asked of the school committee Where are the kids in all of this? The disfunction and utter distain that they treat Mohawk with is the cause of the end of the two-district agreement.

The reason for Heath Leaving was brought up and a member from that committee was in attendance and explained one of the big things was the voting as well as the finances. The voting was just too large of a hurtle, and the move away from mohawk was concerning as that is where the kids go after elementary school for the most part.

It was asked if Hawlemont closes where would the kids get shipped around to. If they went to the mohawk district it sounds like they would be placed in a couple of different schools depending on the situation. It was the consensus of the folks attending the meeting that most of the people present wanted Hawlemont to continue, they implored the school committee to be proactive and positive and come up with some problem-solving ideas. It was also brought up that the community needs to be more involved and not just when it is in crisis mode. The school committee invited everyone to the budget sub committee meeting December 22 at 6 pm at Hawlemont.