Attendees: Mel Myler, Corinne Cascadden, Jon Morgan, Michele Holt-Shannon, Bruce Mallory, Sarah Boege, Dick Ames, Jay Kahn, Susan Huard. 6 public attendees.

Just after 1pm Rep. Myler called the work group to order, called roll, and reminded members of the commission’s shared group agreements.

The minutes from the previous meeting were approved unanimously by work group members in attendance.

Mel began with a discussion of the public engagement session that happened the previous evening and the efforts of the commission to engage the public as much as possible. He noted that focus groups happened in June, educator survey data is coming along with 1700+ respondents, and more engagement efforts are forthcoming.

Michele reiterated results from the June focus groups, noting that participants saw disparities across communities and encouraging people to look again at some of the preliminary results. Mel mentioned that it may make sense to go back to focus group participants later on since they are those engaged in school budgets. Noted the positive nature of cross-state conversations between various stakeholders. Returning to those stakeholders is not in the current schedule of engagement activities, but that may be something to do in the future, especially as the commission begins to consider recommendations after the data-gathering stage.

The Engagement work group next turned to the larger survey results, where Sarah Boege presented preliminary results about those who presented to the commission. The quantitative and demographic aspects she presented will help better sort qualitative opened ended responses to still be analyzed. Sarah asked the engagement group if they had particular areas that they would like to see analyzed – for example among community types (urban/rural). Mel was interested in level of education as a crosstab. Mel asked about how the open-ended response analysis worked, and Sarah discussed the process for qualitative coding. Corinne noted that not all rural counties are the same and it might be worth it to cut by those as well when analyzing the data. Michele asked about opinions from adequacy and fiscal policy about particular codes that they are curious about. Jay noted population density vs scarcity, human resources vs other types of resources.

Dave asked about districts with high per pupil spending vs those with low per pupil spending and/or property value per pupil – perhaps drawing a line at various spending levels or among districts.

The conversation then moved to preparing for the Granite State Poll. Since it is a random sample, it is the most broad group that we will be able to contact through our engagement process (as opposed to taxpayer groups, educators, etc). Dave noted that it can be hard to have well informed feedback about taxes without context in a poll. Bruce notes that there are probably similar surveys from others that would be helpful for formulating questions, and possibly some NH data available. Consensus that attitudinal questions the way to frame. Ex: do you believe public funds should support charter schools, do you believe NH has high quality schools, should public funds
be used for private schools? Jon mentioned that question(s) about special education would be important to include on the granite state poll. Michele was curious if we could ask about what people think the drivers of costs are. Will discuss questions at the July 27 meeting. Goal is to not have anyone be able to say that this commission did not seek out as much public input and engagement as possible. Want to be as inclusive and transparent as possible.

Discussion moved to auditing different groups – in particular other conversations with youth, seniors, family, and community-wide conversations. Michele noted that she would like to see youth and older adults combined conversations. Susan noted several ways that the community colleges could encourage participation in this process through surveys in social science classes. Mel mentioned the AARP as a group to work with. Commission could hold public comment session specifically for young people. May be a way to work with the public library system to engage people, especially during this time. Want to hear from students – currently a big blind spot across the state of NH, especially with regard to remote and reopening. Can’t miss student voice.