

Walker Future Committee- Public meeting
7/17/25

46 people were in attendance.

Carol McGovern (committee chair) shared the following about steps and decisions so far:

- Copies of summary of feedback from our last public meeting on 4/17/25 were shared.
- Committee formed at direction of the Liberty Selectboard
- Walker School closed as of June 2025
- Liberty is still part of RSU #3 and all K-12 students will attend the Mt. View Complex
- Brooks voted to not withdraw from the district.
- Liberty began the process of withdrawal two years ago, but the petition was withdrawn before a vote was taken. Liberty could enter the process again at any time.
- At 4/14/25 RSU #3 Board meeting a motion passed to offer the Walker School to the Town of Liberty
- The RSU #3 25-26 budget included money to maintain Walker School for the 25-26 school year.
- There is an expectation with the RSU #3 Board that Liberty will vote by December/January in order to provide time for the town and school to develop their 26-27 budgets.

Updates:

Dan McGovern, Liberty Selectman, reported that the town is seeking (soft) appraisals of the current Town Office and Liberty Library buildings. This could be helpful information in determining possible relocation to the Walker School building.

Kate Tagia, MCOG representative, will be working with both the Brooks and Liberty committees regarding the disposition of both buildings. Kate outlined how the Redevelopment Land Bank Grant, they received, can support the work of both committees. Among other things, MCOG can help with facilitating meetings and conducting feasibility studies for both buildings. They are committed to working within our timelines as much as possible.

Elise Brown, Walker Future Committee member, presented a slideshow highlighting some other schools that had refurbished their building after being closed. The Community Center in Orland is an example of a public/private enterprise. Corinna Community Center was bought by a business that also allowed the town to retain the use of a community center within the building. Kennebunk developed a school into a dozen affordable apartments and kept the gym as a community center.

It was noted that initial costs as well as on-going costs are important considerations and should be a part of feasibility study.

Comments/Questions:

Septic- It is located across the street from the school and should be considered in any plan for housing or other uses where septic size is important.

Voting- We hope to vote in Dec. or Jan. and it will take place at the polls.

Survey- Should we have another survey to get more input from the public and also ask the question "What do you NOT want to see the Walker School building used for?"

Meetings- Brooks and Liberty will have joint meetings with MCOG representatives in the future. What are thoughts from Brooks?- Ray Quimby reported that Brooks residents want to take control of the building.

General comments- Liberty pays \$2.1 million to RSU #3 currently

Discussion about Exploratory Committee formation to look at the options if Liberty were to withdraw from RSU #3:

In a survey from April when asked "Should Liberty remain part of RSU #3? 15 yes, 25 no and 15 I don't know yet.

An exploratory committee would do the work to bring specific information to the community and opportunity for further feedback about any options to be considered.

Four (4) volunteers will meet next week to start that work.