

GOVERNOR WENTWORTH REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
DELIBERATIVE SESSION
FEBRUARY 1, 2020

In accordance with the provision of Senate Bill 2 (RSA 40:13) adopted by the school district, the first session of the annual meeting (deliberative session) of the 2020 school district was called to order at 10:00AM by Moderator Randy Walker. The moderator welcomes the approximately 50 people present to the annual meeting. He reviews the emergency evacuation procedures and location of exits in the building with those in attendance.

The Moderator leads in the Pledge of Allegiance which was followed by the National Anthem sung by Jenna Hanson.

The moderator introduced those sitting at the front table: Heather R. Cummings, Assistant Superintendent of Schools; James Pittman, School Board Member from Effingham; Krista Abear, At-Large School Board Member from Wolfeboro; Julianne Cardinal, School Board Member from New Durham; Timothy Eldridge, At-Large School Board Member from Effingham; Stacy Trites, School Board Member from Wolfeboro; Dr. James Manning, School Board Member from Brookfield; Wendi Fenderson, Vice Chair, At-Large School Board Member from New Durham; John Widmer, Chair, School Board Member from Tuftonboro; Kathleen Cuddy-Egbert, Superintendent of Schools; Anthony Muir, School District Attorney; Kathy O'Blenes, Business Administrator; Michelle Capone, School District Clerk; Linda Murphy, School Board Secretary.

Absent: Dana Streeter, School Board Member from Ossipee

The Moderator recognizes Kelly Tivnan, Middleton School Board Representative and Kingswood Regional High School Student Representative to the School Board, Connor DeMasi.

The Moderator reviews the reason rules for today's meeting. Voters are reminded that the articles themselves will be voted on in conjunction with each town's voting on Tuesday, March 10, 2020. Voting on Article I will happen in at the polling booth on voting day. This meeting will address Articles II-V and any new business to come before the assembly.

Amendments to articles are to be submitted in writing and given to the Moderator who will read the amendment. Following discussion a motion to amend the article will be made. Once amended a vote on the amended article will happen and if approved, this amended article will appear on the ballot. Under SB 2, no article may be killed or tabled by passing over it; the default budget may not be amended. No changes can be made to an articles subject matter. However, an article's dollar amount, intent or impact can be changed. Voting on the amendment will be a simple pass/fail.

The Moderator will call for a vote if there is a lapse in conversation. A motion can be made to move to restrict and not re-address previous articles. Those in attendance are encouraged to remain till the meeting is adjourned as there could be a vote at the very end. The Moderator will recognize a member of the board to address an article.

The Moderator recognizes Board Chair Jack Widmer. Mr. Widmer thanks those who took time to attend the meeting and gives a special thank you to Jenna Hanson for her performance of the National Anthem and to Katie Small, Kingswood Middle School teacher for helping to arrange for Jenna to be here.

Mr. Widmer gives the state of the schools address highlighting the achievements made at each of our grade levels, recognizing the amazing staff and the benefits our students receive at our state-of-the-art facilities.

Mr. Widmer speaks to each of the schools and staff; their focus on their students and their achievements; the many clubs, extra curricula activities and community events, as well as the buildings themselves and how this all lends to the success of our students.

From athletics, to the arts, to Honor Society, clubs and extra curricula plus robotics and STEM activities students are competing and achieving state and national honors. The students are also learning to be engaged in community service and reaching out to help through service to and beyond their community.

Mr. Widmer gives an update in the areas of curriculum pointing out the advances the district is making. In math, teachers are receiving assistance from our math coach and students are learning to collaborate with each other in learning how and why math works.

In English/Language Arts the teachers use literacy as a springboard for integration into other subject areas and continue the goal of strengthening students reading, writing and speaking skills.

Teachers continue to promote students' understanding of science and social studies. The district continues to promote critical thinking and student engagement.

PTOs and volunteers continue to be actively engaged from chaperoning, assisting in classrooms, donations and fundraising. Many of our schools receive the New Hampshire blue ribbon achievement award for the high level of volunteer participation.

The Moderator reads Article I.

ARTICLE 1:

To choose the following school district officers:

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| (a) School Board Member from Effingham | 2-year term |
| School Board Member from Brookfield | 3-year term |
| School Board Member from Wolfeboro | 3-year term |

School Board Member-At-Large	3-year term
(b) School District Moderator	1-year term

No discussion on Article I, the Moderator reads Article II:

ARTICLE II:

To see if the Governor Wentworth Regional School District will vote to raise and appropriate up to the sum of sixty thousand dollars (\$60,000) to be added to the Turf Field Capital Reserve Fund previously established and furthermore to name the school board as agents to expend. This sum to come from the June 30, 2020 fund balance available for transfer on July 1, 2020. No amount to be raised from taxation. The School Board recommends this appropriation. Majority vote required.

The Moderator recognizes Stacy Trites to address the article. Ms. Trites gives history of the fund stating there is \$457,000 in fund. The field has been assessed and there is possibly two to three more years beyond the life expectancy because of the excellent care that has been taken by the district. If we were to have another possibly two to three years it would take the district to 2024 as the replacement year which would mean no additional funds would need to be raised.

There is no discussion the Moderator moves to Article III.

The Moderator reads Article III:

ARTICLE III:

Shall the Governor Wentworth Regional School District raise and appropriate the sum of two hundred thousand dollars (\$200,000) for repairs and improvements of buildings/grounds at the Kingswood Regional High School, Kingswood Regional Middle School, Lakes Region Technology Center, Kingswood Arts Center, Carpenter School, Crescent Lake School, Effingham Elementary School, New Durham School, Ossipee Central School, Tuftonboro Central School and the SAU 49/Transportation Facility? The School Board recommends this appropriation (majority vote required)

The Moderator recognizes Julianne Cardinal to address the article. Ms. Cardinal thanks the staff for the care in maintaining the districts many building and grounds. She reviews the history of the article and reviews the past years projects done at the Carpenter School (roof); Ossipee Central School (walkways, handicap accessibility to gym, heat pump and underground storage tank); Crescent Lake School (walkways). Future capital improvements for 2020 include window replacement and kitchen roof replacement at Tuftonboro School; an exterior door replacement at Carpenter School; specific roof replacement at Effingham and installation of a dry valve in the greenhouse at LRTC for reduce heat consumption.

There is no discussion on Article III, the Moderator moves to Article IV.

The Moderator reads Article IV:

ARTICLE IV:

Shall the Governor Wentworth Regional School District raise and appropriate as an operation budget, not including appropriation by special warrant articles and other appropriations voted separately, the amounts set forth on the budget posted with the warrant or as amended by vote of the first session, for the purposes set forth therein, totaling \$53,915,778? Should this article be defeated, the default budget shall be \$54,286,459 which is the same as last year, with certain adjustments required by previous action of the Governor Wentworth Regional School District or by law; or the governing body may hold one special meeting, in accordance with RSA 40:13, X and XVI, to take up the issue of a revised operating budget only. *Note: this warrant article (operating budget) does not include appropriation request in any of the other warrant articles. Majority vote required.

The Moderator recognizes Jack Widmer to address Article IV.

Mr. Widmer thanks those in attendance for being here to gather information before voting on March 10th. The history, process and steps that go into budget preparation is explained, how large increases are reviewed prior to being included. Personnel requests are made and may or may not proceed to the Finance Committee depending on the strength and rationale in the need for the position. The business administrator reviews line items and after all requests, cuts and adjustments are made the Finance Committee meets with the principals, special education director, business administrator and superintendent to review the budgets request. The Finance Committee recommends a budget and this is presented at public meetings referenced previously.

An overview of the New Hampshire Advantage is given. NH students' college and career readiness ranked #1 based on SAT and ACT scores. A study done by Wallet Hub shows New Hampshire ranked #1 for return on investment that taxpayers receive from public education.

A summary of the budget categories was done, the budget as a whole decreased .92%. Employee expenses decrease by 1.59% largely due all contract groups agreeing to pick up a portion of their health insurance premiums.

A review of enrollments is done, showing a slight upward trend. The biggest increase, 64 students, is at the high school level. Elementary numbers remain quite variable.

A review of general employee expenses was given. Of note, for the first time he remembers, is a decrease in New Hampshire Retirement System expense which is not in the board's control. Voters are reminded that since 2012 the state began to shirk its responsibility for its portion of retirement and as of this upcoming fiscal year it will have cost the District \$6,045,511 which has an impact on your taxes.

An overview of new staff positions is explained.

An Art Teacher at the High School was requested to reduce the current class waiting list and allow for a third level art class. A Middle School Student Support Center position to assist students in the moment they are struggling with behavior issues. Possibly avoiding suspension and helping students to be successful in school. A district technology position needed to meet the ever growing demands in this area. Technology covers security, servers, firewalls, equipment, etc. Increases to two Diagnostic Prescriptive Teaching positions as a result of student needs: 20% position increase at Ossipee Central School and a 10% position increase at Crescent Lake.

Mr. Widmer reviewed the General Fund Budget pointing out areas of decreases and increases in expenses and revenues.

Some areas of expense decreases were noted in the IT Department due to previous infrastructure upgrades and in the Transportation Department due to the anticipated purchase of a special education van (through grant funds).

Areas of expense increases were noted as follows: Health Services due to a contract increase with Huggins Hospital for school nurses (it continues to be more cost effective to work through Huggins for nurses); Athletics due to the rate officials receive; Snow removal is up (this is a three year contract); Repair projections are up largely based on condition of buses and vans (to date \$66,000 has been spent on bus repairs); Tuition (for out of district placements).

Increases can also be seen in testing supplies (the state no longer picks up cost of data warehousing for test results); cost of materials and licenses; computer media software for items needed in transportation (GPS and the Transfinder-the bus route programming); and replacement of furniture which has become a priority, some furniture is 25 years old. Debt Service also increased due to the decrease in the principal which in turn decreases the building aid received.

Revenue increases were noted as follows:

An increase of .27% due to the legislature reversing its decision to reduce stabilization aid by 4% and an increase in other state aid for 2020 only, this helps offset taxes. Next year should show a small increase in the state grant. Small increases are projected in Medicaid, transportation and miscellaneous.

A review of the elements of the budget and the degree of control the board has over each of these is done. The variable category represents those expenses over which the district has the greatest control. These items have a direct impact on student curriculum and instruction and include general supplies, books and printed media, computer media software and equipment. Employee expense he points out is the largest as we are a labor intensive organization.

An explanation of how the tax rate is set based on the Cooperative Formula is given. Showing 75% based on a town's relative portion of the average daily membership (roughly the number of students in attendance from each town) and 25% based on each town's relative portion of the District's Equalized Valuation. State Education Tax and the State Adequacy Aid are credits used to offset the town's share of its obligation. Towns with less property wealth get some

relief with 25% being based on the equalized value of the town. Less property wealth means paying less per pupil. Effingham being the lowest at \$13,428 and Tuftonboro being the highest at \$24,461 per student.

The project tax rate with the proposed budget is shown as follows:

Brookfield increase of	.86	Effingham increase of	.07
New Durham increase of	.03	Ossipee increase of	.35
Tuftonboro decrease of	(.28)	Wolfeboro decrease of	(.08)

A review of the NH Department of Revenue Administration's tax rate comparison for the district towns is shown and explained.

RSA 40:13 is explained and the default budget, noting that one time expenditures are not included in a default budget, the default budget being \$54,286,459 (\$370,681 higher than the proposed budget).

A review of the FY 2021 budget numbers vs how GWRSD falls in comparison to other New Hampshire school districts is given. LRTC is a percentage point above the state average, having more offerings; some districts don't have vocational programs. The school district spends 2.6% less than the state average on general administration and business services at the SAU level.

The Moderator asks if there are any questions on Article IV.

Mr. Bickford of New Durham thanks the board and staff for the reduction in the budget and asks for an explanation of line 240 Tuition. Mr. Widmer differed to Superintendent Cuddy-Egbert who explained that this line is professional development which was reduced as part of the negotiated contract agreements approved last year.

Mr. Bickford also requests an explanation of line 561 Tuition. Mr. Widmer differed to Business Administrator Ms. O'Blenes. Ms. O'Blenes explains that this is the Special Education expense line for out of district or court ordered placements.

The Moderator asks if there are any further questions on Article IV, seeing none moves on to Article V.

The Moderator reads Article V.

ARTICLE V:

To see if the Governor Wentworth Regional School District will vote to authorize the school board to enter into a 25 year solar agreement to purchase electricity from BP Effingham, LLC and further authorize the school board to lease a rectangular piece of land located south east of the Effingham Elementary School building measuring approximately 197 feet by 148 feet to BP Effingham LLC for purposes of installing, maintaining and operating a solar powered electric generating project on such terms and conditions as the school board shall determine are in the best interest of the school district. The agreement to purchase electricity contains an escape clause. The School Board recommends this appropriation. Majority vote required.

The Moderator recognizes Julienne Cardinal to address the article.

Ms. Cardinal gives a brief history of the research done and the district goal with the proposed project. For the district, Effingham Elementary School was the best location to accommodate a solar power project at this time. A lease/purchase agreement with Barrington Power (BP Effingham, LLC) was worked out and the construction of solar panels on the Effingham School property was agreed upon should the voters approve the article. Ms. Cardinal explained what the system consists of and that the amount of electricity produced will power Effingham Elementary School. This new system will be connected to the buildings existing electrical system. As a lease purchase agreement, no funds will need to be raised for its construction. The project allows for access of electricity at a reduced rate and a reduction in our carbon footprint.

The Moderator recognizes Jack Bingham, CEO of Barrington Power to explain the project and answer questions. Mr. Bingham directs those in attendance to the slides being shown explaining the location, design, security fencing and the reasoning behind each. A description of the area is given. The area previously, being a sand pit, is flat and only has small scrub trees for easy removal allowing for full sun. An explanation of how the system would be connected to the buildings existing transformer is given.

Mr. Bingham explains what net metering of a Solar Power System means, its collection, connection and use. Meters will show power in at the retail rate for a KW of electricity. Power out is the cost to the district, which is 25% less of retail.

The panels themselves are warranted for 25 years and they look at an 80% generation for 25 years going to the investor, i.e. the district. If a solar panel needed a possible replacement, the company does the replacement and absorbs the cost. A 30% tax credit, that a school district would not be allowed to take, can be turned into a credit to the district in reduced costs.

The moderator recognizes Mr. Gordon Lang.

Mr. Lang asked where our panels are going to be made.

Mr. Bingham explains that currently the US companies are limited and expensive so are primarily purchased from Asian manufacturers. Mr. Bingham explains the type of panels available now and what KW are produced by type. He explains that 18-20% of the panels produce 390-400 watts and cost 7% less from years ago.

Mr. Bickford from New Durham asks about the Lease/Purchase Agreement and the benefits to the district and KW savings.

Mr. Bingham explains purchase billing is based on an estimate of an annual percentage of use for a fixed amount. At the end of the year KW use reconciliation is done based on actual vs annual estimate. Mr. Bingham also explained that changes in production can affect billing and can come from weather where more power is produced than needed or less is produced than anticipated. At the end of six years the district can purchase the system for cost. At the end of 25 years if district still wishes to lease you can negotiate 5 year extensions.

Madeline Ness, a member of the audience, asks who will rake the panels in winter. Mr. Bingham explains the panels are mounted at a 35 degree angle 40" off the ground to aid in the snow sliding off. It is not efficient to have to rake, which the company would be responsible for. By mounting panels properly the snow should fall off.

Mr. Bickford of New Durham asks if any money is put in escrow to decommission the system if it becomes obsolete. Who maintains the grounds around the system?

Mr. Bingham explains the company maintains the area inside the fence. Obsolete equipment can be upgraded if the school district wants; it will depend on efficiency and practicality.

Mr. Bickford states some district put up an escrow amount should something go wrong.

Mr. Bingham states that as part of the contract the company takes care of the equipment. There is no bond on the removal and resale.

Mr. Lang asks if the board has any anticipation of installing solar at other school.

Ms. Cardinal responds that Effingham Elementary is a start but the Board may look at other locations.

Moderator asks if there are any further questions on Article V. Seeing none he moves on to new business.

Moderator recognizes the Board Chair Jack Widmer.

NEW BUSINESS:

Mr. Widmer announces that Stacy Trites will be stepping down as a board member recognizes Stacey for her many years of service to the district and as a board member. She has filled many roles while on the board and will be missed. Jack presents her with a gift and stated that he hopes this is only a pause in service.

Stacy thanks everyone and speaks to how this board always works for what's best for students.

Moderator Walker asks if there is any other new business, seeing none asks for a motion to adjourn. Motion made and seconded.

Meeting adjourned at 11:49am

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle J. Capone
School District Clerk