

# **Waits River Valley School District Unified #36**

## **2025 Annual Meeting**

**Monday, May 5, 2025 6:30 PM**

Waits River Valley School Gymnasium  
6 Waits River Valley Rd, East Corinth, VT 05040

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**Board Members present:** Stacy Emerson, Nancy Ertle, Jeremiah Goyette, Jason Rogers, Desiree Thurston and Michael Tkac

**WRVS Representation:** Principal, Carlotta Perantoni, Building Operations Supervisor, Patrick Butler

**OESU Representation:** Marla Ianello, Assistant Superintendent and Bobbi Beck, Assistant Business Manager

**District Treasurer:** Dick Kelley

The Annual Meeting was called to order at 6:32 p.m. by Gary Apfel. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Patricia King, Elliot Lea-Saken, Zachary Lea-Saken, and Jeremiah Graham. *"God Bless America"* was sung by Patricia King.

Vermont State Representative for Orange-1, Mike Tagliavia, Vermont State Representative for Newbury, Topsham and Groton, Joseph Parsons, and Vermont Senator, Scott Beck spoke to the voters of Topsham and Corinth briefly. The Vermont Education Bill H.454, the Vermont Education Foundation Formula, and school reconfigurations at local, central and regional levels, were amongst topics of a brief discussion. There was a comment made to the representatives asking to help maintain school choice for districts where that is a current option.

School Board Chair, Stacy Emerson, addressed the voters first by asking for a round of applause for the staff at Waits River Valley School, followed by announcing a presentation by WRVS Music teacher, Thomas Chapin. Thomas Chapin, presented a video that was produced by, and with, the WRVS scholars to the school song *"This is My Place"* written by *The Rough & Tumble*.

Gary Apfel went over the rules and general commencement of the annual meeting before moving forward to Article I.

### **ARTICLE 1:**

**To elect the following School District Officers for the ensuing year: Moderator, Clerk, and Treasurer.**

A motion was made by Kelly Ann Donahue to nominate Kelly Smith for Clerk. Chris Preston nominated Dick Kelley for Treasurer, and Rick Cawley made the motion to nominate Gary Apfel for Moderator. The motion was seconded and a vote was taken by the voice of the people, and all were in favor. Motion passed.

### **ARTICLE 2:**

**To hear and act upon the reports of the Officers and School Directors.**

A motion was made by John Saken, and seconded by Dillon McGuire to accept the reports of the school officials and directors. Carlotta Simonds-Perantoni spoke regarding additional activities that took place this school year which included the CLiF event which included a free meal and books for families, the Golden Dome reading challenge for scholars in grades 4th-8th grade, as well as the Corinth Coalition and Growing Peace Project, which Jeff Spiegel helped to facilitate between Matthew Denton and April Hallock on the Mural of Sustainability which originated in the Corinth Transfer station but then

moved to WRVS. Gary Apfel called the motion in which a vote was put forth by the voice of the people and all were in favor. Motion passed.

### **ARTICLE 3:**

**Shall the voters of the Unified School District No.36 authorize the school board to expend \$9,225,136.00, (nine million, two hundred twenty-five thousand, one hundred thirty-six dollars, which is the amount the school board has determined to be necessary for the ensuing fiscal year? The Unified Union School District estimates that this proposed budget, if approved, will result in per pupil education spending of \$11, 044.64, which is 5.52% higher than per pupil education spending for the current year.**

Chris Preston moved the motion, and it was seconded by Katherine Lea.

Chris Preston looked for an address by the board of the current budget and where the towns will be left in the coming future with what it's going to cost. Board Chair, Stacy Emerson, addressed concerns, reminding the voters that H.454 will take away local control which is what the communities of Topsham and Corinth need to think about, as well reminded the community members that there are many outside costs to a budget that can't be controlled such as high school tuition (\$240,000), staff 6% step increases as well as support staff step increases, health insurance increase of (\$267,934), VT child care contribution (\$11,773) and transportation increases (\$15,000). Stacy Emerson also reminded the voters that rather than be split by towns, we are brought together as a community when attending events together and said, "if you lose school, you lose community". Paying off the deficit in whole and not carrying it forward, with taxes still going down, Stacy Emerson reminded the community voters that the scholars deserve to receive a "fabulous education" as did everyone in attendance.

Gary Apfel called the motion and a paper ballot was requested.

At 7:38 p.m., Gary Apfel called the meeting back to order. There were 81 votes cast, 41 votes were required to pass the budget; 64 were in favor and 17 votes not in favor. Motion passed.

### **ARTICLE 4:**

**Shall the voters authorize the school board to borrow money in anticipation of tax receipts?**

Chris Preston made the motion, and Jeff Spiegel seconded the motion, to authorize the school board to borrow money in anticipation of tax receipts. Gary Apfel called the motion, a voice vote was put forth by the voice of the people and all were in favor. Motion passed.

### **ARTICLE 5:**

**To transact any other business that may legally come before this meeting.**

Gary Apfel asked for applause for long-time community member who was retiring, Nancy Ertle. John Saken moved the motion and Hank Burmeyer seconded the motion. All were in favor. Meeting was adjourned at 7:41 p.m..

Respectfully Submitted,  
Kelly Smith