

MINUTES OF THE DRESDEN SCHOOL DISTRICT ANNUAL MEETING  
HANOVER HIGH SCHOOL AUDITORIUM  
FEBRUARY 29, 2024

The meeting was held live in the Hanover High School Auditorium and live streamed over JAM and Zoom.

Moderator Tom Csatari called the meeting to order at 7:02 pm on Thursday, February 29, 2024. Present were School Board members Antonia Barry, Lisa Christie, Michael Costa, Kimberly Hartmann, Rick Johnson, Benjamin Keeney, Kelly McConnell, Deborah Bacon Nelson, Neil Odell, Garrett Palm, and Lily Trajman.

Assistant Superintendent Robin Steiner introduced the school administrators present.

Several members of the public, and a member of the Hanover Finance Committee, were also in attendance.

Moderator Csatari read the meeting warning and reviewed the purpose of the deliberative session. He reviewed the towns and grades covered in the Dresden School District, which is the first interstate school district in the country. The voting phase will take place on Tuesday March 5, 2024 from 7:00 am to 7:00 pm in Tracy Hall for Norwich voters and in the Hanover High School Gym for Hanover voters. Absentee ballots are available before the in-person voting date. The warrant had been duly posted 2/8/24 in both Hanover and Norwich. There is voting information on the SAU 70 website. Moderator Csatari reviewed the meeting guidelines.

**ARTICLE 1:** To elect by written ballot for one-year terms a Moderator, a Clerk, a Treasurer; an auditor for a three year term, an auditor for the two-year term and an auditor for a one-year term. Ballots are correct. Warrant article has error on the number of auditor positions.

No comments.

Clerk note that SAU 70 has independent auditors. The Dresden auditor positions are part of the original Interstate Compact.

**ARTICLE 2:** Shall the District determine and fix the salaries of School District officers as follows: School Board members \$1,000 per member with additional \$300 for School Board Chair; School District Treasurer \$2,670; School District Clerk \$500; and School District Moderator \$300 in accordance with Article V-A of the NH/VT Interstate School Compact, and further raise and appropriate the amount of Fifteen Thousand, Seven Hundred, Seventy Dollars (\$15,770) to fund these salaries?

The School Board recommends this article.

Deb Nelson reviewed this article. The proposed stipend for School Board members is \$300 higher than last year. These stipends have not changed in over 10 years. Deb reviewed the frequency of School Board meetings and additional School Board member participation in committees. The salary for the Moderator has been increased from \$150 to \$300, and there is a

small increase for the Treasurer position. The Treasurer duties are mandated under a NH RSA. The Clerk's stipend was increased a few years ago. The article's effect on the tax rate is negligible.

Comment: Kari Assmus, Chair of the Hanover Finance Committee, noted that the Committee voted unanimously to support this warrant article. She noted the last School Board stipend update was actually in 2004, where the level was set at \$700.

**ARTICLE 3:** Shall the District vote to approve the cost items in the three (3) year collective bargaining agreement reached between the Hanover Education Association and the Dresden School Board, which calls for the following increases in salaries and benefits:

Year	Estimated Increase Over status quo budget
2024-2025	\$791,970
2025-2026	\$716,680
2026-2027	\$467,930

and further, shall the District raise and appropriate the sum of Seven Hundred Ninety-One Thousand, Nine Hundred and Seventy Dollars (\$791,970), such sum representing the estimated increase in teaching staff salaries and benefits for the 2024-25 fiscal year brought about by this collective bargaining agreement (majority vote required)?

The School Board recommends this article and appropriation.

Ben Keeney discussed this article: this covers teachers and other certified staff. This agreement includes clarifying language surrounding the parameters for unpaid leave and employment beyond the normal school year. The cost of living increases are 5% for FY 2024-25, 4% for FY 2025-26, and 2% for FY 2026-27. The prior year cost of living increases under the current contract have been 2% per year. Details of the agreement can be reviewed on Board Docs, 11/14/2023 Dresden School Board Meeting, Item 10.B.

**NOTE 1.** The sum necessary to pay the so-called status quo salaries and benefits for teaching staff if this article is defeated is included in the operating budget in Article 4.

**NOTE 2.** A favorable vote on this article shall be considered the approval of the cost items in all three years (3) of the proposed collective bargaining agreement.

Comment: Kari Assmus from the Hanover Finance Committee noted that the committee unanimously supported this article. There was no other public comment.

**ARTICLE 4:** Shall the District raise and appropriate the amount of Thirty Million, Two Hundred Fifty Thousand, and Five Hundred Nineteen Dollars (\$30,250,519), for the support of schools, for the payment of salaries for the teachers and other school employees, school district officials, and agents, and for the payment of the statutory obligations of the District for the 2024-25 fiscal year? This sum does not include the sums appropriated in any of the other articles.

The School Board recommends this article.

Rick Johnson reviewed this article. He thanked all involved who helped put this together.

He gave a slide presentation on the budget. This is on the SAU 70 web site under Departments→Business and Finance→Budgets→Dresden→2024-25→Annual Meeting Budget Presentation

Tax rates to not be discussed.

He re-reviewed the note in article 2 about officer stipends, and article 4.

The budget covers the Richmond Middle School, Hanover High School, and District wide spending. Detailed budget information is on the SAU 70 web site under the Resources tab→Voter Information, in the Dresden and Hanover Annual Reports document.

The total Dresden budget will decrease by 2.8% over last year. There are increases in the RMS and HHS budgets but a decrease in the District wide budget. Expenditures due to salaries and benefits are the highest, followed by property services and equipment. Dresden enrollment at RMS is stable and HHS enrollment is down by 11 students from last year.

Detail by school:

**RMS:** The largest increases in expenditures are in Regular Education and School Administration (includes teaching staff, non union staff, support staff salaries, insurance, and retiree wages). Of this, the health insurance rate increase of 10% is one of the most significant expenditures. This is followed by Building and Site Improvements (one time projects). The total increase over FY24 is \$362,000 (4.06%). There are very few FTE level changes (net decrease 0.15 FTE).

Educational benefits at RMS are reviewed. Highlights include grade 8 Spanish and French field trips; a team model enhancing student connectedness to teachers; and pass/fail class options.

*FY25 RMS Budget total: \$9.29 million which is a 4.06% increase from FY24.*

**HHS:** The total increase over FY24 is \$696,500. Of this, the largest increase is in Regular Education staff expenses (\$400,000+) followed by Building and Custodial expenses (\$284,000). Added 1.5 FTE teachers; and some additional FTE's (regular education assistants, ESOL, Special Education department coordinator) for net 3.22 FTE increase from FY24.

Educational benefits at HHS are reviewed.

*FY25 HHS Budget total: \$17.3 million which is a 4.2% increase from FY24.*

**District Wide:** The total change over FY24 is a \$1.9 million dollar decrease, or 34.47%. Paid off a large bond this year.

*FY25 District Wide Budget total: \$3.68 million which is a 34.47% decrease from FY24.*

**Revenue and Net Assessment:** Projecting a loss in revenue due to loss of the Hanover offset for a long term building project (new RMS and renovations to HHS at that time), and decrease in building aid from the State of NH for the same.

The overall net assessment (with all warrant articles) for Dresden FY25 is \$27,200,279 and reflects an increase of 0.49% from FY24. The overall percentage change is again lower than the inflation rate (third year in a row).

The net assessment for Dresden is shared between Hanover and Norwich. It is based on student enrollment and the average daily membership from Hanover and Norwich students (ADM is calculated by the State of NH). This year the share of the net assessment is slightly higher for Norwich vs FY24. Hanover's share of the net assessment is 69.81% and Norwich's share is 30.19%. This is a 0.63% increase for Hanover and a 0.19% increase for Norwich vs FY24.

**Dresden Progress report:** Dresden students perform far above NH state averages in English, Math and Science proficiency. HHS is 1 of 45 National Blue Ribbon High Schools. Additional RMS and HHS accomplishments were reviewed.

Comments: Kari Assmus of the Hanover Finance Committee noted that this is another warrant article with unanimous support from the committee. Jamie Teague, Business Administrator, wished good luck and thanks to Rick Johnson who is retiring from the School Board this year. No other comments.

**ARTICLE 5:** To transact any non-substantive business that may legally come before the discussion phase of this meeting.

Tom Csatari, on behalf of the community, gave thanks to both the Dresden and Hanover School Boards for their service to the community.

There being no other business, it was moved/seconded to adjourn the meeting. Moderator Csatari adjourned the meeting at 7:40 pm.

Results of Australian Balloting on March 5, 2024: ballots cast 1647 Dresden

Article 1 (Election of Officers)

Moderator:	Tom Csatari	1391	Blank 251	Write-in 5
Clerk:	Carole E Bibeau	1397	Blank 248	Write-in 2
Treasurer:	Cheryl A Lindberg	1367	Blank 265	Write-in 15
District Auditor (one year):	Blank 1588	Write-in 59		
District Auditor (two years):	Blank 1597	Write-in 50		

District Auditor (three years): Blank 1608 Write-in 39

Article 2 (District Officer salaries)

Yes 1215 No 137 Blank 295

Article 3 (Teaching Staff salaries and benefits)

Yes 1249 No 326 Blank 72

Article 4 (District budget)

Yes 1198 No 374 Blank 75

Clerk note: this reflects 1645 ballots run through the ballot tabulator plus a hand count of 2 additional ballots from Norwich found after the tabulator was shut off on election night. Hand count performed March 6, 2024 with the Dresden Moderator and Dresden Clerk.

I hereby certify this to be a true and accurate report of the proceedings of the meeting of February 29, 2024 and the results of the voting held March 5, 2024.

Respectfully submitted,



Carole E. Bibeau  
Dresden School Clerk

