

Timberlane Regional School Board

Atkinson, Danville, Plaistow and Sandown
New Hampshire

Minutes of the Deliberative Session

February 06, 2014

Call to Order

At the Timberlane Performing Arts Center, Moderator Steven Ranlett called the February 06, 2014 Deliberative Session to order at 7:45 PM. He requested that Jim Garrity lead the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. Ranlett introduced himself and outlined the rules of the session. He stated that persons making general comments would be limited to three minutes, and that presentations would be limited to fifteen minutes. He stated that Roberts Rules of Order would be the guide he would be following for the Deliberative Session and that at any time those Rules could be altered by a majority vote.

Members of the Budget Committee in attendance: Gregory Spero (chair), Michelle O'Neil (vice chair), Dennis Francoeur, Cathleen Gorman, Donna Green, Jason Grosky, Dennis Heffernan, Diane Rothwell, Barry Weymouth.

Members of the School Board in attendance: Robert Collins (chair), Nancy Steenson (vice chair), Peter Bealo, Richard Blair, Kate Delfino, Michael Mascola, Joseph Morris, Susan Sherman, Kelly Ward

Mr. Ranlett read the following list of non-voters that may speak or present information at the Deliberative Session:

Dr. Earl Metzler	Superintendent of Schools
Dr. Roxanne Wilson	Assistant Superintendent
George Stokinger	Business Administrator
Atty. Mike Elwell	District Legal Counsel
Kelli Killen	Director of Elementary Education
Scott Strainge	Director of Secondary Education
Deb Armfield	Director of Professional Learning
Beth Rincon	Director of Special Education
Susan Rasicot	Director of Student Services
Nancy Danahy	Director of Human Resources
Michelle Gaydos	Principal - Pollard
Douglas Rolph	Principal - Sandown Central
Michael Hogan	Principal - Timberlane Regional Middle School
John Holland	Director of Technology
Angelo Fantasia	Director of Athletics
Tony DiBartolomeo	Director of Music
Jim Hughes	Director of Facilities
Renzo Binagi	Director of the Evening Division
Lou Broad	TTA – Teachers' Union President
Lorainne Mascioli	TTA – Teachers' Union Vice President
George Haskins	

On a motion by Sue Sherman, seconded by Michael Mascola

- **Voted:** To accept the non-resident list as stated above.
- **Having no further discussion the motion passed unanimously.**

Dr. Metzler welcomed the voters to the Deliberative Session, and gave a presentation, speaking on the improvements in the District over the past year and a half. He asked the voters to keep an open mind and to listen to both sides of the discussion. He explained the roles of the School Board and the Budget Committee. He spoke on the challenges of arriving at a budget that is balanced between providing what is needed

academically while keeping in mind the cost to the taxpayers. He expressed his appreciation for District staff, and he reiterated that the students were the top priority.

Mr. Collins gave a presentation on School Board goals, the primary goal being academic excellence and the progress that has been made since Dr. Metzler gave his Entry Report to the School Board. He stated that under the State of NH Annual Measurable Objectives, Timberlane ranks in the top thirty schools in the state. He presented the School Board goals for the future. He then presented data on past budgets and the proposed 2014-2015 budget for comparison, outlining both costs and savings. He also explained the budget process and the challenges of drafting a proposed budget twenty-one months in advance. He then explained what surplus means for the taxpayers. He closed with an explanation of the Mission of the School Board.

Moderator Steve Ranlett began presentation of the official warrant.

Second Session of Annual Meeting (Voting)

Voting on warrant articles number 1 through number 9 will be conducted by official ballot to be held in conjunction with town meeting voting to be held on Tuesday, the 11th day of March, 2014, at the Town election polls in Atkinson, Danville, Plaistow, and Sandown, New Hampshire.

Atkinson	Voting will be conducted at the Atkinson Community Center from 7am-8pm
Danville	Voting will be conducted at the Danville Community Center from 8am-7pm
Plaistow	Voting will be conducted at Pollard School from 7am-8pm
Sandown	Voting will be conducted at the Sandown Town Hall from 8am-8pm

Article 1 - Election of Officers

To choose the following school district officers:

Atkinson Voters	School Board Member	3-year Term
Danville Voters	School Board Member	3-Year Term
Plaistow Voters	School Board Member	1-Year Term
Plaistow Voters	School Board Member	3-year Term
Sandown Voters	School Board Member	1-Year Term
Atkinson Voters	Budget Committee Member	3-Year Term
Danville Voters	Budget Committee Member	3-Year Term
Plaistow Voters	Budget Committee Member	1-Year Term
Plaistow Voters	Budget Committee Member	3-Year Term
All Voters	District Moderator	3-Year Term

Article 2 – Operating Budget

Shall the voters of the Timberlane Regional School District raise and appropriate as an operating budget, not including appropriations 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 **\$66,452,054**? Should this article be defeated, the operating budget shall be **\$65,974,014** which is the same as last year, with certain adjustments required by previous action of the Timberlane 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: Warrant Article 2 (the operating budget) does not include appropriations proposed under any other warrant articles. (MAJORITY VOTE REQUIRED)

Recommended by the School Board 8-0

Recommended by the Budget Committee 8-1

A motion by Dennis Heffernan, seconded by Jason Grosky, to place Article 2 on the floor for discussion.

George Stokinger gave an overview on the budget process and on the budget itself, including the cost drivers on the increases and the areas where decreases have occurred.

Arthur Green of Sandown made a motion to change the amount of the proposed budget to \$64,000,000, a decrease of \$2,452,054. The motion was seconded by Leon Artus of Atkinson.

Donna Green of Sandown made a presentation on the amendment. She stated that she was making the presentation as a representative of Sandown on the Budget Committee but not for the Budget Committee. Mrs. Green said that the purpose of the amendment is to offer the voters a flat line budget and that it is not to negatively affect the education of students. She presented data to support the amendment, and stated that the District routinely expends approximately \$2,000,000 less than budgeted and has a surplus of that amount each year. She presented information where budget cuts could be made without impacting education. The Moderator indicated that the allowable time for speaking as outlined in the Rules of the Session had been reached after sixteen minutes.

Mr. Stokinger responded to Mrs. Green's comments on the surplus and on the budget amounts for proposed full-day kindergarten. He also stated that it is inappropriate to compare Pinkerton Academy's tuition cost to Timberlane's tuition cost, as Pinkerton's does not include Special Education costs.

Brian Stack of Plaistow spoke in support of the District's focus on children's success.

Louise Pajak of Sandown stated that Pinkerton Academy cannot be compared to Timberlane as Pinkerton has a private endowment and does not have Special Education nor does it participate in the NH Retirement System.

Brenda Copp of Sandown spoke on the tax burden to Sandown residents, and asked the voters to consider the impact of the budget on residents.

Jack Sapia of Atkinson spoke in support of the School Board, the Superintendent and the proposed budget.

Arthur Green of Sandown spoke on the student/teacher ratio, and how that impacts staffing.

The Moderator requested that speakers keep the questions and comments to the amendment only.

George Haskins spoke on his past experience as a School Board member. He spoke in support of the proposed budget and against the amendment on the floor.

Mr. Collins responded to Mrs. Green's presentation and explained that although enrollment was reduced; staffing was not reduced because the District added forty-five courses to the High School. The District has also invested in services for Special Needs students to keep them in-District and offer better options to parents. He clarified what "non-teaching" teachers are. He also stated that the cost per pupil for this current year cannot be calculated until the school year has ended. He did agree with Mrs. Green that Dr. Metzler is providing great leadership.

Mrs. Green stated that estimates on the tax rates can be projected from the budget.

Tony Cantone of Plaistow requested clarification on the amendment and the amount that would be on the ballot if the amendment is defeated.

The Moderator clarified that if the amendment is defeated, the amount of the proposed budget would be the amount originally stated when he read Article 2.

John Goldman of Sandown said that the tax impact on Sandown this year is large. His experience in municipal budgets is that there have been low or no increases, and that residents are looking for a similar impact on school taxes.

William Smith of Plaistow thanked everyone for the job they are doing. He stated that his child has special needs and that the District has been phenomenal in seeing that his child has the services he needs and that he is motivated to go to school each day. He stated that parents as well as the District must be accountable for the students.

Christopher True of Sandown spoke on the tax impact to the residents of Sandown.

Jack Sapia of Atkinson spoke on student enrollment figures and what they meant in terms on class size. He also spoke about his time volunteering on the maintenance of the sports fields.

Christine Collins of Danville asked what the tax impact of the amendment would be if it passed.

Mr. Collins responded with an estimate of the savings to the individual Timberlane communities at current valuations if the budget were reduced by \$2,500,000.

Tina Owens of Sandown asked for clarification on the additional courses that were added at the High School.

Mr. Collins responded that the District has increased the requirement for graduation and needs to provide options for students to attain the credits needed. It is not a state requirement; it is at the directive of the School Board.

Mrs. Owens asked what the impact would be if the budget is cut by the amount proposed in the amendment.

Mr. Collins responded that he could not specifically say where the cuts would be made but that it probably would mean that either teachers or programs would need to be cut.

Robert Radford spoke in support of the proposed budget, and did not think the savings on the tax rates were worth cutting the budget.

Mrs. Green responded that there is money unspent each year, and that the problem is management and not money.

Leon Artus of Atkinson asked if the District had done everything it needed to do in order to operate the schools on the amount expended last year.

Dennis Heffernan responded that there were some safety issues that needed to be addressed last year that were not addressed.

Mr. Stokinger stated that the District was currently projecting that \$950,000 would not be expended from the current budget, but it remains to be seen if the District is able to accomplish all its goals.

Michelle O'Neil stated that we are currently in the 2013-2014 budget and that there is no surplus because we are still in the budget year. If there is a surplus this year it will be returned to the towns. She stated that the budget is up approximately \$950,000 due to items which the District has no control over such as retirement, insurance, FICA, and workers compensation.

The Moderator then moved the amendment to vote. He restated the amendment to Article 2.

Brenda Copp of Sandown stated that she had a petition for a secret vote, but that she was not turning it in because the Moderator had assured her that there would be four people on the floor to count the votes.

The vote was by voter card.

Yes votes = 239

No votes = 372

The motion was defeated.

The Moderator read Article 2 as originally presented on the warrant.

A motion by Michael Mascola, seconded by Sean O'Neil, to move the question.

The Moderator asked if there was any further discussion on Article 2.

A motion by Jack Sapia, seconded by Brian Stack, to amend Article 2 and increase the budget by \$750,000.

The Moderator read the amendment.

Mr. Sapia stated that the purpose of the increase was for an all purpose artificial turf on the football field.

Mr. Mascola stated that it was a great idea but was presented at the wrong time, and should have been presented to the Budget Committee at the start of the budget season.

Mrs. Green stated that the athletic budget was under spent in the past three years and asked if the monies from the increase to the budget that Mr. Sapia put forward in an amendment to last year's budget had been expended.

Mr. Sapia stated that projects to improve the athletic fields were in process. He also stated that this was the appropriate place to present this matter.

Jason Grosky stated that he would encourage the voters to vote no on this amendment. He recommends that the District develop a long term plan to address the issue of athletic fields and that in the future put forward a separate warrant article to put the plan into effect.

Jim Garrity of Atkinson spoke against the amendment and called the question.

The Moderator stated that he would allow the remaining people standing at the microphone to speak.

Brian Stack of Plaistow asked for clarification that expenditure of the money added through the amendment would be at the discretion of Administration. The Moderator confirmed that it was a bottom line budget and could not be earmarked.

John Goldman of Sandown spoke against the amendment.

Ralph Bruno of Sandown spoke against the amendment.

Arthur Green of Sandown spoke on the increase to the tax rate that this amendment would cause.

Mr. Sapia stated that this would be a one-time tax impact.

The Moderator moved the question and restated the amendment.

By a voice vote, the amendment failed.

Sean O'Neil stated that a motion to move the question had already been made and seconded.

The Moderator closed the Article to further discussion, and restated Article 2 as originally presented on the warrant.

The results of a voice vote on placing Article 2 on the ballot was unclear, and the voting went to voting cards.

Yes votes = 329

No votes = 128

Article 2 will be placed on the ballot as originally written.

A motion by Michael Mascola, seconded by Louise Pajak, to restrict reconsideration of Article 2. The motion passed by voice vote.

Article 3 – School Administrative Unit Budget

Shall the voters of the Timberlane Regional School District adopt a school administrative unit budget of **\$1,487,025** for the forthcoming fiscal year in which **\$1,137,741** is assigned to the school budget of this school district? This year's adjusted (default) budget of **\$1,455,409**, with **\$1,113,221** assigned to the school budget of this school district, will be adopted if the article does not receive a majority vote of all the school district voters voting in this school administrative unit. (MAJORITY VOTE REQUIRED)

Recommended by the School Board 8-0

Recommended by the Budget Committee 8-1

A motion by Dennis Francoeur, seconded by Michael Mascola, to place Article 3 on the floor for discussion.

Mr. Collins gave an explanation of the SAU budget and why it is appearing on the ballot separately.

Mrs. Green stated that she was one of the promulgators of the separation of the SAU budget from the Timberlane budget and that it was for the purpose of voter oversight.

There being no further discussion, by a voice vote Article 3 will be placed on the ballot as written.

A motion by Robert Collins, seconded by Michael Mascola, to restrict reconsideration of Article 3. The motion passed by voice vote.

Article 4 – Capital Reserve Fund

Shall the voters of the Timberlane Regional School District raise and appropriate up to **\$350,000** to be placed in the School Building Construction, Reconstruction, Capital Improvement and Land Purchase Capital Reserve Fund established in 1996, with such amount to be transferred from the June 30, 2014 unassigned fund balance (surplus) available for transfer on July 1 of this year? This sum to come from fund balance (2013-14 budget surplus) and no amount to be raised by taxation. (MAJORITY VOTE REQUIRED)

Recommended by the School Board 8-0

Recommended by the Budget Committee 7-2

A motion by Susan Sherman, seconded by Michael Mascola, to place Article 4 on the floor for discussion.

There being no discussion, by a voice vote Article 4 will be placed on the ballot as written.

A motion by Michael Mascola, seconded by Michelle O'Neil, to restrict reconsideration of Article 4. The motion passed by voice vote.

Article 5 – Sandown Central Kitchen Renovation

Shall the voters of the Timberlane Regional School District raise and appropriate the sum of **\$385,412** to renovate the kitchen at Sandown Central Elementary School and to authorize the District to withdraw up to the sum of **\$335,412** from the existing School Building Construction, Reconstruction, Capital Improvements and Land Purchase Capital Reserve Fund with remaining funds (\$50,000) to come from the 2014-15 operating budget? (MAJORITY VOTE REQUIRED)

Recommended by the School Board 8-0

Recommended by the Budget Committee 8-1

A motion by Kelly Ward, seconded by Michael Mascola, to place Article 5 on the floor for discussion.

Mr. Collins stated that the District has been renovating the District school kitchens over the years and the Sandown Central kitchen is the last to be updated.

Mrs. Green stated that this is a lot of money to spend on a kitchen renovation, as she understands that the School Board is exploring the possibility of closing Sandown Central School under the Capital Improvement Plan.

Peter Bealo stated that there has been no discussion on closing Sandown Central School during his three years on the School Board.

Mr. Mascola stated that the renovations were necessary to address safety concerns.

Susan Sherman stated that the School Board has not had discussions about closing Sandown Central School as part of the Capital Improvement Plan.

Mr. Mascola made a motion to move the question, seconded by Jason Grosky.

Mrs. Green stated that the School Board Chair and the Superintendent had indicated at various times that closing Sandown Central School was a possibility if there was a radical cut to the budget.

Mr. Collins responded to Mrs. Green's statement.

There being no further discussion, by voice vote Article 5 will be placed on the ballot as written.

A motion by Michael Mascola, seconded by Michelle O'Neil, to restrict reconsideration of Article 5. The motion passed by voice vote.

Article 6 – One Year Collective Bargaining Agreement (Timberlane Support Staff Union)

Shall the voters of the Timberlane Regional School District approve the cost items included in the collective bargaining agreement reached between the Timberlane Support Staff Union and the Timberlane Regional

School Board, which calls for the following increases in salaries at the current staffing levels over the amount paid in the prior fiscal year:

Cost Distribution	2014-15
Salaries	\$49,969.92
FICA	3,822.70
New Hampshire State Retirement	5,104.16
Insurance	189,550.62
TOTAL	\$248,447.40

and further to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$248,447.40** for the 2014-15 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 the current staffing levels? (MAJORITY VOTE REQUIRED)

Recommended by the School Board 8-0

Recommended by the Budget Committee 8-1

A motion by Kelly Ward, seconded by Richard Blair, to place Article 6 on the floor for discussion.

Mr. Collins gave a presentation on the negotiation process for the collective bargaining agreement. He stated that insurance adjustments that have to be made as a result of the Affordable Care Act are included in this CBA.

Gabrielle Bevilacqua of Plaistow explained the role of the paraeducators in the education process, and asked the voters to support the warrant article.

There being no further discussion, by a voice vote Article 6 will be placed on the ballot as written.

A motion by Michael Mascola, seconded by Brian Stack, to restrict reconsideration of Article 6. The motion passed by voice vote.

Article 7 - Authorization for Special Meeting on Cost Items

Shall the voters of the Timberlane Regional School District, if Article 6 is defeated, authorize the Timberlane Regional School Board to call one special meeting, at its option, to address Article 6 cost items only? (Without this Article the District would have to petition Superior Court for a Special School District Meeting. This saves the District the expense of attorney fees and court costs).

Recommended by the School Board 8-0

Recommended by the Budget Committee 8-1

A motion by Kelly Ward, seconded by Nancy Steenson, to place Article 7 on the floor for discussion.

Mr. Collins explained that if Article 6 fails, it is the intention of the School Board to immediately enter re-negotiations with the TSSU. Article 7 will save the District money as it will allow the process to begin without petitioning the court.

Mrs. Green stated that she believes that the District would be unlikely to petition the court, and that unless the union petitioned the court at its expense, the agreement would lie fallow until it went before the voters next year.

Superintendent Metzler stated that if the article fails, the District would begin re-negotiations immediately and would negotiate in good faith.

There being no further discussion, by a voice vote Article 7 will be placed on the ballot as written.

A motion by Michael Mascola, seconded by Richard Blair, to restrict reconsideration of Article 7. The motion passed by voice vote.

Article 8 – General Acceptance of Reports

Shall the voters of the Timberlane Regional School District accept reports of agents, auditors, and committees as written in the 2013 Annual Report? (MAJORITY VOTE REQUIRED)

Recommended by the School Board 8-0

A motion by Jim Garrity, seconded by Susan Sherman, to place Article 8 on the floor for discussion.

There being no further discussion, by a voice vote Article 8 will be placed on the ballot as written.

Article 9 – Rescind SAU Budget on Warrant Petition by Julie Knight et al

Shall the voters of the Timberlane Regional School District within School Administrative Unit Number 55 rescind the adoption of RSA 194-C:9-b, relative to the alternative school administrative unit budget adoption procedure, and adopt the provisions of RSA 194-C:9 as the method for governing the adoption of the school administrative unit budget? (MAJORITY VOTE OF BOTH DISTRICTS REQUIRED)

Recommended by the School Board 8-0

A motion by Michael Mascola, seconded by Richard Blair, to place Article 9 on the floor for discussion.

A motion by Jim Garrity, seconded by Jason Grosky, to call the question. Mr. Garrity withdrew his motion; Mr. Grosky withdrew his second.

Carson Springer of Danville requested an explanation of why the SAU budget should be incorporated into the Timberlane budget.

Mr. Collins responded to the question. He explained that as a stand-alone budget monies can no longer be moved from the Timberlane budget to cover unexpected costs incurred within the current year.


There being no further discussion, by a voice vote Article 9 will be placed on the ballot as written.

A motion by Michael Mascola, seconded by Dennis Francoeur, to restrict reconsideration of Article 9. The motion passed by voice vote.

A motion by Jason Grosky, seconded by Peter Bealo, to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed by voice vote.

Moderator Ranlett adjourned the Deliberative Session at 10:55pm.

Respectfully Submitted,


Lorna Walker
District Clerk

Vimeo of the 02/06/14 Deliberative Session can be found at <http://vimeo.com/86187592>