

**Massachusetts Association of School Committees
Regional Schools Subcommittee
Assabet Valley V-T High School - Marlborough, MA
October 22, 2009**

In Attendance:

Ellen Holmes, Chair	Ashburnham-Westminster Regional
Lynn Ryan	Assabet Valley V-T
Roberta Newman	Athol-Royalston Regional
Kosma Evangelidis	Essex Agricultural Technical
John Skrip	Farmington River Regional
Paul Schlichtman	Life Member
John Columbus	Narragansett Regional
Cliff Fountain	Quaboag Regional
William Flannery	Southeastern Regional V-T
Mindy Kempner	Southeastern Regional V-T
Dina Sullivan	Triton Regional
Tom Evans	Whitman-Hanson Regional
Rep. Cleon Turner	Guest, Regional Schools Caucus Chair

I. Call to Order

Meeting called to order at 6:00 pm by E. Holmes.

II. Review and Approval of Minutes from September 17th, 2009

MOTION to approve by R. Newman; seconded by W. Flannery. (Y-11; 1-Abst. P. Schlichtman)

III. Legislative Update from Representative Turner

Governor Patrick will hold off as long as he legally can to announce 9C cuts for FY'10 budget correction. He has is planning on requesting Legislative approval to make cuts in areas outside of his control such as Local Aid. Rep. Turner noted while the legislature might agree with the Governor's proposed cuts, he felt the House Speaker and Senate President would have the legislature make the decision themselves, rather than turning their authority to the Governor.

Rep. Turner noted the continued revenue challenges Massachusetts is facing. While revenues month to month are increasing, comparing monthly figures with one year ago at the time, shows lagging revenues. He felt the "best case" scenario this budget cycle would be "level funding".

During a discussion of cost saving measures, Rep. Turner brought up Rep. John Quinn's bill. The proposed legislation would request a study of the funding the Commonwealth provides to private Massachusetts colleges and universities. K.Evangelidis volunteered to investigate this subject (especially the funding for Harvard University), and report back to the membership. Members felt strongly that this type of situation comes at the expense of funding the public K-12 educational system.

Rep. Turner suggested the committee propose legislation for the caucus to present regarding changing the deadline for regions to submit their following year's budget. Currently, several regions are forced to forward to their many town treasurers budgets prepared without having even seen House 1 or shortly thereafter.

IV. Old Business

a.) Senate Bill 269: The Chair reviewed comments received from legislative proponents of this bill. They felt strongly that the bill provided a greater degree of protection/stability for Regional School Transportation funding by rolling it into Chapter 70. They specifically pointed out the large percentage drop in the line item versus the significantly lower drop Chapter 70 suffered. While noting with appreciation the tremendous support that these legislators have provided for

regional issues in the past, the Chair expressed hesitation to support noting the disappearance of Regional Incentive Aid so many years ago.

MOTION to not support Senate Bill 269, but to express appreciation to the bill's proponents for their work on regional school issues by T. Evans; seconded by R. Newman. Unanimous.

b.) Performance Contracting Concerns: The Chair discussed the concerns recently raised from a DESE conversation with C. Lynch regarding Performance Contracts. Ms. Lynch stated that when regional districts enter into leases with these companies, the first three years can be booked as an Operational expense, but years four on must be booked as Capital Expenses. Some of the questions raised included "How do you change the expense from Operational to Capital?" and "Capital Expenses must be voted and approved by Town Meeting vote, but Operational Expenses require only vote and approval of the Regional School Committee. This is a concern where MASC Regionals needs to discuss the implications with DESE (Jay Sullivan and Chris Lynch) in greater detail.

V. New Business

The Joint Conference will begin Wednesday, November 18th and conclude Saturday, November 21st. (See footnote in Schedule for informal meeting.)
Day on the Hill – March 30th

VI. Schedule of Future Meetings

November 12th (Conference call with Jay Sullivan and Chris Lynch; questions to the Chair by November 5th); November 18th (informal meeting at Joint Conference); January 21st; February 18th (most likely a regular meeting due to early date of Day on the Hill); April 15th; May 20th

V. Adjournment

MOTION to adjourn by R. Newman; seconded by P. Schlichtman. Unanimous. 9:30pm.

Respectfully submitted
E. Holmes, Chair.