

SeVEDS Meeting Minutes

Date: Monday, March 24, 2025

Time: 3:00 – 4:30 PM

In Attendance:

Kieth Marks, Tom Cain, Meg Streeter, Drew Richards, Wendy Harrison, Adam Grinold, Samba Diallo, Chloe Leary, Gretchen Havreluk

Staff: Laura Sibilia, Meg Streeter, Gretchen Havreluk

Guest: Karen Astley (considering election to the board)

Meeting Called to Order

Wendy Harrison called the meeting to order at 3:05 PM.

Approval of Minutes

Meg Streeter moved to approve the minutes from the February 24, 2025 meeting. The motion was seconded by Samba Diallo.

Gretchen Havreluk abstained.

Presentation & Board Discussion

Topics Discussed:

1. **Status of Closed/Closing Buildings in the Region**
2. **Current Public Education Landscape in Windham County**
3. **School Choice in the Windham Region**
4. **Demographic and Population Considerations**
5. **Scenarios Under Discussion**
6. **Future Areas of Focus for SeVEDS:**
 - Vermont state-level education proposals
 - Impacts on Windham Region communities
 - Reuse and repurposing of school buildings

Key Discussion Points & Suggestions:

- **Assessment & Reclamation:**
 - Drew questioned the complexity of reclaiming closed buildings.
 - Laura proposed conducting a market study to better understand opportunities.

- Karen suggested analyzing square footage and assessed values.
- **School Choice & Population Shifts:**
 - Tom highlighted the importance of school choice data, particularly in Bennington County.
 - Karen emphasized the impact of school closures on parental choice and community engagement.
- **Reuse Opportunities:**
 - Adam and Wendy noted potential for housing, especially in buildings with recreational land.
 - Drew suggested creating a development “playbook” to frame reuse opportunities.
 - Kieth stressed involving communities in visioning for reuse.
 - Samba proposed shared spaces for nonprofits in reused municipal buildings.
- **Governance & Decision-Making:**
 - Meg referenced Wilmington’s Old School Enrichment Center as a positive reuse example.
 - Adam emphasized identifying decision-makers and understanding their rationale.
- **Strategic Alignment:**
 - Chloe advocated aligning reuse efforts with the CEDS (Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy).
 - Drew proposed consistently using a housing lens in project evaluations.

Meeting adjourned at 4:45 pm