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Long Range Planning Committee Minutes

January 3, 2018

Present: Deirdre d'Albertis, Diane Lyons, Laura Schulkind; Tom Burnell, Joe Phelan and guest Steve Boucher.

Members of the LRP met with **Athletic Director Steve Boucher** to review trends relating to enrollment and budgeting that might impact the **RCSO Interscholastic Athletic Program**. For background on the goals, principles, and philosophy of the program see:

<http://www.rhinebeckcsd.org/tinymce/js/tinymce/plugins/moxiemanager/data/files/athletics/coaching%20philosophy%2008-13-13%20final.pdf>

Opportunity and participation have been the hallmark of Rhinebeck's approach to athletics: 45% of our students participate in one or more sports. Mr. Boucher walked us through the number of participants for each sport over the past nine years with a breakdown of athletes according to gender and level (Varsity, JV, and Modified) by season (see attached).

Year to year decisions about sports teams are made based on the number of students who register: there is no modified or JV field hockey team, for instance, due to low numbers. The committee asked for specific details regarding the capacity of the district to continue to support particular sports with dwindling numbers. Merged teams (as with a Rhinebeck-Red Hook baseball team last spring and a successfully merged football team this fall in tandem with Pine Plains) do allow for opportunity without necessarily representing cost saving; depending on the scale of such cooperative endeavors, however, transportation costs can be justified and contained (for instance, if two sports teams between the same two districts are simultaneously formed this way). Each merger is distinct: some involve fees per student athlete and others do not. Shared coaching can be a savings. Merged teams need to be approved by the section in May. The introduction of 8-man football in our section may directly impact future planning in Rhinebeck for that sport.

There is very little in the way of costs that can be cut at present in terms of supplies and uniforms: the district has been focused on economizing in this area already for years. Could the number of contests be cut back? Mr. Boucher pointed out that this has been happening already across the state in the wake of the tax cap. Many districts are moving to a Varsity / Modified A (grades 7,8,9) model for their sports programs and he has been in communication with colleagues in Section 9 about the pros and cons of such a shift. Having 9th graders play against seniors, for instance, poses considerable safety and liability risks in contact sports. Even so, given declining enrollments, this may well be a change that becomes necessary across districts in a few years' time: how would that look for Rhinebeck in particular?

The committee discussed the possibility of mobilizing our community in support of interscholastic athletics: SOAR was very active at one time in raising funds. PTSO might also become an organization that could serve some of the functions of a traditional booster club. Red Hook, for instance, has a very active group: <https://www.raiderssportsclub.org/> We agreed that representatives of existing groups (PTSO, RSF) should be invited to the annual budget workshop, but ideally communicating pressing needs (as well as wants) should happen long before April budget season.

What would it look like to generate a list of needed donations for the district, a digital “donations tree”? Where are the limits to advocacy and fund raising for a public school district? Joe will consult our legal counsel to gain a sense of how best to explore these ideas.

What is the breakdown of costs for interscholastic athletics, broadly speaking? Tom estimated that equipment/supplies amount to 30 or 40K per year. Much more substantive are the costs for transportation to and from contests, coaching stipends, and the cost of the trainer. **For our next meeting, members of the LRP asked Tom to provide a “per student cost” report for each sport** (something Steve and Tom said had been done some years prior).

Steve plans to make his annual report to the full board on January 23.

It was noted by all that the **Rhinebeck CSD Athletic Program is a major factor in many families’ and students’ positive experience of the district.** A great deal of professional time, care, and expertise goes into overseeing (in real time) a vast number of moving pieces, for which the committee expressed gratitude to Mr. Boucher.

In the remaining time, members of the group discussed a query from a resident in the district about the philosophy behind the presence of SROs (School Resource Officers) in our school buildings. Joe will follow up, communicating the importance of building strong, positive relationships between peace officers and young people in our small town. So too, security considerations have assumed greater importance in recent times: our local police officers are committed to the health and welfare of our school community, serving an important education function at all grade levels.

AGENDA For our next meeting we plan to discuss:

--“per student cost” data for interscholastic athletics

--review survey responses collected over the past two months from families in our district about the choice to attend Rhinebeck schools

--Forecast 5 report &

--reviewing minutes from 8/17 to 1/18, each member of the committee will come prepared to discuss possible changes with regard to particular areas/categories of expense not only for the coming budget cycle but looking forward into year 2 and 3 of the long-range planning process.

As a reminder one of our three board goals for the year is **Long Range Planning**: The Board will work to understand and address the challenges of declining enrollment and attaining financial stability. In the first-year of this multi-year goal, the Board will engage the school community and the community-at large in providing feedback regarding a preferred and sustainable model of educational programming, while projecting fiscal assumptions and enrollment data over a 3-5 year period in support of the development of the 2018-19 proposed school budget. In year two, the Board will complete the long-range plan, to be updated annually.

Respectfully submitted,

Deirdre d’Albertis