

Minutes
Secondary Education Financial Planning Advisory Committee
March 31, 2021 7PM via ZOOM

Attendees: Jim Dow, Blue Hill Select Board; Ben Wooten, Blue Hill School Board; Jim Goodman, Penobscot School board; Kelly Samperi, Sedgwick School Board; Ben Astbury, Sedgwick Select Board; Michelle Berger, Surry School Board; Bill Matlock, Surry Select Board; Kathy MacArthur, Castine School Board; Mark Hurvitt, Superintendent Union 93; Sally Mills, GSA Trustee; Jim Crawford, GSA Trustee; Deborah Ludlow, GSA Trustee; Samantha Politte, GSA Trustee

Guests: Jeffery Roth, Penobscot Bay Press; Lynn Cheney, Blue Hill Budget Committee; Scott Miller, Blue Hill Budget Committee; Clifton Page, Blue Hill Budget Committee

Ben Astbury chaired the meeting.

At 7:01PM the meeting opened and the minutes from the March 1st meeting were approved.

S. Mills presented GSA's options if a town does not pass the tuition request. All decisions are made based on the mission of the school. At the core GSA serves all the kids on the peninsula and offers a curriculum which reflects that. GSA has a 3 tiered curriculum:

1. Core Curriculum to meet graduation requirements
2. Elective Offerings
3. Co-curricular Offerings

The short-term solution is to charge families who live in towns that did not pass the tuition increase the \$1000 difference. GSA will offer financial aide to families who can not afford this increase. In order to fund financial aide GSA will consider short-term borrowing options as well as refinancing mortgage options. Lines of credit could be drawn on for one year.

The long-term solution is to cut many elective and co-curricular offerings which will result in fewer choices, larger class sizes, and a greatly diminished student experience. Faculty and Administrative Staff will be reduced. This will likely result in fewer students choosing GSA as their high school.

Concerns raised by the committee:

- a lack of transparency still exists
- there needs to be some role for sending towns in GSA's governance structure
- GSA needs to hold more public forums and speak directly to voters. [there is a ZOOM Public Forum on April 8th at 7PM]
- there is a difference between being transparent and being responsible to the public. what is the mechanism to inform and involve the public?
- the general public do not understand endowments
- what is the bigger picture and the long term plan?
- we need to explore secondary education on the peninsula

Meeting Adjourned at 8:15PM

Next Meeting: TBD. Discussion topic: how GSA can be more inclusive in its governance structure.

Respectfully Submitted, S.Politte