



Town of Embden

809 Embden Pond Road

Embden, Maine 04958

Incorporated June 22, 1804

Dear Embden Resident,

The Town of Embden will hold a referendum election on **June 9, 2015** to act upon a citizens petition to initiate the RSU#74 withdrawal process. There will be an informational meeting on **May 9th, 2015** and a Public Hearing on **May 30th, 2015** where additional information will be provided and citizen's questions will be addressed. **All** residents and taxpayers will be allowed to speak at the meeting and hearing. However, the referendum election on **June 9, 2015** will be restricted to registered voters of Town of Embden.

When you vote on **June 9th**, you will have the opportunity to vote to approve the formation of a committee to evaluate the possible withdrawal of Embden from RSU#74. The purpose of this letter is to clarify the warrant article and to provide some basic information, including the dates of the Public Hearing and the Referendum, in order for you to make an informed decision at the voting booth. The Maine Department of Education requires that any withdrawal warrant article put before the voters contain specific language as put forward in the State Law for school consolidation.

Warrant Article Wording:

"Do you favor filing a petition for withdrawal with the Board of Directors of Regional School Unit #74 and with the Commissioner of Education, authorizing the withdrawal committee to appropriate and expend \$50,000 from surplus and/or authorizing the municipal officers to issue notes in the name of the Town of Embden or otherwise pledge the credit of the Town of Embden in an amount not to exceed \$50,000 for this purpose?" **YES** **NO**

What you are voting for:

The vote on **June 9th** is only the second step in a formal twenty-two step process overseen by the Maine Department of Education. The vote is only to establish a withdrawal committee as called for under State Law to begin the withdrawal process from RSU#74. The funding authorization in the warrant is to cover legal and consultant's fees associated with the study and the negotiations of a withdrawal agreement and the development of definitive cost estimates. **A final vote will be scheduled after negotiations are complete and the agreement is approved by the Maine Department of Education and the RSU.** The estimated time frame for this process is between six to twelve months and we encourage public participation throughout the process.

Important Dates:

May 9th, 2015 Informational meeting for RSU Withdrawal Referendum - Location: Embden Community Center 10:00AM.

May 30th, 2015 Public Hearing for RSU Withdrawal Referendum - Location: Embden Community Center 10:00AM.

June 9, 2015 Embden Referendum Election- Location: Embden Town Office 8:00AM-8:00PM.

Why consider withdrawal?

- To re-establish the relationship with RSU#74 or to establish a new relationship with a district where we will have an equitable standing for policy issues and budget matters along with the establishment of a truly equitable cost-share agreement where costs as well as benefits are more equitably applied to the Town.
- To explore the possible restoration of school choice and the freedom for parents to assume an active role in decisions regarding their children's educational opportunities.

Who will be on the Committee?

The Commissioner shall direct the Selectmen of Embden to establish a Withdrawal Committee to develop a Withdrawal Agreement in the format specified in the "Required Elements of a Withdrawal Agreement," per 20-A MRSA §1466(4). The four member Withdrawal Committee shall include members appointed as follows: One member from the municipal officers, one member from the general public, one member from the group filing the petition, and one member of the regional school unit board who represents that municipality.

What are the responsibilities of the Withdrawal Committee?

The Committee will provide a detailed plan as required by law on how to meet the educational needs of all Embden students.

This may include the following structural, operational, and logistical options:

1. To provide a detailed financial analysis of all associated expenses in withdrawing from the RSU; administrative issues will need to be decided.
2. If we join another school district, the Committee will need to determine the specific cost sharing arrangements and transportation provisions.
3. Possible establishment of an option that allows school choice.

Final steps if the June 9th vote passes and the Withdrawal Committee creates a negotiated withdrawal agreement:

After the committee's report and negotiated agreement is finalized, it is submitted to the Commissioner of Education for approval. **If the plan is approved by the Commissioner, there will be a second and final vote by Embden voters to approve or disapprove the final plan to withdraw or stay in RSU#74.** For additional information please visit the Town's website at <http://www.embden.gov/>. Additionally, please feel free to contact the Embden Town Office @ (207) 566-5551.

Sincerely,

Charles E. Taylor, Chairman

Elizabeth Pratt

Scott LeHay

Selectmen, Town of Embden