

**Inter-Lakes School District
Selectmen, Town of Center Harbor
Selectmen, Town of Meredith
Selectmen, Town of Sandwich**

**Roundtable Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, August 18, 2010**

CALL TO ORDER: At 6:00 p.m. Mr. Drenkhahn called the meeting to order. He welcomed everyone to the Town of Center Harbor and turned the meeting over to Mr. Brothers. Present were:

- **Inter-Lakes School District (ILSD):** Superintendent of Schools Dr. Philip McCormack and JLSD Board Member Jack Carty
- **Town of Center Harbor:** Selectmen Richard Drenkhahn (Chairman), Charley Hanson and Randy Mattson (arrived at 7:20 p.m.)
- **Town of Meredith:** Selectmen Peter Brothers (Chairman), Colette Worsman (arrived at 6:05 p.m.), Miller Lovett, Chuck Palm, Nate Torr and Town Manager Phillip Warren
- **Town of Sandwich:** Selectmen Bud Martin and Gerry Gingras

Six residents, Laconia Citizen Reporter Bea Lewis, Meredith News Reporter Erin Plummer and Town of Center Harbor's Selectmen's Secretary Robin Woodaman were also in attendance.

INTRODUCTIONS: Mr. Brothers thanked the Center Harbor Board of Selectmen (CHBoS) for providing a meeting place and providing hospitality for the meeting. Selectmen and ILSD representatives were introduced.

WHY ARE WE HERE?: Mr. Brothers explained the Meredith Board of Selectmen (MBoS) thought it would be helpful if the four (4) entities were brought together to have some dialogue as to how did we get here and why did Meredith extend an invitation to the ILSD and the other towns. He explained this is the first time, since he has been a Meredith Selectmen (4 years) that the Boards have had a chance to get together and talk about the strategies that may be beneficial to the communities. He discussed opening lines of communications, brainstorming on how to do this more effectively.

DISCUSSIONS:

- **ILSD Annual Meeting:** There was discussion regarding the ILSD's budget being increased by \$1,300,000 by the voters at the ILSD Annual Meeting. Mr. Carty explained it was a particular group with a particular agenda who were able to carry the day. Mr. Lovett explained it was a coalition between all three (3) towns; Sandwich voters could not have done it alone. Mr. Torr explained after \$1,300,000 was added to the budget, people looked at the cost per student and he feels that's

when the backlash started. Resident Mark Billings reported the animus fueled by the results of the ILSD Annual Meeting continues to fester because the \$20,200,000 budget has made the Inter-Lakes cost per student among the highest in the State.

- **Meredith's non-binding resolution to withdraw from the District:** Mr. Brothers reported some of the history; the ILSD budget was increased substantially at the ILSD Annual Meeting and, as a result, at the Meredith Annual Meeting there was a non-binding resolution to explore withdrawing from the ILSD. Mr. Brothers explained the public made it clear that they wanted to explore other options for the Town. He explained the MBoS and the ILSD worked in collaboration. Mr. Brothers reported a Local Government Center (LGC) attorney presented the background criteria for withdrawing, which the MBoS chose not to pursue. He explained the MBoS is not interested in dissolving the district and chose not to ask the ILSD to initiate the study. Ms. Worsman explained once they got the ball rolling it would be difficult to stop; she explained the MSoB felt it was too aggressive an approach. Dr. McCormack explained the High School would be ½ its size if Meredith withdrew, which would have negative consequences for programs offered within the school. Mr. Palm reported the MBoS discussed the quality of education if Meredith withdrew.
- **Meeting attendance:** Resident Karen Sticht reported attending all the meetings and had no problem with the budget; she explained the ILSD tried to make cuts to make the budget more palatable for taxpayers. She explained she feels the problem is that voters do not attend the Annual Meeting and suggested the meeting be moved from a Wednesday evening to a Saturday. She also suggested the meeting be moved to a different location to make it easier for the elderly to access.
- **Citizen reaction to ILSD budget:** The Selectmen from Center Harbor and Sandwich were asked if they had heard from their constituents about the ILSD budget.

Center Harbor: Mr. Hanson reported no citizen of Center Harbor has discussed the increase in the ILSD's budget with him; Mr. Drenkhahn reported the same.

Sandwich: Mr. Gingras reported he feels the decision to retain the sixth-grade in Sandwich was a good decision. He expressed his concern for the viability of Sandwich if the sixth-graders had been bused to Inter-Lakes Elementary School; some businesses have been lost and he asked what would be next – the fifth grade?

Mr. Martin's, comments made as a Town Official, a parent of a child entering her senior year at Inter-Lakes High School and a 22 year resident of community, said the citizenry of Sandwich highly values education and believes the ILSD is doing an excellent job. He explained he didn't have any burning issues to bring to the meeting; he and Mr. Gingras came as a courtesy because they were invited.

- **Education funding formula:** There was discussion regarding the formula used to apportion the school budget to the three (3) communities. Mr. Palm suggested there

be a future presentation on the funding formula. Ms. Worsman reported in the year 2000, there were 1,400 students and the ILSD budget was \$11,500,000. She reported ten (10) years later there are 1,100 students and the budget is over \$20,000,000. She expressed her concern with the skyrocketing budget and explained an excellent education should be available with a more reasonable budget.

- **Contract negotiations:** There was discussion regarding upcoming teacher contract negotiations. Mr. Carty explained the ILSD will be negotiating with a strong local union backed by a strong national union. He reported there were sixteen (16) six (6) hour meetings during the negotiations three (3) years ago. Dr. McCormack explained it is not appropriate to discuss negotiations in a public forum.
- **Purchasing:** There was discussion regarding the entities purchasing collaborately and multiplying the ability to negotiate for items.

SCHEDULE FUTURE MEETINGS/AGENDA ITEMS:

- **Next meeting:** Wednesday, November 10, 2010 from 5:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.
Meredith Community Center

ADJOURNMENT: At 7:40 p.m. the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Robin Woodaman

Selectmen's Secretary, Town of Center Harbor