Vermont Act 170: Merger Committee # 19
Meeting Minutes

September 30, 2026 7:00 p.m.
Colchester High School Library, 131 Laker Lane, Colchester, VT

Committee Members Present

Cheryl Dunn of Alburgh School District, Linda Darrow of Champlain Islands Unified Union School District, Lindsey Cox of Colchester School District, Nick DeVita of Milton Town School District, Richard Monterosso of South Hero School District, and Committee Facilitator John Everitt.

1. **Facilitator Call to Order**
   John Everitt called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. He introduced himself and provided his background.

2. **Welcome and Introductions**
   The committee members introduced themselves. Richard Monterosso asked that the committee record his request for more representation from each district, noting that Act 170 outlines a minimum number of members per school board but does not set a maximum. (See below.) Facilitator Everitt stated he would ask his supervisor. No action was taken.

3. **Overview of Committee Roles**
   Facilitator Everitt read the roles and responsibilities of the committee members.

4. **Merger Committee Organization**
   a. **Adoption of Robert's Rules of Order**
      The committee agreed to adopt the modified Robert's Rules of Order. (See below.) The committee also discussed what constitutes a quorum regarding decision-making. They agreed that the committee will not make decisions at a meeting where not all five districts are represented. It was also agreed that, in light of this modification, all districts will make a good-faith effort to attend, either in person or virtually, so the committee can make decisions and continue making progress.

   b. **Election of Chair**
      Nomination: Linda Darrow nominated Richard Monterosso; he declined.
      Nomination: Nick DeVita nominated himself; Richard Monterosso seconded.
      Vote: Nick DeVita was unanimously elected as Committee Chair.

   c. **Establishment of Committee Norms**
      The committee agreed to be open to hearing others, avoid judgment, and keep the focus on students. They also agreed on the importance of soliciting input from their communities and making committee information easily accessible.

   d. **Determination of future meeting location(s) and meeting frequency**
      The committee agreed to meet at least monthly at 6:00 p.m. in rotating locations. The next two meetings will be November 18, 2026, and December 16, 2026. The location for November is Grand Isle and the December location is yet to be determined.

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5. **Act 170 Overview Presentation (Warned as Agenda Item #7)**
   The committee watched a 15-minute video titled *Understanding Act 170* by David Younce, lead facilitator for the Act 170 process. The committee acknowledged that many questions and items remain undecided. David's role is to work with the Secretary of Education to get answers.

6. **Good Faith Standard Review (Warned as Agenda Item #5)**
   Primarily covered in the overview video. Members agreed to support honest, respectful, and full energy toward the charge of the committee.

7. **Public Input**
   None. The suggested Public Input Guidelines were amended. Line two now reads, "Public input is solely for receiving comment on items related to the work of the committee."

8. **Proportional Representation Determination**
   The committee reviewed a map of the districts and Aggregate Daily Membership (ADM) data, generally favoring representation split by student percentage, which members will discuss with their local boards in October. The discussion then turned to committee size: Richard Monterosso, joined by Cheryl Dunn and Linda Darrow, advocated for allowing appointed backup representatives to formally join discussions without altering district voting percentages. Conversely, Lindsey Cox and Nick DeVita favored maintaining the current 5-member board, emphasizing that a smaller group allows for efficient, deep conversation and avoids adding more potential scheduling conflicts to an already difficult meeting schedule matrix.

9. **Areas of Committee Interest and Next Steps for Next Meeting**
   - Local boards to generate broad, comprehensive questions about merging.
   - Discussed community engagement tactics and the need for a full timeline to ensure there is adequate time to solicit feedback.
   - Establish an action timeline starting with the end in mind and working backward.
   - Need for a discussion of compensation for set up/tech/clerical work of hosting district.

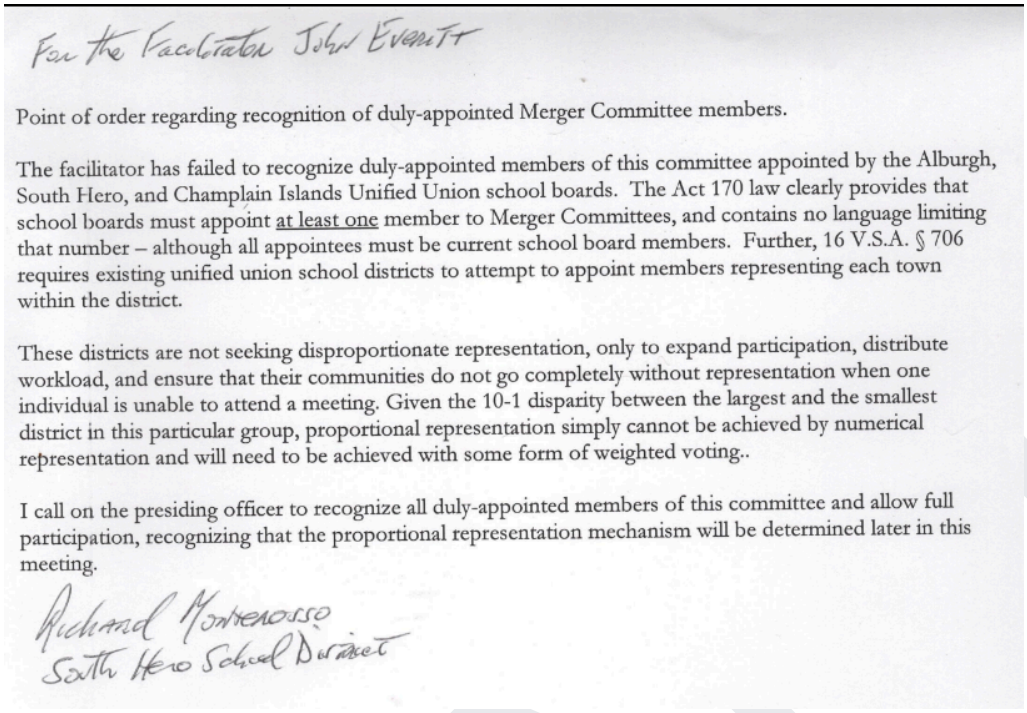
10. **Agenda Building**
    Members can send future agenda items to the facilitator or committee chair.

11. **Adjourn**
    The meeting was adjourned at 8:25 p.m.

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Request from Richard Monterosso



For the Facilitator John Everitt

Point of order regarding recognition of duly-appointed Merger Committee members.

The facilitator has failed to recognize duly-appointed members of this committee appointed by the Alburgh, South Hero, and Champlain Islands Unified Union school boards. The Act 170 law clearly provides that school boards must appoint at least one member to Merger Committees, and contains no language limiting that number – although all appointees must be current school board members. Further, 16 V.S.A. § 706 requires existing unified union school districts to attempt to appoint members representing each town within the district.

These districts are not seeking disproportionate representation, only to expand participation, distribute workload, and ensure that their communities do not go completely without representation when one individual is unable to attend a meeting. Given the 10-1 disparity between the largest and the smallest district in this particular group, proportional representation simply cannot be achieved by numerical representation and will need to be achieved with some form of weighted voting..

I call on the presiding officer to recognize all duly-appointed members of this committee and allow full participation, recognizing that the proportional representation mechanism will be determined later in this meeting.

Richard Monterosso
South Hero School Director

Roberts Rules of Orders - Modified

1. Motions do not require a second.
2. Discussion without a motion is acceptable.
3. Fewer limits on speaking
4. The chair can participate
5. No strict rule for stopping debate
6. No decisions will be made unless all five boards are represented. (Added by committee)

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