

1. **Call to Order-Roll Call- Pledge of Allegiance:** Nelson called the meeting to order at 5:30pm and upon call of the roll the following board members were present: Pass, Nelson, Robinson and Leach. Absent: Kunz
2. **Board Discussion:** Nelson stated that this is the workshop to discuss the proposal of Dr. Joyce. She stated that like last night it is great to see the public but this is a board discussion with Dr. Joyce so we will not be taking public comment. Joyce stated that it is nice to be back in the district, we conducted the study to choose to send the children to Marshwood and they asked the area schools for interest and there was great interest for the schools to welcome Rollinsford. He stated that when we replied we detailed the work we would do, it is different than the one we did and it is his understanding that we may be adjusting it so we can rewrite the proposal. He stated that they will approach this as a team with Keith Burke and they have done eight complete studies and are doing four now. He stated that they will look at the demographics and all aspects of the community as well as trends, they will map the residence of every child to show where each student is becomes helpful for the board to plan transportation and to understand if a new development. He stated that they did a study in Epping and it showed an increase in enrollment but it wasn't due to births it was a new development that was priced right to attract families which is not always easy to see but the combination of different elements and the data provided to you, the number of students becomes a variable. He stated that then they move to the assessment of the school, the Rollinsford Grade School building with the programs and goals and they will make a neutral assessment of that. He stated that the report is our report not your report so it puts the board in a better position to question and we will defend the report. He stated that they will also look at the Marshwood School, the building, programs and goals. He stated that our proposal doesn't include the demographics of Marshwood; they would have to agree with that. He stated that part of our role is to gain assurance of interest from them and what capacities would be and the cost. He stated that in the final analysis they will present alternatives, we won't choose an alternative but we will list viable alternatives and provide advantages and disadvantages. He stated that cost becomes one of those elements but it is more than that, this is like a center for the community. He stated that the final report will have all the advantages and disadvantages and they will suggest next steps. He stated that they propose that it will take three months to complete but it will have to be while school is in session in order to get an honest assessment of what the school is doing. Nelson stated that the way you laid it out is very good and it covers a lot but we have more specifics to run through. She stated that will you do the demographics and enrollment in Marshwood. Joyce stated that it is not in here but it is about a \$5,000 cost. Nelson stated that one thing needs to be clear is the board's purpose with going forward with the study is to gather facts and information to better inform the community about our school and the possible option to move to Marshwood. She stated that the first order of business is to gauge if Marshwood is willing to be a part of this study. Joyce asked if that was dependent on the demographics of Rollinsford. Nelson stated that even if Marshwood doesn't want to be a part of the study we

still want Rollinsford to be looked at. Robinson stated that we have a list of questions before we get rolling. He asked if he has ever worked with a town that has shut a school down. Joyce stated that they did a study in Derry where they have five elementary schools and two middle school and they send students to Pinkerton and one alternative was looking at closing one. They also worked with Manchester on redistricting patterns. He stated that there are very few communities that have closed a school. He stated that Surry and Sullivan are examples they closed and sent the kids to Keene; they had fewer than 40 students K-12. He stated that there are increasing challenges for communities and the trend is statewide that enrollment is declining and births are declining and there is no evidence that the pattern in NH is a bubble, it's a trend. He stated that the process is painful to close a school, Derry decided not to in this budget but they hired an independent facilitator to lead a community group to investigate for a year. He stated that neighborhood schools become a valuable resource. He stated that in your case you would lose a town center and it represents more than 8-3 educational programming. Nelson stated that she is hoping that he can put value and weight the value to not have a school in town. Joyce stated that we won't do that, it is a community decision. He stated that there will be clear data points and rationale comparison of advantages and disadvantages but how they are weighted becomes a community decision and it would be inappropriate for us to do that. He stated that they will work in our certification area to define the data points and the three people listed on the proposal have 120 years of experience and we draw upon that for the advantages and disadvantages but it is your decision on how valuable each of these are. Nelson stated that in terms of the property values if a town doesn't have a school. Joyce stated that he doesn't think we have that data. He stated that some communities don't have the ability to provide an education and they are subject to contract negotiations, up in the mountains in Hale they pay \$38,000 to educate each child. He stated that every community has a responsibility to provide an education to children in the community and the question is how you accomplish that goal. Leach stated that with the example that you gave because the town didn't have the ability if we were to close our school would that mean we would be under that type of contract. Joyce stated that you could form a co-op like Monadnock and they vote as one body. Leach stated that do they all have members on the board. Joyce stated yes. He stated that Fremont signed a long term contract to send to Sanborn and it was a 20 year agreement. Barrington would have a medium sized high school if they built but they find it more fitting and cheaper to tuition to three high schools and they are governed by different contracts. He stated that you can have all different kinds of contracts. Leach stated that she is more curious about the price tag. Joyce stated that it is a negotiated price because they have no other alternative. Supt. Mosca stated that when people go to the website and look information up unless you have the history behind it, it can be deceiving. Joyce stated that size of scale is very important unless you have the knowledge. He stated that when you compare cost per pupil it is important to understand the composition of it. He stated that he lives in Newington and nobody would think of closing the school they see it as a real value to the community. Nelson asked if both schools will be covered. Joyce stated only for the program comparison purpose. Leach stated that can you explain what demographic things will be covered. Joyce stated that they wouldn't do any demographics for Marshwood they wouldn't have their data or resident mapping. He stated

that when you rent space the landlord is not going to disclose everything to you. If you buy it, a co-op is not allowed unless you get approval by the US congress for multi-state. He stated that the option of co-owner is a different complication but it can be done. Robinson stated that he is not opposed to going to congress and looking at that possibility as we move forward it may come to a point where that makes sense. The state does it already and we have been neighbors and we have relationships with them so it may be something to keep in mind. Joyce stated that take your six year agreement now, they could end it and that is the problem with not running your own K-12 system, with an area agreement it comes with a contractual obligation. Robinson stated that are these things the types of things you will give us with the options. Joyce stated if they tell us and it is not binding unless they agree to a contract. Nelson stated that a few things they mentioned when doing the other contract didn't make it into the contract. Joyce stated that we will assess interest and whether this comes to fruition becomes a matter of negotiation. Leach stated that he concern is that we received a preliminary proposal from Superintendent Nash saying that they could do things and indicated that they are open to having us but she has heard from parents on the side lines that they may not be on board with sending our kids there and she asked if the plan assesses the community. Joyce stated that it doesn't matter what people say if the board decides to do it. Leach stated that her concern is that the kids may not be treated properly. Joyce stated that he is not sure that you can assess that. Nelson stated that part of assessing the program would be if they have space. Joyce stated that the first questions will be if they have space, if they don't it ends right there. Nelson stated that we asked if they had space and they said they understand we were bonding and said yes but she felt it was for a year. Do you look at capacity? Joyce stated that is not a yes or no answer. He stated that we have elementary classes with 15 and the state average is 25. He stated that they will ask. Nelson stated that you will be looking at real costs of education. Joyce stated that we are not doing a budget analysis. Nelson stated that we are working with our administration on our cost per pupil. Joyce stated that their budget is public but we don't necessarily know what is in it and Maine's program budget is divided differently than NH so to find a black and white comparison is difficult. He stated that we would know what the cost would be to send the kids there but we don't know how it came to be. Nelson stated that there are two obvious possibilities to stay in RGS or to move K-6 to Marshwood. She stated that you also throughout phasing so there are places in between such as grade level movement. She stated that K-3 is housed in a separate school and 4-5 in separate school and 6th grade goes to the middle school so that is a nice transition. How do we know if that is cost effective? Joyce stated that moving sixth grade the cost varies and it also varies with separating siblings with one in kindergarten and one in sixth grade going to different schools, there are costs on both sides. He stated that our if willing to share things with us. Joyce stated that we work for you and they have no interest, they will share only what they want to. Marshwood could reply here is our program of study and yes we would take them and that's all. Robinson stated that he is surprised that they wouldn't. Joyce stated that you are a small appendage to their large system and you are not co-owners so they are going to control that relationship. Robinson stated that we would provide them students and revenue. Nelson stated that we are renters; they don't have to disclose everything. Supt. Mosca stated that if Tia and Judy remember through the negotiation process

many things went forward with that and slowly got taken out and we didn't have a lot of control. Nelson stated that we had no bargaining power, they were nice and kind but it was clear that they held all the cards. Nelson stated that when you get Marshwood's programs would that also include after school, and arts and sports. Joyce stated that there is no standard definition we judge 54 data points and some are judged more by you and that is your judgement but we will report it. Nelson asked if you would be able to find out if students who qualify for free and reduced in NH will still qualify in Maine. Joyce stated that is a federal program. Nelson stated what about 68 hours of hunger. Joyce stated that there is no guarantee that things will be there next year. Nelson stated that why she brings up 68 hours of hunger is that she would like to see if it is there and any other programs. Supt. Mosca stated they don't have that program. Joyce stated that we use this as a snapshot in time, we can't tell what was there and what will come. He stated that sometimes people say this is here and we don't see it or things they have that they don't report that is why it is important to see it while kids are in school. Nelson stated that will you report the impact of time on the bus. Joyce stated that they will report it but the impact is up to you. He stated that you will see it when we do the mapping. Nelson stated that what you report if Marshwood considers doing full day kindergarten in the future will you report they have half day. Joyce stated that unless it has been passed. He stated that school districts don't do this if it requires them to build anything; it is not economical to do construction on a contract that is why an area agreement had a long time frame and language to pay for the debt. Nelson asked if the program would include extended year services. Joyce stated yes but they would be open to special education surcharges. Leach stated that when you predict the future enrollment do you take into consideration future home projects. Joyce stated yes we talk to town planners and use a three year weighted model. Nelson stated that do you look for input from the communities. Joyce stated that they would provide the opportunity for anyone who works in the school to give us insight anonymously and they will summarize and report and they are not identified by name. He stated that they will confirm things we have already seen our it causes us to go back and look at things. Nelson stated that can Marshwood do that if they want to. Joyce stated that if they want to but were not assessing them for them we are assessing them for you. Robinson stated that some of the repercussions of moving forward with closing the school is reduced overhead and currently we are in a Co-op with SAU 56, could we become our own SAU without going with an area agreement with Marshwood. Joyce stated that you could be your own SAU but it would be the worst thing you ever did. It would cost you multiple times what you pay now. He stated that there were 47 SAU's when he started and now there are 90-100 and the NH trend is to break up SAU's and it is always about control of the district and not about saving money. He stated that business wise it is less efficient and costs more money. He stated that it is driven by a public vote and a warrant article to do a study and then the state board would approve and ask you how you would deliver the services because every district has to deliver those. He stated that he can send Jeni the list of 11 compliances and no matter what every district has to do that and this district would have to do with one person and it is very hard to get a person to go on a part time basis and the only ones who can do it are very experienced unlike this office where you have many people with expertise. She stated for your \$160,000 that is one person and an administrative assistant and it

is very hard to find people and it is never less money. He stated yes it can be done but without question it would be more expensive and it is hard to find the service level you expect. Robinson stated that the voucher set up if we go into a tuition agreement with Marshwood and is there anything where we can say to a citizen of Rollinsford you can send your kids anywhere and here is your check. Joyce stated no, the challenge becomes that you become an orphan district where you have an obligation to educate every child through high school or special education age twenty one and if you don't have a school what if nobody wants that child. He stated that you get into astronomical costs but it never frees you to the obligation to do it. He stated that nobody has to take the kids unless it is your school or it is a contracted relationship. Nelson stated that this has been eye opening for me and I realized how naïve I was for thinking some of the things you could do. She stated that what we will get will be incredibly valuable so we have facts to make decisions. Joyce stated that ultimately your community will make the decision based on an independent look at it. It is what you owe all the taxpayers in your community. Nelson stated that the purpose is to gather the facts and information to inform the board and the community to make an informed decision. Joyce stated that the last time we did this we had the biggest community turnout he has ever seen. Supt. Mosca asked what the next steps are. Joyce stated that he will relook at the proposal to add and think about our conversation and see if there is something you definitely want to see and he will send the revised proposal to Jeni within the week. Robinson stated that realistically it won't start until September. Joyce stated that the day of the agreement they will start the demographic study and will do a June tour of the school and a September tour. Robinson asked if we will receive things piece meal. Joyce stated no. Leach will we at least know of Marshwood's interest. Joyce stated yes.

3. **Adjournment:** The workshop closed at 6:40pm.

Katie Krauss
Board Secretary

Pending Board Approval