

**INTER-LAKES SCHOOL DISTRICT ANNUAL MEETING  
CENTER HARBOR, MEREDITH, SANDWICH  
MARCH 9, 2023**

The Annual Meeting of the Inter-Lakes School District was held on Thursday, March 9, 2023, at Inter-Lakes Middle/High School Community Auditorium.

At 6:04 pm. Inter-Lakes School District Moderator Patrick Kelly called the meeting to order. School District Moderator Kelly offered an invocation adapted from the words of Leroy "Lee" Rouner.

Paolo Cao, the student body representative on the Inter-Lakes School Board led the Pledge of Allegiance. Inter-Lakes High School Seniors Haley Pimley, Emily Waldron, Hannah Coleman, and Olivia Richards of sang their rendition of the National Anthem.

The Moderator stated that the meeting would be recorded this evening, and that this meeting would not be conducted under Roberts' Rules but rather those listed in the Annual Report.

The meeting was turned over to Chair Lisa Merrill, who shared a brief statement. In the past few years we have seen many challenges: a deadly virus, remote learning, mental health and special education repercussions, etc. We have recently renegotiated our CBA for teachers. The consumer pricing index is rising. Oil and electricity are rising and made the budget much higher. Please understand that this evening you, the taxpayers, get to ask questions on each Warrant Article. This is the finest example of how our democracy works.

The meeting was turned over to Moderator Patrick Kelly. Patrick Kelly read the rules.

- a. Anyone wishing to make a motion, second a motion, or wishing to speak on an Article must first be recognized by the Moderator.
- b. All speakers must address the Moderator; there will be no cross-floor debates.
- c. When recognized, please go to the microphone. State your name and town of residence before making or seconding a motion, or speaking on an article.
- d. A motion to "call the previous question" can cut off debate and, if seconded, must be voted on immediately. The motion is not debatable and so a two-thirds favorable vote is required.
- e. Voting will be done by a show of voting cards.
- f. Seven voters may challenge the declared vote on any Article, before the next Article is brought up, then a secret ballot must be held.
- g. If a secret ballot is desired on any Article, a written request signed by five voters (in attendance at the meeting) is required and presented to the Moderator.
- h. Any Article may be legally amended; each amendment will be discussed independently and acted upon before the Article is called.
- i. A motion to reconsider any Article may be made at any time prior to the final adjournment and the Article would be taken up again immediately unless protected by a vote to restrict reconsideration.
- j. Five voters (in attendance at the meeting) may request a recount of a secret ballot before the next Article is taken up. (The vote margin must be less than 10% of the total votes cast.)
- k. Only registered voters may vote.

- l. Only registered voters, school officials and district’s attorney may speak to questions, unless the meeting votes to allow anyone else to speak.
- m. The Moderator can be overruled by a simple majority vote. Any challenger will be recognized and no second is required. The challenger has the right to state his or her reasons for the challenge.
- n. RSA’s (Revised Statutes Annotated), which are state laws, cannot be overruled by the meeting.

**Article 1**

The Moderator read Article 1.

It was moved by Howard Cunningham, Member-At-Large and seconded by Duncan Porter-Zuckerman, Sandwich to see what action the District will vote relative to the reports of Agents, Committees or Officers chosen.

Article 1 carried in the **affirmative** by a show of voter cards.

**Article 2**

The Moderator read Article 2.

It was moved by Duncan Porter-Zuckerman, Sandwich and seconded by Mark Billings, Meredith to set the salaries of District officers for the coming year as follows:

Moderator	\$100.00
School District Clerk	\$20.00 per hour
School Board Chairperson	\$1,800.00
School Board Members (6) each	\$1,500.00
District Treasurer	\$1,500.00

Article 2 carried in the **affirmative** by a show of voter cards.

**Article 3**

The Moderator read Article 3.

It was moved by Charles Hanson, Center Harbor, and seconded by Nancy Starmer, Sandwich to see if the District will vote to approve the cost items included in the collective bargaining agreement reached between the Inter-Lakes Cooperative School District and the Inter-Lakes Education Association which calls for the following increases in salaries and benefits at the current staffing level:

Year 2023-2024	\$ 566,332
Year 2024-2025	\$ 496,645
Year 2025-2026	\$ 443,730

and further to raise and appropriate \$566,332 for the 2023-2024 fiscal year, such sum representing the additional costs attributable to the increase in salaries and benefits required by the new agreement over those that would be paid at current staffing levels.

Article 3 carried in the **affirmative** by a show of voter cards.

**Article 4**

The Moderator read Article 4.

It was moved by Nancy Starmer, Sandwich and seconded by Charley Hanson, Center Harbor to see if the school district, if Warrant Article 3 is defeated, will authorize the governing body to call one special meeting, at its option, to address Warrant Article 3 cost items only.

Article 4 was not voted on - Article 3 passed.

### Article 5

The Moderator read Article 5.

It was moved by Lisa Merrill, Meredith and seconded by Charley Hanson, Center Harbor to see if the District will vote to raise and appropriate the amount of \$30,666,251 for the support of schools, for the payment of salaries for the school district officials and agents, and for the payment of statutory obligations of the District.

Lynn Montana of Meredith asked why the Moderator has not been opening up the floor to discussion. The Moderator stated that he forgot to do so.

The Moderator opened up the floor to discussion of the Motion.

Ms. Montana said that a couple of years ago when the school board first presented one-million-dollar budget or slightly more, she asked the School Board if the budget would continue to increase by this much every year thereafter, and they said no. However, the budget has increased each year by a substantial amount, like they said it wouldn't. Ms. Montana expressed concerned because if this is the precedent set for the last few years, the budget might be jumping a million and a half in another year or two, and then two million, and then it starts to get ridiculous. Ms. Montana asked how many students are enrolled in the District. Mrs. Moriarty said there are about nine hundred and twenty (920) students currently enrolled.

Ms. Montana emphasized that the thirty million dollars is for 920 students, while inform the town budget to run a 50 square mile area with over six thousand people is thirty-two million. She noted that the schools are not paying off any new buildings, only for maintenance and repairs, unlike the town of Meredith which is still paying off some new construction projects. She pointed out the SAU's budget of approximately one million dollars, and recalled that she can remember is being around \$250,000. As the school district's student population diminishes from 2000 to 900, the budget is going up a million dollars a year.

Ms. Montana expressed concern that citizens simply vote "yes" on the budget as presented every year because everybody's embarrassed to say anything against the school. Everyone wants a good school and the best teachers, but 30 million for 920 students is beyond the pale. She requested that this budget should be tabled, and that the Board should go back and design something else. For example, the District does not have to give raises to the Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent.

Lynn Montana of Meredith moved, seconded by Rudy VanVeghten of Meredith, that the vote on the budget be tabled and the School Board go back and draw a budget that is more in line with only 900 students, not one that's in line with a town of 6,000 people and 50 square miles and multiple government buildings.

Moderator Patrick Kelly opened up the floor to discussion of the Motion.

Kathleen Green, Sandwich, suggested that the discussion might best be put to the Superintendent, and requested that the Superintendent explain the complexities of the children the district is servicing.

Mary Moriarty stated that special education costs are a significant driver of the budget. In 2020-2021, the budget increased by nearly one million. Approximately \$466,000 was for special education needs. That year, the district also had approximately \$570,000 in deferred facilities maintenance that needed to happen. There was recently a law change, making it so that students with significant needs are now the school district's responsibility through the end of their 22<sup>nd</sup> year of life. There are a number of students that require out-of-district placements which are significantly costly, and in addition to the cost of those placements the students must

also be transported to and from their placements. Sometimes transportation costs more than tuition. The 2021-2022 budget increase of \$599,000 was in significant part driven by the New Hampshire Retirement System, which increased by \$440,000. Last year, the budget increased by close to \$600,000, with a major driver of the increase being the district's significant special education needs.

The Moderator called for a vote on the Amendment to the Article.

The Amendment **failed** by a show of voter cards. The Moderator returned to discussion of the original Motion.

Richard DeMark of Meredith expressed appreciation for the words of the maker of the amendment. This kind of increase is hard to swallow. But as stated earlier in the meeting, the Collective Bargaining Agreement was crafted at a time when the consumer pricing index was rising, inflation was rising, and costs for everything were going up. There are many external forces at play here, including health and dental insurance, special education; the operation of the plant; and transportation costs that are astronomical. Mr. DeMark notes that the district is fighting external forces but also fighting a system in New Hampshire rigged against public education, and the answer is by voting for who is sent to Concord and to Washington, because right now they're not doing their job and providing the resources needed for public education. Mr. DeMark expressed support for the budget as presented.

Article 5 carried in the **affirmative** by a show of voter cards.

#### Article 6

The Moderator read Article 6.

It was moved by Mark Billings, Meredith and seconded by Howard Cunningham, Member-At-Large to see if the District will vote to raise and appropriate up to \$250,000 to be placed in the previously established Inter-Lakes School District Facilities Maintenance Expendable Trust, with such amount to be funded from the June 30, 2023 unreserved fund balance for transfer on July 1, 2023, with no amount to be raised by taxation.

The Moderator opened up the floor to discussion of the Motion. No comments were made.

Article 6 carried in the **affirmative** by a show of voter cards.

#### Article 7

The Moderator read Article 7.

It was moved by Nancy Starmer, Sandwich and seconded by Lisa Merrill, Meredith to transact any other business that may legally come before the meeting.

The Moderator opened up the floor to discussion of the Motion. No comments were made.

Article 7 carried in the **affirmative** by a show of voter cards.

The Moderator turned the meeting over to Chair Lisa Merrill.

Chair Merrill expressed gratitude for Mr. Howard Cunningham's dedication and years of service to the School District. Though Mr. Cunningham tried to retire a few times, he knew the District needed him, so he continued to serve. Mr. Howard Cunningham's service began in 1968. In addition to work as guidance counselor and a special education director, Mr. Cunningham spent close to twenty years serving on the school board. His tenure has been remarkable and left a lasting impact on this community.

Chair Merrill also expressed gratitude for Mr. Richard Hanson. Mr. Hanson was instrumental during Ms. Merrill's tenure on the board. Mr. Hanson began serving on the Inter-Lakes School

Board in 1999, and from 2010-2021 led the School Board as the Chair. In summer of 2021, he moved away from the area, ending his tenure on the school board. His commitment to having students at the center.

Mr. Hanson and Mr. Cunningham's commitment to the well-being of the Inter-Lakes schools and community have contributed greatly to the positive and productive work of the School Board and the success of the district's schools. Ms. Merrill thanked them for their unwavering sense of civic responsibility. There will be name plates recognizing Mr. Hanson and Mr. Cunningham for the school library.

It was moved by Lisa Merrill, Meredith and seconded by Howard Cunningham, Member-at-Large to adjourn the meeting at 6:39 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*Heather H. Bullimore*

Heather H. Bullimore  
Recording Secretary

I hereby attest that this is a true copy.

*Kerri Parker*

Kerri Parker  
School District Clerk