

Wiscasset hears RSU 12 pullout consequences

By Matthew Stilphen

At a regular meeting of the Wiscasset Board of Selectmen June 7, RSU 12 Supt. Greg Potter gave a presentation on the funding implications for the town if Wiscasset withdrew from the current school consolidation model.

According to a document prepared by Potter, Wiscasset would experience a \$2 million increase in total local contribution to meet operating costs.

"So are you saying that the RSU is saving us money?" asked Selectman Ed Polewarczyk.

Potter explained that his numbers were based on inexact science but felt the RSU model was worthy if done in a cooperative spirit. The presentation was part of a larger effort by RSU 12

administrative officials to create a dialogue with district residents.

"We wanted to visit Wiscasset first because you have formed a research group," said Potter. "Most towns have not done this."

A number of concerns were raised by residents in questions to Potter including decaying facilities at the Wiscasset Middle School, the funding formula used to determine town contribution, and a declining number of students in the high school.

Public hearing

In other business, the town held a public hearing before the meeting to discuss the town's application for funds to construct an intermodal transportation center on Railroad Avenue.

According to Town Manager Laurie Smith, the funding will enable the town to build roughly 20 parking spaces, three bus parking spaces at the northerly end of the avenue, install a new railway platform, and construct public restrooms.

The brief hearing included a letter of support from District 53 Rep. Les Fossel (R-Alna) and praise from Donald Jones, a member of Wiscasset's transportation committee.

"It's a delight for me to stand here tonight and see the town implementing this plan," said Jones. "We started this three years ago

and spent hours working on it. It accomplishes the two major things we wanted which is additional parking and moves the railroad stop away from the commercial pier into an underdeveloped part of town."

The project is dependent on voter approval of a \$350,000 capital improvement project to replace the town's commercial pier, which would qualify as a match, said Smith, for the railroad project.

Proposal to improve traffic

In still other business, DOT Study Manager Gerry Audibert presented a modified proposal to hire reserve police officers to improve Rt. 1 traffic flow.

The amended plan called for two officers to work seven days a week over a four-week period July 17-Aug. 14.

At the suggestion of Selectman Judy Colby, the board passed a motion to increase the study by two additional weeks.

Chairman David Nichols estimated the plan would cost the town roughly \$5000. After the board passed the motion, longtime bypass opponent Morrison Bonpasse stood and applauded the selectmen's willingness to try other methods of traffic reduction.

The Wiscasset Board of Selectmen will next meet Tues., June 21 at 7 p.m.