

TOWN OF KENNEBUNKPORT
Memorandum

January 22, 2013

TO: Members of the Board of Selectmen
FROM: Larry Mead, Town Manager



WARRANT ARTICLE TO CONSIDER WITHDRAWAL FROM RSU-21

The warrant article would require the Town to consider withdrawal from RSU-21 and to hold an election at a later date for voters to decide whether to leave the RSU. The question is the result of a citizen petition submitted to, and validated by, the Town Clerk. If passed by voters the Board of Selectmen would then be required by State statute to appoint a three-person committee charged with drafting a plan for withdrawal from the RSU, and an alternative approach to educating the Town's K-12 student population. This plan would be submitted to both the RSU 21 school board and the Commissioner of Education for review and approval. The final approved plan would then be submitted to the Town's voters, and would require a 2/3 margin of support to be implemented.

The wording of the question is specified by state statute, as follows:

"Do you favor filing a petition for withdrawal with the Board of Directors of Regional School Unit #21 and with the Commissioner of Education, authorizing the withdrawal committee to expend \$30,000 and authorizing the Selectmen to issue notes in the name of the Town of Kennebunkport or otherwise pledge the credit of the Town of Kennebunkport in an amount not to exceed \$30,000 for this purpose?"

The Town is required to estimate the cost associated with drafting a plan for withdrawal and including it on the question for consideration by voters. I have used an estimate of \$30,000 based on the recent experience in Arundel. The anticipated costs would include legal services during the drafting of the plan and the negotiations with both the RSU board and the Department of Education. There would also be costs associated with hiring a consultant to assist with assessing the options available for educating the Town's students, including the advantages and disadvantages of potential options, and probable costs and issues related to quality of education associated with different options.

Both the Board of Selectmen and the Budget Board are required to vote on whether to support the appropriation of funds for the purpose of considering withdrawal, and the vote must be listed with the question on the ballot. Therefore the Budget Board will convene a joint meeting with the Selectmen at the January 24 meeting for that purpose.