

TIMBERLANE REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
Atkinson, Danville, Plaistow and Sandown, New Hampshire
Minutes of the Deliberative Session
2023 Deliberative Session, held at the Timberlane Regional High School, 36
Greenough Road, Plaistow, NH,
February 9, 2023

District Moderator Robert Harb called the February 9th to order at 7:01PM. The Moderator led the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance, which was followed by a performance of the Timberlane Regional High School Chamber Choir under the direction of Robert Finch.

School Board Members in attendance: Brian Boyle, Atkinson (chair), Dr. Kimberly Farah, Danville, Sheila Lowes, Sandown, Michael Boucher, Atkinson, Shauna Manthorn, Plaistow, Katie Knutsen, Plaistow, Mark Sherwood, Sandown, Kim McCormick, Danville, Kristin Savage, Plaistow (Vice Chair)

Budget Committee Members in attendance: Kristi Auclair, Julie Hammond, Elizabeth Kosta, Michael Mascola, TRBC Todd McCormick (chair), Susan Sherman (vice chair) and Karen White.

Also seated with the Board and Committee: Superintendent of Schools Christopher Kellan, Justin Krieger, Assistant Superintendent, Business Administrator Maria Watkins and District Legal counsel Attorney James O'Shaughnessy.

Moderator Harb reviewed the rules of the meeting to the qualified voters in attendance and directed all makers of motions and seconds state their names for the record. Ryan Labrecque, of Plaistow, stated that the secret vote rules also allow for seven (7) participants to vote verbally, not just five by writing and he would like that added to the stated rules. Moderator Harb checked with Attorney O'Shaughnessy and clarified that voice votes of the seven are for a challenge to any voice vote. Attorney O'Shaughnessy quoted from RSA 40:4-A that to request a secret ballot requires five or more voters who are present to make the request in writing. He believed the provision Mr. Labrecque was referring to was RSA 40:4-B which is the process for questioning a vote which requires in writing or orally that requests be made by seven or more voters present. Both Moderator Harb and Attorney O'Shaughnessy stated that requests for secret ballot must be made prior to the calling of the question. Moderator Harb also explained requesting a recount of the secret ballot. Mr. Labrecque continued to question the process, with Attorney O'Shaughnessy that the moderator of the district meeting will comply with the statutes governing secret ballot votes. Moderator Harb stated that he would revise rule ten to read secret ballots will be followed according to the revised statutes. Richard Anthony, of 4 Village Way, Plaistow, wanted to clarify how to make a request for secret ballot. Moderator Harb reiterated that if he called the vote, it would be too late to call for a secret ballot on that particular warrant article.

Moderator Harb then asked the people seated at the tables as well as the Budget Committee members in attendance to introduce themselves.

With no further objections, the standard moderator rules were adopted for the conduct of the meeting. General comments are limited to 5 minutes. Makers of motions must state their name and address. All votes will be a voice vote followed by hand count by raising your card if necessary. If it is close the assistant moderators on the floor will count.

Voters in attendance: Atkinson (58), Danville (29), Plaistow (59), and Sandown (36)

MOTION: Brian Boyle made a motion, seconded by Kristin Savage to allow the following non-residents to speak during the meeting: District Legal Counsel Attorney James O'Shaughnessy, Louis Broad (TTA President), Ryan Richman (TTA spokesperson), Justin Krieger (Asst. Superintendent), Karl Ingoldsby (Director of Plant Operations, Mike Darvy (EEI Energy Efficient Investments representative). **PASSED by voice vote.**

To the inhabitants of the School District of the Towns of Atkinson, Danville, Plaistow, and Sandown, New Hampshire, qualified to vote in District affairs:

The first session of the annual meeting, the Deliberative, you are hereby notified to meet the Timberlane Performing Arts Center, 40 Greenough Rd, Plaistow, NH on Thursday, the 9th day of February 2023, at 7:00PM. This session shall consist of explanation, discussion, and debate of warrant articles number 2 through number 16. Warrant articles may be amended subject to the following limitations: (a) warrant articles whose wording is prescribed by law shall not be amended, (b) warrant articles that are amended shall be placed on the official ballot for a final vote on the main motion, as amended, and (c) no warrant article shall be amended to eliminate the subject matter of the article.

Second Session of Annual Meeting (Voting)

Voting on warrant articles number 1 through 16 will be conducted by official ballot to be held in conjunction with town meeting voting to be held on Tuesday, the 14th day of March 2023, 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-7pm
Danville	Voting will be conducted at the Danville Community Center from 8am-8pm
Plaistow	Voting will be conducted at the Plaistow Fish and Game Club from 7am-7pm
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	1-Year Term
Atkinson Voters	School Board Member	3-Year Term
Danville Voters	School Board Member	3-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	3-Year Term
Plaistow Voters	Budget Committee Member	1-Year Term
Sandown Voters	Budget Committee Member	1-Year Term
All Towns	District Moderator	3-Year Term

ARTICLE 2 – OPERATING BUDGET

Shall the voters of the 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 **\$83,270,418.18**? Should this article be defeated, the operating budget shall be **\$81,401,106.67**, 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 7-0-0

Recommended by the Budget Committee 8-1-0

MOTION: Jack Sapia (5 Chrystal Hill Rd, Atkinson) made a motion to put Article 2 on the ballot as written; seconded by Kristin Savage

TRBC Todd McCormick: I have been on the budget committee for about 5 years; this is my last year. We started meeting in September. We had about ten public meetings. We also hosted tours at all seven buildings in the district, including the Performing Arts Center. I invited everyone from the public to come if they could to inspect and be toured around those buildings to see what the condition was. It's slowly and surely deteriorating over the years. Some of the buildings are 50 to 60 years old. Again, we met in public for ten meetings, had our public hearing a few weeks ago. There are quite a few drivers that have increased this budget. In the five years that I've been on the budget committee, we've level funded the budget year over year. This year there are some major drivers in health care increases, facility increases. We are going to go over that in a couple of slides I believe but it is up. Last year, I believe it went up .47% year over year. This year it is up 9% from last year. We did everything we could to try and stave that off over the years, but it's caught up to us. Things are exorbitantly expensive now and on top of that the facilities are crumbling around us and so there is some money in this proposed budget to put some extra dollars into the facilities but by and large its not necessarily the capital expenses but just kind of the costs of doing business and the fact that health insurance and salaries have raised exponentially from last year to this year.

TRBC Chair McCormick went through the slides and figures that were in the handout provided to the public.

Ryan Labrecque, 174 Main St., Plaistow: Fellow voters, the district has proposed \$7.2M budget increase over last year as well as over \$5M of yearly increases within the additional warrant articles resulting in a FY 2024 budget of \$88M if all this excess is voted in. This district's budget is over double the combined town budgets of all participating towns. You all feel this is sustainable on the backs of already significant tax increases over the last several years. This is not sustainable. There has been no fiscal responsibility demonstrated by the district. Where will this end? First question I have: We have a \$328K, although your slide says \$470K, there's differing numbers in different presentations throughout the last month, increase in salaries. The warrant articles include approximately \$1.4M additional salary increases over and above the \$470K budgeted for a total yearly salary increase of \$1.7M. This will also increase the budget every year moving forward. How many employees do we currently have in the district and what is the average percentage increase for each employee?

Superintendent Christopher Kellan: We have approximately 750 employees in the district. I can't tell you off the top of my head an average salary for all of those people.

Ryan Labrecque: Average salary increase by percentage, not their average salaries. So these \$1.8 M and increases represent what percentage of total?

Business Administrator Maria Watkins: We have six different unions in the district, and we have some employers that are non-union. It is very hard for me to give you an average salary for employee because we have 750 employees. All the agreements for the unions are online so you can have access to them if you want to review them and they have the salary schedules, all of them.

Ryan Labrecque: Well, I live in a 3% land and corporate world. And by numbers we're averaging, based on total cost \$36 M in in salaries and roughly \$2M and increases, it's over a 5% increase per year, on average per person. Obviously per person is going to differ depending on their salary. I'm not saying that people shouldn't make more over time, we all want to make more overtime, but we're adding that to a couple million dollars in insurance increases. So, my next question is what is driving insurance increased costs and how has each district employee's share of the cost increased? And what percentage of insurance costs are paid by district employees currently?

BA Watkins: The increase is driven by the guaranteed maximum rate that our insurance company gives us which is 10.8% for this year. The district pays 85% of the cost of insurance for employees and the employee pays 15%.

Ryan Labrecque: When was the last time employee contribution has increased, percentage wise?

TRSB Board Chair Brian Boyle: The majority of the employees who work for Timberlane are members of collecting bargaining agreements. These groups, which we will be talking about a little later this evening, have negotiated individually. A lot of your concerns, to the best of our ability at the school board level and administration, we are addressing. You cannot paint with a broad brush. Those questions have come up every other meeting during negotiations. Percentage of contribution for health insurance depends on the union. Some people can get a step increase. There were several people who have not received a raise for three years. We are doing what we can to negotiate with each person. And I think, as Maria mentioned, a small percentage of our people are not members of the union. But the majority are members of a union, and they are negotiated with, with council and all these things come up so we can't sit back here and discuss and debate the each individual union negotiation.

Superintendent Kellan: Approximately forty (40) employees are not union. There are six collective bargaining units for the approximately seven hundred (700) employees.

Ryan Labrecque: Thank you and I want to qualify my comments. I go to town deliberative sessions for the last couple of years. I've been absentee a lot of years because I've been away, working away. So, this is my first time I've come to a school deliberative because every time I go to the town deliberative, I'm told, "Why are you barking up the wrong tree? You should be barking up the school deliberative session." So, I'm here and I have lots of questions and some of that is learning and I think a lot of people will learn some things in the process as well. So moving on.

<Point of Order from crowd>

Moderator Harb: I believe we have almost exceeded your time. I'll allow you one more question then I need to have a new person speak.

Ryan Labrecque: That's fine. I can back up. What is the total transportation budget if there's a \$785,000 increase? What's the total budget before including that increase? And what is driving the \$785,000 increase?

TRSB Mark Sherwood: That information is in the packet that's available to everybody in the audience, including yourself. One of the major drivers is, as you know, we do need to ship our kids to school if they're within a certain distance from the school. We did put out to bid to anybody who was able to provide transportation for the district as we have year after year after year. Anybody that has kids in the district knows that there have been problems with the buses simply because there are not enough bus drivers. So during this competitive bid process, we did try to get the most financially conservative bid. Unfortunately, there is only one big player in town that can provide services and the cost for bus drivers has gone up. The salaries of paying the bus drivers now not enough. That's why they can't find enough bus drivers. Fuel prices have gone up, etc. So that's a prime example, that is a fixed cost. We can't do anything about that. We can't get a stagecoach to bring the kids in. We need the bus company and there's only one player in town unfortunately.

TRSB Dr. Farah: Sorry, to answer his question directly, we enter into, typically, a three-year agreement with the bus company and also food service. Sometimes it has an add on with a plus one and a plus one.

This year, when we had to renew the bus contract, the increase was 21%. After we went out to bid, we had two bidders. We chose the lower of the two bids, and it was up 21%. Our transportation budget I think is around the order around four and a half million for transportation.

Ryan Labrecque: What other creative ways have been and have been explored to reduce cost?

Moderator Harb: I allowed you one more question and you asked that, so I need to move to the other people waiting.

Sara Wood, 52 Judith St., Danville: As far as the transportation budget goes, I do have to agree. My mother-in-law worked in the school district for 17 years driving buses. It's not cheap. And yes, they do go through deliberation every three years to figure out what's going to be the best company for our kids so I can back you guys up. With the eleven million dollars for the special needs department. I do know that there have been many parents that have to go to due processing in order to get their services for their children. One in forty-four kids are diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder, including my son and it has been very difficult to make sure that he's getting the necessary things he needs. So my question is: what does the district have planned to help improve the special needs department in order to save money in the district and prevent overspending and outsourcing services to allow for a more sustainable budget for special needs students?

Superintendent Kellan: Thank you for the question. We are conducting a special education audit. Some of you might be aware that you received a survey and hopefully those that have received that have completed that survey but that's just one portion of it. But we are assessing all of our service delivery models that we provide currently, and we are going to be coming forward with a report in the next couple of months. With respect to making recommendations for improving services within the district, increasing program options within the district to try and reduce out of district placements and provide the opportunities for our students within the district where they have the opportunity to participate with non-disabled peers providing a greater breadth of services for our students within the district and doing so at a lower cost. And it can be done, but it's going to take us some time to get there.

Karen Steele, 4 Pebble Brook Rd., Atkinson: I'd like to say that having watched the meetings of both the board and the budget committee, I think that the team has done a great job. They recognize the balance of giving people fair wages and doing the right thing, and I support this operating budget and I hope that all of my good neighbors vote in favor of it.

Jack Sapia, 5 Crystal Hill Rd., Atkinson: I don't think this budget is excessive. I think, so we don't lose track tonight, as we deliberate, although the money's important component of it, is that we are here for the education of kids. That should be the driving factor in everything we do. What can we do and does this budget reflect getting to be number one in the state in English and Math and Science? I could very easily see putting \$2M on the capital line. We have walked away from my responsibilities of maintaining safe facilities for over 20 years. I've sat here year after year and asked people to address it. And in the end, in the light of trying to keep the budget low, we've avoided taking responsibilities for some of those things. So very easily this could be \$1M- \$2M higher without batting an eyelash. Fuel, energy, we all go to the supermarket. Those are all driving factors here with the budget. I've been very critical of people on the two boards, very critical, but I've got to tell you guys tried to thread a needle this year and it's not an easy thing to do. So I appreciate your efforts and get it let's get to that number one spot.

Jessica Pelletier, 24 North Ave., Plaistow: I'm just curious, you mentioned in considerations for the operating budget, the projected enrollment and I'm wondering what the trajectory has been over the past several years.

TRSB Dr. Farah: Enrollment over the past ten years has been declining. We are now starting to see that that's leveling off. Every year we get projections from NESDEC, which is the New England School Development Council. They look backwards to see where we were and they were also projecting ten years forward. The number of students is expected to really level off within the next five to ten years. So yes, we have seen a decline over the last ten years; we've been down almost 1000 students over the last ten years, but we're now starting to starting to see it level and we based on the building, we may see a slight increase. Sometimes we're seeing increases, and some are leveling.

Jessica Pelletier: So, leveling up back up to where it was ten years ago?

TRSB Dr. Farah: No, it's not going to approach that for at least ten years and beyond that we can't project beyond that.

Jessica Pelletier: But that is taken into consideration for the operating budget, even though it's declining?

Superintendent Kellan: Yes, part of the budgeting process is looking at class enrollment within the scope of the district policies for class sizes. Absolutely.

TRSB Dr. Farah: For instance, the middle school went from four teams to three teams as the enrollment declined. There's definitely a decrease and typically, as students decrease, there's always a certain number of staff attrition a year for retirements or leaving that usually we just don't rehire for those positions. We haven't had to employ the layoffs because there's usually a certain amount of turnover regardless and then they redistribute the teachers accordingly.

Superintendent Kellan: In addition to the middle school reduction of teachers since 2016, the high school has reduced by ten teachers.

Karen Steele, 4 Pebble Brook Rd., Atkinson: I would like to call the question on this article please.

MOTION: Karen Steele (4 Pebble Brook Rd., Atkinson), motioned to call the question; seconded by Jack Sapia (5 Chrystal Hill Rd., Atkinson). PASSED

A voice vote was inconclusive. Moderator Harb asked all persons to vote using their cards.

Moderator Harb: The count was 158 to call the question to 20 to not call the question. The question is called. While we were taking the count to call the question, a citizen put in an amendment to the clerk, and it's been ruled by our attorney that it is out of order because we were in the voting mode of calling the question. I see my assistant moderators are agreeing. I'm ruling this motion out of order since the question was called.

Ryan Labrecque: I was standing up ready to ask. I didn't have the opportunity to ask.

Nolan Pelletier, 24 North Ave., Plaistow: I had a motion written too. I didn't get a chance to get up and say my motion either so I would make a motion to suspend the rules and accept his amendment to be heard.

MOTION: Nolan Pelletier (24 North Ave., Plaistow) motioned to suspend the rules and have the amendment be heard; seconded by Richard Anthony (4 Village Way, Plaistow). WITHDRAWN

Jack Sapia, 5 Chrystal Hill Rd., Atkinson: I stand against this motion. And what I would ask is is it the right thing to do? On top of that, I would say if this was a close or something that would be intimidating, or someone felt intimidated I understand the reasonings behind the secret vote. This was overwhelming. I anticipate this taking place all night long and I think we should have more respect for our good neighbors and move this meeting along. Thank you.

Moderator Harb: The motion that I have is not for a secret vote. I want you to understand that it's not for a secret vote.

Nolan Pelletier: I would like to speak to my motion. It is not for a secret vote. Every person in here has the opportunity to speak, should have the opportunity to be heard, should have the opportunity to put their amendments forward. Just because you want to go home, doesn't make it right. If we're going to follow this process, we need to follow it through fully. Thank you.

Karen Steele: I disagree with the request to suspend the rules. I again wish that we should vote as a deliberative body on this article. Thank you.

Moderator Harb: A point of order. Yes, sir. Please go to the microphone.

Dave Knight, 71 Far View Dr., Danville: We're in the middle of a vote. We haven't heard the results of the vote yet.

Moderator Harb: I announced the results of the vote.

Dave Knight: Fine, then let them bring the motion back. We haven't said we couldn't reconsider. Bring back a motion for reconsideration and let's move on.

Moderator Harb: You could interpret, I believe, his motion to suspend the rules like to reconsider because then he'll offer the amendment.

Jon Goldman, 11 Settlement Rd., Sandown: I don't really have an opinion either way at this point. However, I think less than thirty minutes discussion on a \$6.9M increase is worthy of discussion. I think it's important that everybody gets to have their thoughts and their questions answered. And to be fair, that 30 minutes, no offense, sir, was greatly tied up by one person. We haven't had fair open discussion on this budget increase; that's the only thing I ask for.

Ryan Labrecque: Any amendments should be voted on; that's our right as citizens. They can be voted down just as easily as well. There should not be any hesitation to vote on an amendment. Just vote it down if you don't like it.

Jim Garrity, 14 East Rd., Atkinson: I get the folks that are using the rules to call a question and that's good; but there might be some newbies here who don't know that if you want to speak you better get yourself in line before someone calls the question. And that's really what you need to do. You got to get in line. If you've got an amendment to get in just get in line like you're in church, right? Those folks might not have known that. And you could say, Well, too bad, too bad. They should have known that... So I'm just saying I would support, for fairness purposes, a reconsideration of the call the question so that those folks who didn't know they should have been in line before someone called the question, maybe could get in the line.

Richard Anthony, 4 Village Way, Plaistow: Just pointing out the obvious - I think it's important that it is \$83M and it should be treated like \$83M. Someone has an amendment and wants to be heard, they should not be procedurally shut down because it is \$83M and should be treated as such. It's not pocket change and I fully support the fact that if someone has an amendment, let's hear it. You don't like it, vote it down and move on. And if it takes a little while, it's a \$83M. Take your time.

Moderator Harb: I'm going to call the motion and because of the loud noise last time, I'm not going to ask my counters to count but I thought it would be appropriate if you're in favor of suspending the rules so that they can bring the motion on please raise your cards.

Attorney O'Shaughnessy: Can you announce what the count needs to be in terms of the majority? My reading of the Rules of Order is that it requires two thirds vote to pass. The motion to suspend the rules typically requires two thirds vote but that's your that's your ruling not mine.

Moderator Harb: I didn't have in the rules, to suspend the rules, how much you need. We had in the rules how much to...

Attorney O'Shaughnessy: It does become like a Russian doll, but I think they just need to know what the vote is that you're imposing to suspend the rules.

TRSB Vice Chair Kristin Savage: Just a point of clarification? Is the motion to suspend the rules on just this one? It's not for the entire night?

Attorney O'Shaughnessy: It is it's the suspend the rules to not allow the amendment to come forward because the question has been called so it's limited to the issue of calling of the question, yes.

Nolan Pelletier: Point of Order, Mr. Moderator. Barring a roll on the rule to suspend the motion, I would advocate that it's a simple majority.

Jim Garrity: It may be simpler if the person who asked to suspend the rules, withdraws their motion to suspend the rules and I will make a motion to reconsider the vote to call the question and that's a simple majority.

Nolan Pelletier: I withdraw my motion Mr. Moderator. The second, Mr. Anthony also withdraws.

MOTION: Jim Garrity (14 East Rd., Atkinson) motioned to reconsider the vote to call the question; seconded by Nolan Pelletier (24 North Ave, Plaistow). **FAILED**

Moderator Harb: 65 Yes; 86 No

The motion to reconsider fails. And since we've called the question and there were no amendments submitted timely, and reconsideration failed, **Article 2 will appear on the warrant as written.**

MOTION: Liz Kosta, 4 Evergreen Dr., Plaistow, made a motion to restrict reconsideration of Article 2, seconded by Karen Steele (4 Pebble Brook Rd., Atkinson). **MOTION PASSES**

Mr. Pelletier inquired as to whether this was debatable. Moderator Harb said it was not debatable. By a show of cards, the vote passes. Mr. Pelletier yelled "Democracy is mob rule!"

ARTICLE 3 - Lease Purchase Agreement

Shall the voters of the School District authorize the School Board to enter into a 20-year lease purchase agreement for the installation of up to \$25,243,000 of energy saving equipment and associated building and facility improvements at school district buildings in Atkinson, Danville, Plaistow and Sandown, and further to raise and appropriate \$2,061,000 for the first year’s payment under the lease to be partially offset by energy savings and a resulting reduction in costs? This lease agreement will contain a non-appropriation clause. (MAJORITY VOTE REQUIRED)

Recommended by the School Board 7-0-0

Recommended by the Budget Committee 7-0-0

MOTION: Brian Boyle made a motion, seconded by Kristin Savage to put Warrant Article 3 on the ballot as written.

TRSB Chair, Brian Boyle – Approximately 20 years ago, Timberline school district made a very large investment in all our facilities. Since then, we've just, quite frankly, been putting on band aids. This year, the School Board with the assistance of EEI, we hired a firm, and they went through all the buildings, and very quickly came up with well over \$100M worth of improvements. We recognize that we couldn't ask and get the \$100M article passed. So we, as a board, deliberated and have come up with \$25M of improvements, which I believe have been put out on the district website, Facebook, all kinds of social media. Obviously, I expect a bunch of people are here to talk about this this evening, which is good, as you should be. But I think we're long overdue. In the basic summary of this is if you put up, when I first started this board almost six years ago, it was my goal to see three to \$5 M put into our buildings, which even that number is low. This particular mechanism, if passed, will allow us to do about \$25M of improvements, and then pay for it over the term of this lease purchase agreement. And then we will be able to offset some of those improvements by savings in energy bills. So that that's a quick summary. I'm sure we're going to be talking about this but I just wanted to open that up.

Dave Solomon, Cricket Lane, Sandown: I was going over the project list and I noticed under Sandown North, there was a line item for ‘addition to relocate Sandown Central’ for the amount of 9,350,000. I was wondering if there's anyone that could speak to a little greater detail as to exactly what addition to relocate Sandown Central means.

TRSB Dr. Farah: There has been discussion over the years about closing Sandown Central, again, and moving it to North. There are major structural renovations that need to be done to Sandown Central. There's no plan set to do that right now. But when you think about the fact that you have two small schools with two sets of administrators, and people are upset about the fact that our taxes continue to go up; I’m from Danville we have one of the higher tax rates. I think it is a prudent plan to look again to see about consolidating those two schools, perhaps expanding North so that we can maintain one building, have one staff and move forward that way. So that's what's driving that number. Some of these numbers, I mean, when you're talking \$100M in projects, over nine buildings, these are approximate value. Some of these have not been nailed down yet because until you go out for bid on some of this, you're not going to be able to get an exact amount. So does that answer your question about where that number is kind of sitting? There's also building aid that's starting to become available from the state which will take us at least 18 months to make the application for but there was a thought about trying to put that towards that renovation and increase to make to make one building.

Mr. Solomon: So as a follow up, if Sandown Central is moved to Sandown North, what happens to the existing Sandown Central?

TRSB Sheila Lowes: That is the \$64K question right there, Mr. Solomon. What do you do with the empty building?

TRSB Dr. Farah: I suppose that the district could sell the land and the building.

Thomas Geary, 5 Line Brook Rd., Atkinson: I have a few questions regarding the financing. So, the first is what is the interest rate for the lease?

BA Watkins: At the time that we did this warrant article, which was back in the fall, the lease purchase agreement interest rate was between 5.2% and 5.3%. So we utilized 5.25%. Obviously, as you are aware, the rates change every day and it's extremely volatile now, so we used the best estimate that we had in the fall when we created the warrant article but obviously, we will go out to bid if the warrant article passes. We will go out for the best rate that we can find.

Tom Geary: Thank you. And a follow up... was the New Hampshire Municipal Bond Bank contacted to finance this project? Because I just recently looked at their website and they sold bonds in January for 3.44%. And over the course of 20 years, that's a Delta of approximately \$6.5M. So I was just wondering if the district looked into bonding these much needed repairs?

BA Watkins: We cannot start that process until the warrant article passes. There's a big difference between a bond and a lease purchase agreement. One of the advantages of the lease purchase agreement the option to refinance. With the way the market is right now, it's my advice to enter into a lease purchase agreement so we have the flexibility to refinance throughout the entire 20 years. A bond does not give you the option to refinance. On a lease purchase agreement, you can have an appropriation clause as well that gives you a lot of flexibility on what you can and cannot do. You can also prepay a lease purchase agreement; you cannot prepay a bond. So if we had any additional adequacy aid that we get from the state in any given year of those 20 years, we can apply that towards it. With a bond we don't have that flexibility.

Tom Geary: Will this similar question come up for the next nineteen years to appropriate the annual payment for this agreement?

BA Watkins: No, there's an RSA that says once the warrant passes it is for the length of the lease or the bond.

Tom Geary: I think the warrant article states for the first-year payment though? I'm just wondering what would how we would tie up the constituency for twenty years.

BA Watkins: That's the wording from the DRA for the warrant article but like I said the RSA, which I'm sorry, I don't I don't know it by heart, maybe Jim (Attorney O'Shaughnessy) can help me with that?

Attorney O'Shaughnessy: The RSA in question is 33:7-E. Essentially the voters are doing two things: They're voting to approve the district/the board to enter into lease purchase agreement and they're also authorizing in the first-year payment. Because it contains a non-appropriation clause, which is also known as an escape clause, the legislative body is theoretically authorizing future years to zero out the line item for payment. And because of the existence of that clause, future legislative bodies don't have to approve the payments. They're just put into the operating budget.

Bree Woodworth, Emerald Dr., Danville: I was just wondering where it says 'facility improvements and energy savings' if solar was considered in this calculation with the utility costs almost doubling?

BA Watkins: Yes, if you take a look of the list of the projects, solar is considered for the first round of the projects that we included in the \$25M but it is not because unfortunately, with both the rebates and the savings that we can exercise out of the of the projects we chose the ones that will that will realize the most amount of savings in a shorter time.

Bree Woodworth: And what was the cost savings over a longer time?

TRSB Dr. Farah: I think what Maria is trying to say is when we looked at repairs and maintenance that were absolutely critical, we've got boilers that are 20-25 years old. We have roofs that are at the end of their lifetime. And then we looked at what are items that are going to give you your quickest payback in terms of energy savings. So, if you replace a boiler and you're saving 20% in energy a year, that's a significant savings. Certainly, with solar you have a significant savings but you can't put solar panels on a roof until you have a roof that is sound. And in the meantime, we are trying to maintain major systems, HVAC systems, that are in disrepair and they're things that that we're even having difficulty getting repair parts for, so I think what our CFO is saying is that EEI tried to prioritize what 1.) we need to repair and replace as soon as possible and 2.) what gives you the biggest bang for your buck in terms of energy savings. Solar is in the works.

Bree Woodworth: Thank you for answering and then just a quick follow up. When you talk about safety. I'm a Danville mother. I was shocked at the lead that was found in some of the sinks in Danville Elementary. I was just wondering why that wasn't listed on necessary fixes?

Superintendent Kellan: Those have already been remediated. The lead is not in the water. It's from the solder from the fixtures so it's being mitigated by replacing those fixtures with a new solder.

Jon Goldman, 11 Settlement Rd., Sandown: We're talking about boilers, roofs, HVAC systems. There A.) was a ton of COVID money for HVAC systems and B.) there's a capital reserve fund and line every year since the 18-19 years that I've been here. Where's that money? Every year or every few years we get asked to raise an appropriate funds to put into the capital reserve fund. I would agree that we've walked away for years on this. This is not feasible. At all. Two million dollars

every year for the next 20 years? We're talking about financing lightbulbs and solar panels. I think this is completely off the charts. If there was a motion to reduce it or zero it out, I would support that.

TRSB Dr. Farah: What did we do with all the COVID money? We replaced HVAC systems. We replaced boilers. It was not a drop in the bucket in comparison to what we still need to replace. We are talking millions. We do have a warren article that will be coming up to take \$900,000 out of the capital reserve fund, which now stands at slightly over \$1M; to take 900,000 out of that to do the boilers at the high school. And remember, we've got all these other schools that still need it. Danville needs a whole system upgrade. So we are spending all the money that's in the capital reserve unlike past boards. I've been sitting on this board for almost six years. That money was sitting there. It wasn't even getting any interest, until I found out as a trustee of Trust Fund and put it somewhere else. We spent \$600,000 out of that for the PAC. We have been spending that capital reserve fund instead of letting it sit there and basically lose money because we're not getting the interest we need. We have spent all the COVID money. When you look at a list of \$100M and we got \$2M from COVID funding for our HVAC systems, it's just not doing anything. We do not have enough money in our operating budget. We never have to maintain the amount of buildings that we have, especially when we haven't done any major projects in 20 years.

Jon Goldman: And that's understandable and obviously I can't blame every single person but this is a problem. We've ignored this for 20 years. I think everybody agrees with that. I don't think a \$25M lease purchase is the answer.

TRSB Dr. Farah: What would you suggest?

Jon Goldman: I would rather see the budget lowered a little bit and then raised right back up with \$1M to \$2M a year specifically for this. I get it. You can't do \$100M projects, a million dollars at a time. I completely understand that. But at a time where a portion of this district has been screaming for tax relief for years, I'm the chairman of the board of selectmen at Sandown. The numbers that I hear right now is that the existing proposed budget will increase my town's tax payment into the district by \$5 M.

TRBC Chair TRBC Todd McCormick: But the budget has been level funded for four and a half years.

Jon Goldman: I don't agree with that.

TRBC Chair TRBC Todd McCormick: It absolutely has.

Jon Goldman: I doubt it. My mortgage escrow account has gone up every single year.

TRBC Todd McCormick: That could have to do with the reevaluation, but I guarantee you the budget has been level funded for the four years that I've been on the budget committee.

Jon Goldman: I can remember when we crested \$70M, and now we're at \$83M

TRSB Dr. Farah: What drives the budget in each town is the number of students that are in the district. If Sandown is seeing growth in their student population, which they have, that is going to raise the taxes and Sandown. Because for every student that your town is sending into this district, it's costing you about \$25,000 in taxpayer money and so let me put my pitch in for conservation! That's why you should be conserving land instead of building houses.

Jon Goldman: I don't disagree with that at all. I will wholeheartedly admit Sandown sends the most kids. Sandown has also been the most vocal with, although we have good representation, we just don't seem to get any traction. And, and I would echo what some of the others have said, and I would ask my good neighbors to strongly vote this down.

TRSB Sheila Lowes: You'd have to open up the Articles of Agreement to give Sandown any kind of relief. However, getting that done, bless you. However, I just want to say that in order to build new schools, because we have walls that are in trouble in these schools, you're talking \$200M a school now. So, while I had palpitations, seeing the tax impact, especially for Sandown. I don't know what the solution is, but we got to start doing something.

Jack Sapia: I want to give the Board and the committee kudos because this is the first time, I can remember in a long time that someone's made the effort to address this. So, congratulations. Secondly, I'd like to just ask people to consider this. If we had done this 5, 6, 10 years ago, we would have gotten a lot more bang for the buck. If we wait and put this off, we're going to get a lot less for the same amount due to the same reasons why we have an inflated budget this year. The first and most important thing that we all have responsibility for is keeping the children safe here. I have serious concerns about some of the structural integrity of some of the parts of the building. I've been walking these campuses for close to 20 years.

Things have got to be addressed from a safety standpoint. I think the best way to reduce the operating budget is to invest in your assets. What good is it putting a boiler in the high school if that energy savings just get blown out the windows, which were put in here, I believe in the 60s when oil was 25 cents a gallon. If you're going to put the boiler in, you need to wrap up the building and make it energy efficient. You just can't be one thing at a time. I wish we weren't having this conversation right now. I wish that warrant wasn't up there. But it is and it just touches the tip of the iceberg of what needs to get done. So, I stand in favor of this Mr. Moderator.

Tom Geary: Is it appropriate to submit an amendment at this time? Article remains as stated but requires a three fifths majority rather than the simple majority. Sorry I might have had the numbers wrong. What do you require for a vote on a bond? Two thirds?.

MOTION: Tom Geary, 5 Line Brook Rd., Atkinson made a motion to require a 3/5 majority instead of a simple majority on article 3, **MOTION WITHDRAWN**

Attorney O'Shaughnessy: A bond approval in a SB2 district requires a 3/5's majority vote. And I think that's an illegal amendment because the statute explicitly states that the approval of a lease purchase agreement or lease agreement the non-appropriation clause is by a simple majority. I don't think the legislative body can create a higher vote. It's set forth by law.

Tom Geary: I'll withdraw my motion.

Sara Wood, 52 Judith St, Danville: Going back to the whole entire Sandown Central, as far as having the kindergarteners and pre-K's being moved. I do understand that for a little while the TLC center was in Plaistow and has now been moved to Sandown Central. TLC center is supposed to be made for the special needs students. Is there something that's going to be in the plans or possibly you maybe using that building for our district children that have special needs to be able to utilize that building for them but still kind of keep it in District?

TRSB Vice Chair Kristin Savage: We're not at that stage yet. It's not part of this proposal or for what these this warrant article will be for. That's just something that was put out as a possibility to look at down the road. We're not at the stage and I would just ask that when we get to that stage, please come forward with any comments or concerns so they can be considered. I mean, we have a public hearing and we do talk about things and at all our meetings, all these things come up. It's great to see so many people here tonight, but it's better if you come to us throughout the year, so that we can consider what the thoughts are and have different opinions then as opposed to now because we do the best that we can based on the information we have in the time and the input. And this is why this is before you the way it is now.

Rob Collins, 75 Walker Rd., Danville: So I looked at the list, the long list in the short list. And the short list is mostly HVAC and LED lights. Then there's the steeple and Atkinson Academy, I believe for \$200,000. So I know Jack mentioned crumbling walls. People talked about safety for the school. So, I would like to hear from board members, if you're willing, how you whittled it down from the \$115M to the \$25M and why you chose the things that you chose. Why is it critical that we replace all this HVAC and why is it critical that we replace all of these LED fixtures? And I'll add on that when you break down the interests that's in the warrant article, we're paying \$750,000 a year just to have access to the lease agreement.

TRSB Mark Sherwood: If I could, I'll take the first stab at it. There's absolutely a lot to unpack there. For the past decade and a half, we have been underfunding what we need, as you know, because you're on the board, underfunding what we need to keep up our second most precious commodity which is the infrastructure our schools, largest building, largest entity and all of the town's. First being the children, of course, our students. We've been severely underfunding it and anybody who has taken the facility tours with the budcom or the school board and has walked through, and I'm just talking not talking about you know, paint and cosmetics, but actually seen a lot of our walls, the actual structural walls are deteriorating. They are leaching from the outside in. We have had our engineers look at that and part of this cost analysis and do you know what, what's the most important? What is the biggest bang for the buck? There are a lot of things that went into that. One, taking a look at the infrastructure. We'll just talk about HVAC. We have systems that are 25 years old; we can't get replacement parts for them now. We have boilers that are breaking down that they can't get replacement parts. And if you're an Atkinson, you know, your kids had to go home for a couple of days because there wasn't heat. We're seeing this happening more and more and more. So it's not as if we're looking at our home and the paints peeling, we're saying okay, we should probably fix that up and put on some primer and some paint. It's beyond that because we've neglected it year after year. Now we're looking at the paint and seeing that there's actually dry rot and it's not just in the trim anymore. We're afraid that it could be, affecting the structural integrity of the school. That's part of what EEI helped us with. And so some of these costs and projections are just that, projections, because quite honestly, we don't know the amount of physical infrastructure that will need to be replaced. And as far as the interest rates go, I absolutely get it. I

understand what you're saying. There was a lot of discussion among budcom as well, but what's the best, most responsible way to finance it and what's the best, most responsible way to keep our assets valuable and attracting value?

Most of us when we buy a car, we don't pay cash for it. This is a \$25M ask. We have had people come up here saying we should lower this from \$2M to \$1M. The advantage of this lease over a bond is we're not locked in. Interest rates have been going up and down with come from historic lows. Now we're settling the mean point. We don't know where they're going to go. The advantage of the lease is we can renegotiate should rates go down. We don't get that with a bond, and we get all the money up front. In the case of the boilers that we were pricing out at the beginning this process, some of them are no longer available and have increased by double digits from when we first put the bid in. So \$1 Today is not going to buy the same thing as \$1 five years from now. Does that address any of them or am I just go to the surface here?

Rob Collins: No, I get what you're saying but I guess, to be specific, the items that are on there, why are they on there?

TRSB Mark Sherwood: So first off, we were looking at safety and structural integrity and then looking at what can we do to help mitigate the upfront cost? Some of those projects fortunately aligned with some of our needs, such as the boilers, the HVAC, etc. We have an extremely inefficient system for heating our schools right now. The windows were brought up, that is part of the plan and part of what we looked at as well. If we know that these boilers statistically, they're going to need to be replaced within the next three years. Well, if we don't do that, now we're going to have that spending three years so let's do it now. Get them while the prices are cheaper and enjoy the savings that we get from increased fuel efficiency.

TRSB Chair Brian Boyle: Also, Rob, I think what we're attempting to do here is get the most bang for the buck. So these are the type of improvements that should yield the quickest energy returns, which will help offset the cost of this product. Nothing on here is really a wish list. I mean, I'm sure that people in the audience and people that couldn't make it tonight would love to see an addition, a new locker room, all kinds of things that we know we need. But we're looking for things that we need that will also have an offset and these clearly will give the district some kind of offset.

TRSB Vice-Chair Kristin Savage: Just to add to that, it wasn't the nine of us that decided what these projects should be. We were consulted. We had EEI that came in and looked at our schools extensively and came up with these lists and worked on them over and over and over again and gave us priority lists of if you have this much money, this is what needs to be done and this is why. We went on the advice of professionals that look at this to figure out what we need to bring our schools to a standard where we can continue because we could get to a point too where if something happens as we've heard holes in walls, things of that nature. Then what do we do? If we have to shut down a school, what do we do? I mean the costs of that are going to be astronomical and then where do we go and then that's an emergency cost. So, we're trying to do what we need to do to keep the schools up and running and figure out where we go from there.

TRSB Chair Brian Boyle: Construction costs before, it's just a whole new world in 2023. A lot of us are aware of Salem. I talked to some people at Salem High School about three weeks ago. They did an incredible improvement. It is now twice that price. What has happened in the last three years. It is illogical, but it's reality. So, 4-5 years ago you could say I can build a new high school \$100M, roughly. You can't do that now. It makes no sense. And I don't see anything in the immediate future changing that.

Karen Steele, 4 Pebble Brook Rd., Atkinson: Quick question on solar. I know when I was investigating putting solar panels, on I was told that if I had to replace my roof, I could get the 30% Federal tax credit on that as well. And I was just curious if that entered into your decision making as I look at some of the price of roof replacement.

TRSB Chair Brian Boyle: We don't need to, we can't take advantage of tax credits.

Karen Steele: So, the school district can't? That's only for the private homeowner? I guess that was really my question.

TRSB Vice Chair Sue Sherman: I wanted to add in that these projects not only had been looked at by EEI, discussed at the school board level, discussed at the budget committee level but these have been on the CIP list for numbers of years. Not with these figures because the figures change that's flexible, but these are projects we've had in our focus for years. This isn't all brand new thoughts.

Jack Sapia: I'll be quick. And thanks to John and Sue Sherman, who worked diligently over summer to put together that CIP outline. Two quick questions. One, there's \$1M in the capital line in the budget and I know you can't speak for the next board, but, say this passes, could we use that \$1M in that capital line to pay that in other words, don't expend \$1M? I think that \$1M is there as a contingency in case this fails. I could be wrong.

TRSB Vice-Chair Kristin Savage: Jack we have so many things that we need to do in this school. If we don't spend that money, we're going to come back here with something else and it's going to be worse. It's pig on a lipstick right now. We have to keep spending. I hate to say it but we have to spend what we have access to.

Jack Sapia: Has there been stronger advocate for the facilities than me?

TRSB Vice-Chair Kristin Savage: No. I'm just saying, I'm watching Karl over there shaking his head going 'no like it needs to be done'.

TRSB Dr. Farah: So Jack, your point on the walls, that's what we're looking at right now. We have no idea what they're going to cost. It could eat up a \$1M right there.

Jack Sapia: Trust me. I did it for years. I get it. I understand it. The second point I want to make is I hope we take this as a learning lesson, and I hope next year I see a warrant up there. I don't even know if you do it in the form of a warrant but it would be nice - across the country there have been formulas established where you spend, it equates to the total replacement value of the building, so we don't find ourselves here ever again. Where you spend 3%. It could be any percentage you want, determined by the board and the budget committee. Say for instance, a standard is 3% to manage and maintain the buildings janitorial, etc. Two percent of that total replacement value goes into repainting the doors, the walls, broken windows, but then you tuck away 1% Of that total replacement value every year. So, you chip away at it over the course of 25 to 50 years. Not only should we develop a formula like that, but then we have to be disciplined to execute that formula year over year. And this way here we don't have all this, what we're struggling with this afternoon or this evening, Thank you.

TRSB Dr. Farah: Jack, you can't do that in New Hampshire. You've got a default budget that holds you to what you spent the previous year. So, if you want to put it in 3%, which is now Massachusetts, they are making you put that to try to do this. You're going to have to get an operating budget to pass and I can tell you right now looking at the last 15 years if the proposed budget is more than \$300,000 to \$500,000 over the default, the default is going to pass. So that's the issue. If you could put that money into the operating budget, if we could know that we got this money every year, which is what we're looking to do

Jack Sapia: You misunderstand what I was trying to say? You will probably already have the 3% in your janitorial, your maintenance, your garbage, that's already kind of baked into the sauce.

TRSB Dr. Farah: No, no its not, not in this budget.

Jack Sapia: You don't have your janitors, you don't have your wax and your soaps and your buckets to manage and maintain the buildings, of course you do.

TRSB Dr. Farah: That's maintenance. That is not capital repairs, Jack.

Jack Sapia: Right. But what I'm saying is there is a formula. I'll send you the thing, pretty simple. Thank you.

Ann Gerns, 3 Rolling Hill Ave., Plaistow: I really wish someone would speak to the choice of this Lend/Lease program and A.) what it is and B.) why you chose it over any other financial instrument in order to do this. And I think I'm not clear...We're going to pay \$2M every year for 20 years, that's \$40M for the use of \$25M now? I'm confused. I really wish somebody would outline what the program is. I probably should have heard it at another meeting. I'm sorry, I didn't.

BA Watkins: Yes. So, we do not have the funds available in the budget, in the operating budget, to take care of this. So, we have to somehow finance these projects. So as I mentioned before, I we cannot start researching which is the best entity to provide this loan or this lease until this warrant article passes. So, we are going to go out to bid if the article passes. we are going to go out to bid to get the best rate that we can with the institution that better fits our needs.

Ann Gerns: But that's not answering my question. I know you're trying to get the best rates you can and do things the most responsible but that's not the answer to my question.

Attorney O'Shaughnessy: I think this might help; I don't know. But one thing we often say is that a lease agreement like this is basically just a loan. You're borrowing the money and you're paying it off over the course of the loan. What makes it different from a bond is that there's what they call, I said this before, but it's a crazy word. It's called a non-appropriation clause, which means future legislative bodies can zero out the payment. And that's why it's different than a bond. It's not

considered debt. Because theoretically, the voters can zero out their payment in future years. But it's, in all other ways, it's the same as a bond or any other loan.

Ann Gerns: I see. So you put the \$25M in savings and then dole \$2M a year back to the company?

Attorney O'Shaughnessy: Yeah, you get the money. You do the project and over the course of 25 years you pay off the loan. That's basically it.

Ann Gerns: Okay, the money is dispersed as you do the work. Okay, that makes sense. All right. Thank you very much.

Tom Geary: Just for further clarification. This does not go into the default budget, year after year? I'm hearing a non-appropriation cause so if the proposed operating budget gets voted down, does that mean you don't pay the annual payment? I not following it? Does it enter into the default budget?

TRSB Chair Brian Boyle: You have to pay any contractual liability? Absolutely.

Tom Geary: So that conflicts at least when I'm understanding from the non-appropriation clause that Attorney O'Shaughnessy stated.

Attorney O'Shaughnessy: There's lots of different ways the legislative body could not appropriate the specific payment. But voting down the operating budget wouldn't be one of those ways because the payment is approved today. And it would be in the default budget as a contractual obligation under the definition of default budget.

Tom Geary: What would be a mechanism to do that then? To not appropriate it?

Attorney O'Shaughnessy: The legislative body, during deliberative session, would, by amendment, vote to zero out or non-appropriate the payment for the lease agreement, basically. So, you would do it during deliberative session, it would pass. The voters would then pass the operating budget and that would have a zero and that line item or that purpose will have been zeroed out and that is considered a non-appropriation.

Tom Geary: Okay, just one last comment. I do think this mechanism is intended to skirt the supermajority required for a bond and I hope the voters see that. Thank you.

Moderator Harb: I'm going to recognize Mr. Labrecque because there'll be tons of people still come into this mic and that gentleman's been standing. And I'm going to remind you, Mr. Labrecque, you have five minutes so I hope you can get your questions all out.

Ryan Labrecque: Other people have taken over five minutes at this point, even as single individuals but regardless of that, first, I'm a 30-year construction professional construction management degree. I've managed billions of construction across the country from Hawaii to Maine and everywhere in between, and have been involved in these proposals. I was involved in a proposal with a company for Manchester school systems that did something similar to this. While I don't disagree that everyone in front of us has expended effort in good faith to get to this point, this is not how you handle these things. This is not a good example of a capital improvement plan and moving forward to the capital improvement plan.

First, to address some comments, a comment about our schools are 60 years old. I live in a house that's 190 years old. I can go in every house in this district and \$100,000 to \$250,000 worth of issues that I want to do. Any construction company can go in any school system and find many millions of dollars, up to billions of dollars, of unmet need.

Another point, it's been mentioned that the walls are falling, the walls are crumbling, the schools are falling down. I don't know this. I haven't been through the schools. I haven't done the assessment. But I will say there's not one project in the \$25M that addresses any structural repairs to any schools. If you look through every one of those, they are control upgrades, HVAC upgrades, roof upgrades, with the exception of a steeple repair. There's nothing structural to address what is supposedly the school is falling down and these massive safety issues. As a matter of fact, none of those projects are safety issues. Yes, a leaking roof, you can patch it.

I also direct everybody to a 12/1/2022 school board meeting. It was brought to my attention on Vimeo. I watched it at 4PM today. It's very fresh in my mind. And it's very clear to me that the reason the lease option was taken was because those in front of you didn't want to put it in front of the three fifths majority. It was specifically set that way. Someone made a comment, if this is three fifths, we'll never get it passed.

EEI submitted a proposal. It had four options. This was the most expensive option. Of course, the most expensive option is what's been put in front of us. It was also said 'well if we don't go big or, go home and we'll never have another opportunity to do this because it won't get passed in future years. So, we're putting forth this \$25M. We're obligating \$40M+ over 20 years.

The RFP that was put out to the bidders, I haven't been able to find. I've requested it and no one's been able to provide it to me. From what I understand there's been two bidders, I doubt the RFP was a very high quality in the sense that generally these RFPs go out with a facility assessment already done. So, a town or school system would hire a design engineer or a construction manager, like myself, and bring in a team of people and they'll do a facilities assessment. Assess the need, which here is \$116M, and then categorize that need by this is an immediate need, this is a public safety issue, we got roofs leaking, that's an immediate need. So basically, 1,2,3,4, A,B,C,D, whatever you want to say, and really put some thought into the prioritization of projects based on life safety, based on facilities repairs, like structural issues, etc. From what I understand that didn't happen. What happened, I believe, is an RFP went out, I don't know what it said and it very little bid participation because when contractors like myself, see these RFPs, we're not going to get excited about something that requires us to go walk through all the schools and develop our own list. We have to spend money to do that. It cost money to bid projects. If we have other projects to bid that are more fully developed with quality RFPs, we're going to go after those projects first. We're not going to go after the projects that require us to expand our resources in support of the town without any money coming in. I assume EEI was not paid anything for this effort to date. Is that correct?

BA Watkins: Well, they have done projects and they have been paid for the projects, not for the evaluations.

Ryan Labrecque: Right. So they did the evaluation at their own cost.

TRSB Dr. Farah: Sorry, your point on the evaluation. They did prioritize 1,2,3,4 just as you stated.

Ryan Labrecque: Okay. But it was a free evaluation. They didn't get paid to do it. They're marketing, their business development, they want to sell you a bill of goods. I know anything about EEI. They might be a good outfit. Maybe I'll work for them one day. I don't know. But their response is only as good as the RFP that's put forth and the RFP that was put forth, from what I understand in conversations with others, doesn't sound like it was very comprehensive.

TRSB Dr. Farah: I would disagree with the idea that EEI is selling us a bill of goods. Even if they're trying to sell us a bill of goods, and I'm not saying that they are, there's \$116M in projects here that they're recommending. We're dropping in the bucket with \$25 M of major repairs here. We have not included the structural issues with the walls because right now they're still in engineering and we have no idea what that cost is going to be. If this gets passed, or if the money is going to have to come from somewhere to get that done. But we had no way to input that into this \$25 M, because you might be right, maybe they're not falling down the way people keep saying, maybe they are, it could be anywhere from \$200,000 to \$10M. I don't know. So, we couldn't put it in here.

Ryan Labrecque: So next year, we'll come back with another \$10-20M.

TRSB Dr. Farah: It's very well could be. It could be or it could be back to \$200,000. I don't have a crystal ball. We're just trying to make sure that we do right here by the students and the staff in these buildings. We just went through COVID. We put as much money as we could into our HVAC systems, but they are not up to where they need to be and our systems are going to fail. We have a list of all the HVAC systems in this district and I can tell you, the majority are approaching 20 to 25 years old and I live in a 250 year old house so I understand that these buildings are not very old but they still need maintenance.

Ryan Labrecque: I don't disagree the buildings need maintenance. I maintain mine constantly. The 20-year-old boiler is not that old and mine is probably 30. But regardless of that.

Moderator Harb: Can I interrupt you for a moment Mr. Labrecque? Mr. Labrecque is making a presentation. I would rather not have a debate going back and forth. Can we let him finish his presentation? If some of you have a comment in response to it, we'll give you time to speak. But constantly going back and forth doesn't get him to finish his presentation. Mr. Labrecque, can you continue and finish?

Ryan Labrecque: So, the second bidder? What was their proposal in brief?

TRSB Mark Sherwood: It was not as inclusive. They didn't have the bandwidth and after doing research and looking at these two the two companies that did agree to do an analysis of the school, we went, and we spoke with some other districts that had utilized them. And one received strong recommendations whereas the other was lacking. So, there were a couple of different things that went into deciding to choose EEI over the other company.

Ryan Labrecque: Okay, and in regard to the comment that we have to vote on this lease before we can determine if it's a bond. That statement contradicts itself. The warrant article is asking to appropriate money for a lease.

TRSB Dr. Farah: No, the CFO said that we have to vote on a lease and then we can go out to see what we can get for an interest rate on the lease.

Ryan Labrecque: On the lease, but it's not a bond.

TRSB Dr. Farah: No, it's not a bond.

Ryan Labrecque: And it's not a bond because it has to be the 3/5 majority, which is very clear in the 12/1/22 video. Another member of the board, and I don't know any of you and I don't know anybody's names, but indicated that if you go out on the street and ask a hundred people, what the budget was for the time, they're not going to know so don't worry about the budget increases in the monies. It was very appalling in a video, when you look at it as a taxpayer, for the things that were said. Anyway, that's an aside.

What performance guarantees does the town have in this agreement or framework of agreement with EEI for energy efficiency, performance guarantees?

TRSB Chair Brian Boyle: Excuse me? Mr. Moderator? I think what you just told us we're getting a presentation. I'm not hearing your presentation. I'm hearing a question/answer.

Moderator Harb: He has a right to ask questions to the board. If you wish to answer them; you can refuse to answer them or say you don't know. But I would caution Mr. Labrecque. He asked for more time. Mr. Labrecque, you're getting near like eight minutes so if you could ask your questions and then finish your presentation so other people at the mic, including Mr. Pelletier can speak, that'd be great.

Ryan Labrecque: Alright, that's one question. Next question. Is EEI required to competitively bid all the work to subcontractors in this agreement? How much is EEI the self-performing of the work? There's also a discrepancy the school budget slide deck from 1/12/23 that indicates the first year cost of \$1.8 M dollars. Yet the warrant article released on 1/27/23 indicates first year cost of over \$2M. Why is there a discrepancy?

There is no design for this project. So I assume this is a design build contract with EEI, potentially. Would EEI be bonded to complete to work? Have they provided comprehensive estimates for each one of the process projects or are they simply conceptual estimates that will likely change and go up. So, in other words, the \$25M voted on, if passed, may only cover half the projects by the time EEI gives you the real numbers. Once they go out to bid to get the actual cost and spend more resources not saying that they're purposely doing that but it's probably a conceptual estimate that's based on estimators best guess at that point in time. They didn't go to the market to get those dollars and maybe that's not true. But that's my belief. Has the district considered hiring a construction manager to prepare a quality RFP, provide professional guidance to said RFP and provide a detailed review of construction estimates. Unless anyone up there is well versed in construction, it's a different animal. If you don't do it full time, you can look at a bunch of numbers and you're probably not going to know what you're looking at. So, a third party reviewing these proposals is essential to making sure the town is getting the best value.

So with that, I'm not going to sit down because I'll get circumvented or someone will come through with rules that will try to stop me from doing things that I'm in my rights to do as a voter and taxpayer this town. Ultimately, all, this is \$1,000 a year tax increase. What we're all talking about tonight, for every household in here. In addition to the several thousand a year that we've already been increased in the last five years. But you know this isn't insignificant and the mantra that while we've underfunded maintenance, well, maybe we weren't fiscally responsible with our overall budget and because of that we overspent in other areas and we underspent in the areas that should have been spent on so now we're in this predicament. I agree, the schools need to be worked on, but this is not the way to do professional construction, RFP, RFP response, contract negotiation, etc. Thank you.

Jack Sapia: A little bit about my background, I'm a fourth-generation bricklayer. I was a mason contractor. I had one hundred bricklayers on my payroll. And I worked for companies like Suffolk, Gilbain, Perini, Floor, I can go right down the list. I also sat on the board when we worked on the gym, and on the pointing job and I can tell you, the mason contractor told me that the wall over the roof, we were very close to losing it. I can also tell you, I, unlike my good neighbor, have spent 20 years and I know where the structural defects are. I don't know the ones about which I don't know. So, to say that the walls are in pretty good shape, these buildings when they were built, were built cheap, with the exception of this one. You have subpar designs. We had 20 feet of water that sat between the brick and the block work all around the gym for probably 20 years. Not too many people are familiar with that until the water came pouring out on the gym floor. Because of improper design. These are the things that might Good Neighbor do not know about but those that have been involved on the campus and with the district for the last 20 years do. I agree, the buildings that are 150 and 200 years old, were built much differently than the buildings of today.

The High School and the middle school were built on a wing and a prayer. I wonder if, and I don't know if you have a student here at the school, and I don't know if they're an athlete, but try and go back in the athletic wing in the fall and it's 110 degrees back there. And the coaches work out of a closet and there's no training facility for the trainers. It's horrendous. We have this discussion, this debate every year and by not moving forward, if you think it's costing us a lot now, put it off for another five or ten years and see we'll be having that same argument, but only for half the amount of work. I'll put my qualifications up against anyone in this room. The other thing I would highly recommend is if this does move forward, we have a tremendous amount of good people in our community in the four towns. We have architects, we have engineers, we have contractors that would gladly step up, form a committee to have a little bit of oversight to assist the Budget Committee and the Board in making some of these decisions. You have incredible people in this community that have always extended themselves to our children. Thank you.

Moderator Harb: So before we let this next speaker on my right speak, I have two motions to amend here. One came in first so I'm going recognize that speaker for his motion. In the future perhaps if you're new and one of you did say you're new here. When you have a motion we said you write it down and sign your name. You make the motion at the mic. Hand the paper in and we get your motion seconded. Then we have the motion in writing. You really shouldn't pass them in and don't make it at the mic, because I'm not supposed to be the one that read them. So but I'm going to let you know that so I'm going to let this gentleman speak first, because I have a motion from him. And I have a motion from Mr. Labrecque. I'm going have him go second on his motion because it came in second. And then we'll listen to Mr. Pelletier after we take these two motions.

Mr. Heffernan: Point of order, can I ask a question in regard to this article?

Moderator Harb: No, no, not at this time, but you can speak after.

Mr. Heffernan: But I was standing here to ask a question.

Moderator Harb: Well, this gentleman's been standing here, and he gave me his motion five minutes ago.

Tom Geary: Mr. Moderator, I would yield my time to Mr. Heffernan.

Moderator Harb: So, Mr. Heffernan, go ahead.

Dennis Heffernan, 4 Secluded Circle, Plaistow: Just a real quick and easy question that was brought up in regard to the school board policy and going out to bid with these projects. Would each project have to go out to bid per school board policy?

TRSB Chair Brian Boyle: Yes, everything goes out a bid. Yes.

Moderator Harb: Would you like to make your motion?

Tom Geary: Sure. I'm really wishing I didn't hand it in. I was looking to keep the article as stated. But with the added language at the interest rate shall not exceed three and a half percent. And that is to align with the New Hampshire municipal bond Bank Rate rates that were released in January. My only hang up was the financing and the mechanism. It was never for the building improvements. So it doesn't exceed three and a half percent, I'd support it.

Moderator Harb: For the record. could you give your name again.

Tom Geary: Thomas Geary, Atkinson.

Moderator Harb: So, we have a motion to amend Article Three by adding the sentence, “the interest rate shall not exceed 3.5%”. Do we have a second. We have two seconds.

MOTION: Tom Geary (5 Line Brook Rd., Atkinson) motioned to add the sentence “the interest rate shall not exceed 3.5%; seconded by Sara Wood (52 Judith St., Danville). **FAILED**

TRSB Chair Brian Boyle: I want to speak against the motion, for or the simple reason I'm not sure we can get the 3.5%. If you can get 3.5%, Timberlane can get 3.5%, we'll go get 3.5%. But if we can't get 3.5%, it's not going to do us any good.

Moderator Harb: Further discussion on this motion?

Ryan Labrecque: The 5.25% in the lease itself. If this passes does that pass through to EEI or does this? I guess I'm completely confused on EEI's involvement because it's been said that this will go back out to bid. Every project is going to go back out to bid. Yet, we have this lease at 5.25% with a scope of work that's been provided by a company and the proposal through a bid process. What obligations does the town have to EEI? Is EEI the one that's soliciting the financing for the town and therefore the rate via the lease payment? I think that's the way it would work. Explain in detail, the financing part of this because it just doesn't make sense.

Moderator Harb: Can someone talk to the interest rate? I thought I heard it discussed before, just as a point of clarification, that you really don't know the interest rate. You're going to put it out to bid after the article might pass but you're not going to put it out to bid so probably to answer the question that I heard asked. You're not locked into that five point something percent Am I correct?

Various TRSB Members: Yes. Correct.

Moderator Harb: So I think that answers your question.

Ryan Labrecque: Who's putting it out to bid? EEI? The town?

BA Watkins: The School District will. So, if the warrant article passes, we will go out to bid for the rate for the lease.

Ryan Labrecque: The lease cost is completely independent of EEI?

BA Watkins: Yes.

Ryan Labrecque: You're going to get a lease for \$25M, and then you're going to go hire EEI to do the work or bid out the work and EEI may get it or may not get it based on competitive bid process for every project on that list.

BA Watkins: We already went out to bid. We already did the RFP. There were only two companies that responded to our RFP. EEI was one of them. The lease that we're going to get is for the Timberline Regional School District. We are going to go out to bid for the rate. Regardless, I can guarantee you that we are going to try to get the best rate that we can. I am a taxpayer in this district as well. I can guarantee you that I will do my best to get the best rate that we can. But the municipal bonds the other gentleman is referring about it even says on the website that that day that the bonds were issued that we're very lucky with those words, that the rates were down that day. It changes every single day. Rates change every day. So yes, I can guarantee you that if an article passes, I will do my best to get the best rate that we can.

Ryan Labrecque: I understand that. So, if this passes, is the town hiring EEI?

Moderator Harb: Mr. Labrecque, we're discussing only the motion to amend which only relates to setting a cap on the interest.

Ryan Labrecque: The interest rate is part of the article in the proposals by EEI so they are tied together.

Moderator Harb: I don't believe they are. You can speak to the 3.5%. If you're in favor or against it and why you are.

Ryan Labrecque: I think this should be a bond and it should require a three fifths majority. Not only am I not in favor of of it, I'm not in favor of the \$25M and there'll be further amendments after this one, if this one is voted in or not. Thank you.

Moderator Harb: On the motion to cap the interest at 3.5%, do you want to speak to that Mr. Pelletier?

Nolan Pelletier: Why not? I'm not in favor of it. I actually agree. I think it should be at three fifths and I think this is pretty crazy. So that's it.

Moderator Harb: Any more discussion on the motion the motion is to add 'the interest rate shall not exceed 3.5%'

TRSB Mark Sherwood: Just a point of clarification from the gentleman who submitted it. For clarification, was your intention to make certain we got the best rate or we got the New Hampshire rate that you saw that you just looked up online. And if that second part was your intention, would you consider revising your amendment to say seeking a bid equal to whatever their best rate is which whatever municipal entity you are referring to.

Tom Geary: I understand what you mean. However, I maintain by the principle that if you're taking out a 20 year, loan, lease, Bond, whatever it is, it should be under a supermajority vote. We're really indebting people that haven't even been born yet. If it's 20 years. However, I can concede that if we can match the municipal bond rate currently at 3.5. That was my reasoning.

Karen Steele: I would like to restrict the discussion to be specifically on this motion of adding the restriction of the 3.5%. I'm against this motion because I think it kneecaps and prevents good people from doing the good work for the school district. And thank you very much.

Moderator Harb: Anyone else to speak on the motion before Mr. Pelletier speaks twice? You're all set? We're going to call the question. If you're in favor of the amendment to add "interest rate shall not exceed 3.5%", I assume that's per annum, please raise your cards. You can put them down. I don't think we need to count Jim. If you're against the motion, please raise your cards. Okay, motion **fails**.

I have another motion here. This is a motion by Mr. Labrecque. Article Three Amendment. He wishes to reduce the value of the article to zero. So, I assume that's the appropriation shall appropriate. \$0. Mr. Labrecque? He says Correct. Do we have a second on that? We have a second by Mr. Pelletier, discussion on the motion to reduce the value item and Article Three of raise and appropriate instead of \$2,061,000 down to zero. On the motion.Mr. LaBrecque or Mr. Pelletier on the motion?

Nolan Pelletier: He put forth the motion, right? So, he has the right to speak.

Ryan Labrecque: I'd like to request the secret vote on that as well.

Moderator Harb: You have a question, Mr. Garrity?

Jim Garrity: I respect his motion and just want to remind everyone a secret ballot usually takes 30 to 45 minutes. Thank you.

Moderator Harb: So, I'm going to try to interpret the signers of this because then the clerk has to check to make sure number one you're here. So, when I call your name, it's like an interpret it, stand up and say "here", and then we'll check to make sure your registered voters.

Nolan Pelletier
Jessica Pelletier
David Solomon
Amanda Knight
Jonathan Goldman

- All were present and all had checked in and had proper voter cards.

Question: A clarification has been asked of Mr. Labrecque. If you look at the article, a dollar figure appears in two places. Is your motion to replace both places with zero?

Nolan Pelletier: Mr. Moderator, if he if he would be willing to withdraw, he might have saved some time because I had a very similar motion. My motion was to replace both figures. \$25,243,000 and \$2,061,000 to the dollar value of zero.

Moderator Harb: I like your motion better if he'll withdraw his.

Ryan Labrecque: I withdraw mine. We'll use his and the secret vote continues.

MOTION: Nolan Pelletier (24 North Ave, Plaistow) motioned to replace both figures \$25,243,000 and \$2,061,000 to the dollar value of zero; seconded by Ryan Labrecque (174 Main St, Plaistow). 26-133 FAILED

Moderator Harb: So, now we're replacing Mr. Labrecque's motion with a clarification motion made by Mr. Pelletier, seconded by Ryan Labrecque. Essentially, he's reducing both dollar figures on article three to zero. So as he mentioned at the mic, the \$25, 243,000 reduced to zero. The \$2,061,000 reduced to zero. I assume the five wish to still have a secret ballot? Would you raise your cards again if you do? (All five raised their cards to affirm.)

Okay. So now let me read about the secret ballot. We will now hold a ballot vote. Those who wish to vote are asked to exit the auditorium (not immediately wait) through the main doors voting will take place across the lobby in room 707. Please enter through the door to the left of the televisions. Once you have voted you will exit room 707 through the far door, cut through room 716 across the lobby and reenter the auditorium through the side door.

Male audience member: I would like to offer a suggestion for my good neighbors who would like the secret ballot vote and I want to honor and respect their wishes, but maybe this could help. Would it be possible for you as the moderator just to say for all those that think they might support it just a show of hands?

Moderator Harb: Not a vote? No, no. He's asked for a secret vote, and he has the right to do that and he's got his five signatures. If you all please just remain seated for one moment. I need to see the ballot clerks and I'll come back, and we'll dismiss you to go vote.

<Dismissed to vote>

Moderator Harb: Secret ballot was made. All voters that wanted to vote voted. The tally is: those in favor of the motion 26. Those opposed: 133. Motion fails. I recognize Mr. Mascola.

Michael Mascola, 63 Pollard Rd., Plaistow: I'd like to call the question.

MOTION: Michael Mascola (62 Pollard Rd., Plaistow) motioned to call the question; seconded by Sara Wood (52 Judith, Danville). PASSED

By voice vote, the motion passes.

With no further discussion Moderator Harb declared Warrant Article 3 would appear on the ballot as written.

MOTION: Michael Mascola (62 Pollard Rd., Plaistow) to restrict reconsideration of Article 3; seconded by Karen Steele. PASSED

By voice vote, the motion passes.

Moderator Harb: Before I read Article 4, let me remind you that this is a collective bargaining, a CBA, article. It is non-amendable. They are cost items. I'm going to read the article and maybe somebody will speak to the number but its non-amendable by law. And that's one of those articles we can't change. If you are not in favor of this CBA, and we have a

whole bunch of them, it's up to you to vote no at the polls because we can't amend the dollar items. They are technically called cost items. So I mention that in advance for all the CBA articles. I'll also mention in advance, so I only have to do it once, the secondary article after the CBA article that says, "Authorization to call a special meeting on cost items", that also is unamendable. I don't believe anybody is going to speak on that except for me reading it because they can't be changed or amended. The language is prescribed by law. In the event the CBA article fails, you need the second article to call a special meeting to have another meeting to go over the cost items. But we cannot change the cost items here tonight on the CBA articles and there are a number of them. I confirmed that with our council.

ARTICLE 4 – Three Year Collective Bargaining Agreement (Timberlane Administrators' Union)

Shall the voters of the School District approve the cost items included in the collective bargaining agreement reached between the Timberlane Administrators' Union and the Timberlane Regional School Board, which calls for the following increases in salaries and benefits at the current staffing levels over the amount paid in the prior fiscal year:

Fiscal Year	<u>2023-24</u>	<u>2024-25</u>	<u>2025-26</u>
Estimated Increase	\$459,400	\$137,501	\$135,523
 3-Year Total			 \$732,424

And further to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$459,400** for the 2023-24 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 7-0-0
Recommended by the Budget Committee 7-0-0

MOTION: Brian Boyle made a motion to place Article 4 on the ballot as written; seconded by Kristin Savage.

TRSB Chair Brian Boyle: This particular agreement is a result of a long negotiation. The reason you're seeing a difference in the first year being significantly higher than the other two years, this group has been without a raise for, I believe, four years. Both parties, after long negotiations, came to terms and I'm happy to say that we're trying to get this moved ahead so the people the district can support this.

Ryan Labrecque: With the decrease in students in the school system over several years, apparently, and the outlook continuing to decrease maybe a little bit and then leveling off. How many positions have been eliminated, for lack of better terms? And if positions have been eliminated, why is a cost continually increasing significantly?

Moderator Harb: I'm going to allow the question on the cost item. Although we can't amend it, but you can ask the question because we're here to debate and discuss. Does anybody want to answer this question?

TRSB Mark Sherwood: I'll do it in very broad strokes. I think you had said that you lived in a 3% world. These individuals have gone without any pay raises for the past four years so the math is pretty simple. When we looked around and did a lot of due diligence and looking at the equivalent pay grades for districts our size, not our size, experience levels for the various administrators and essentially, we were severely under competitive is a generous way to put that and if we want to keep the best talent, if we want to attract new talent, this is a step we need to level up to what the competitive marketplace is offering.

Ryan Labrecque: So based on the increases of the dollars, what's the unwanted turnover been over the last couple of years?

TRSB Mark Sherwood: I'm not certain what you mean by unwanted turnover but circling back to your prior question with student enrollments. It has trended down over the past decade. It's starting to trend up and we think that that will be leveling off. Again, certain towns, Sandown being one of them, is driving this slow incremental growth. I know from our prior meeting, I think we went back the past eight or ten years, this was at a budcom meeting, I believe. No policy and

procedure. Anyway, as the number of students has gone down the number of administrators and teachers has, kept pace or gone down as well. It was referenced earlier, as individuals retire in the school population has gone down, those positions just weren't refilled. So, the ratio to student to teachers and administrators is about the same as it was. So, it is diminishing as the population diminishes as well.

Superintendent Kellan: There are also state minimum standards that we are obligated to meet with respect to ratios of administration to students for various positions, as there are for other positions as well as administration. As far as the number, and Maria might be able to help us with the specific number, but I'm not sure if you're aware or not, but we are now Timberlane School District SAU 106. We withdrew from SAU 55 which also included Hampstead in addition to the four towns that we have, and in the process of that withdrawal, a number of administrative positions were eliminated from the Timberlane School District. Maria might be able to answer the specific number but that was done in 2019/20, going into the 2021 school year.

TRSB Dr. Farah: With the withdrawal, we did eliminate a minimum of two positions but in addition to that, since my time on the board, I can think of at least five administrative positions that we've eliminated.

Ryan Labrecque: The question about unwanted turnovers, how many people have left with in an exit interview indicating it was due to pay?

Superintendent Kellan: We don't have that information available to us.

Ryan Labrecque: You don't ask questions when people leave?

Superintendent Kellan: We don't have that information available because those are personnel. That's confidential information.

Ryan Labrecque: Well, I'm not asking about any specific individual. I don't know any specific individual be honest.

Superintendent Kellan: You just asked how many. That's a specific question.

Ryan Labrecque: How many people, I didn't say Who? It's fine if you're not able to answer the question.

Superintendent Kellan: We don't have that information here.

Kara Malo, 6 Washington Road, Atkinson: I'm going to use this as an opportunity just to say a few things. First, I just have a question in terms of that pay increase in relation to the teacher pay increase. Now what is the percentage that indicates for administrators compared to what the teachers got for an increase? This is all new to me so let's just talk.

TRSB Sheila Lowes: This is apples and oranges.

Kara Malo: Okay. Okay. It isn't for me though.

TRSB Sheila Lowes: It is for us though. It's two different bargaining units. Two different sets of rules, two different, two totally different groups. One has gone without a pay raise for, in negotiations, have not been able to come to terms with an agreement with us, for four years. They have received no pay increases. They've been status quo. We finally got an agreement. Now, as far as the teachers is concerned, again, we had a TA. Their group voted it down. <Comments being yelled from teacher's area.>

Kara Malo: I'm not trying to open a can of worms. I want to say some nice things. <more yelling>

TRSB Sheila Lowes: Excuse me!

Moderator Harb: Can we let her talk? If you have something to say you can approach the mic on the cost items.

TRSB Sheila Lowes: Thank you. We had a TA back in December. It was not agreed to. We went back to the board. We could not come to an agreement until very last minute, where we offered what you see here for teachers.

Kara Malo: I have a very passionate place where I come from, in terms of an educator of 17 years who worked throughout the Covid pandemic. I have two kids in this district. I have seen this district is going downhill. I feel very strongly about it.

I think there hasn't been a big enough conversation about the educational piece. And I want to thank from the bottom of my heart, the teachers in this district. I'm not saying, and I know it has to do with money. It has to do with the money. It does. And it's not that the administrators aren't doing great work too. I'm sure they are. I just want it to be I think the education piece. I think the value that teachers bring to this school district needs to be addressed and I hope at some point will be reflected in the budget. I also was planning on thanking the board members for your dedication to our children's education because I've been more involved. I see the time and effort you all put into caring about our kids, which is super important. I don't have the time to dedicate to doing it. So I want to add that in there as well. I think though that having not been teaching in the classroom, people need to take that into consideration that we're living in a different time after the pandemic than we were. I think that needs to be thought of and I'm using this as the opportunity for everyone to realize the teachers are the place where it's coming from. They're dealing with it every day. They're living in every day. I lived it every day, and I moved on to making hopefully bigger changes. I was curious on the budget increase, and I think it's fair, everyone deserves to have an increase and raise but I want to shout out to the teachers.

David Gerns, 3 Rolling Hill Ave., Plaistow: I respectfully request that the moderator see to it or control that we stick to the topic of the article that we are talking about. We are going to talk about the teachers in a few minutes. With all due respect to the previous speaker that was talking about staffing levels and things like that, that's really besides the point of this article and I really would

Moderator Harb: I appreciate your comments, but that last speaker was emotional and passionate, and I was about to tell her stay only on the administrator side but then she finished. But I appreciate your comments. Thank you.

Karen Steele: I know you just explained, and I understand that we can't, I guess this a point of question or order, we can't amend the collective bargaining agreements. But do we vote on them? And if not, how long will you allow discussion on each one before we move on to the next article?

Moderator Harb: Well, that's a great question because normally in my last ten years here, nobody's every wanted to talk about a collective bargaining agreement that cannot be amended, but in our training, as moderators, we're always told we need to be open and the articles can be discussed, even though they can't be amended. So, tonight's the first night for a lot of us.

Karen Steele: So that means we don't vote, right? You, as the moderator will move us along when you see fit?

Moderator Harb: Yes,

Amanda Knight, 32 Giordani Lane Sandown: Just quick question. How many people are in the Timberlane administrators' union?

TRSB Dr. Farah: It's right around 30 to 32 but our CFO is going to get to the number exactly.

TRSB Mark Sherwood: Perhaps this is pre-empting your follow up question. This is salaries and benefits. And as was stated earlier, in order to budget this out appropriately, we have to look at what the insurance rates are and the max insurance rate we were given was 10.8%

TRSB Sheila Lowes: I believe the number is 38.

Amanda Knight: I thought I knew what administrators were and then I looked on the next one and it says administrative assistants and that's kind of what I was

TRSB Sheila Lowes: Our administrators are our principals, vice principals, that group. The administrative assistants are the secretaries so that's a whole different group. This is just our principals right now.

Amanda Knight: And then this increase in salary and benefits. So then the taxes and all of that is all included in one, and that's the one number?

TRSB Sheila Lowes: Correct.

Ryan Labrecque: So that's an average of \$12,000 pay and benefits increase per person.

TRSB Dr. Farah: Over three years

TRSB Sheila Lowes: Over three years.

Nolan Pelletier: I would like to speak in opposition to this. As a taxpayer in this town, we're just bleeding money, and there's no accountability despite dropping numbers in the school system. The school budget pretty much goes up every year. I think last year was the exception where the budget went down for one year. We can't keep doing this you're going to push people out of this community and I'm against this.

Moderator Harb: With no one else at the mic and seeing this is not amendable, Article 4 will appear on the ballot as written.

Article 5 – Authorization for Special Meeting on Cost Items

Shall the voters of the School District, if Article 4 is defeated, authorize the Timberlane Regional School Board to call one special meeting, at its option, to address Article 4 cost items only? (MAJORITY VOTE REQUIRED)
Recommended by the School Board 7-0-0

MOTION: Brian Boyle made a motion to place Article 5 on the ballot as written, seconded by Kristen Savage.

Moderator Harb: I have a motion to place this on the ballot as written and seconded, and it's non amendable. So if you wish to debate an article that we can't change whatsoever and it's provided by law.

Ryan Labrecque: I'm not debating. What happens if the voters vote that down and there's no special meeting and the salary increases are not voted for?

TRSB Dr. Farah: Then those people stay status quo. They don't get their salary increases.

Moderator Harb: Moving on. *Article 5 will appear on the ballot as written.*

ARTICLE 6 – Three Year Collective Bargaining Agreement (Timberlane Administrative Assistants/Secretaries and Skilled Maintenance Union)

Shall the voters of the School District approve the cost items included in the collective bargaining agreement reached between the Timberlane Administrative Assistants and Maintenance Union and the Timberlane Regional School Board, which calls for the following increases in salaries and benefits at the current staffing levels over the amount paid in the prior fiscal year:

Fiscal Year	<u>2023-24</u>	<u>2024-25</u>	<u>2025-26</u>
Estimated Increase	\$141,943	\$108,273	\$99,195
3-Year Total			\$349,411

And further to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$141,943** for the 2023-24 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 7-0-0
Recommended by the Budget Committee 7-0-0

MOTION: Brian Boyle made a motion to put Warrant Article 6 on the ballot as written, seconded by Kristen Savage.

TRSB Chair Brian Boyle: Article 6 is for a different bargaining unit. I neglected to mention in the last article that this year being my last year in the board, this is the first time that there were four different bargaining agreements. The entire board participated in all kinds of bargaining units. In previous years, it was only two or three members of the board, but there's nine members of this board and I'd say pretty much everyone participated in all four of the units. This is a three-year agreement. It's self-explanatory. So, after several meetings we came to terms so we could move it forward to the warrant.

Amanda Knight: How many people are in this unit? There's a theme.

BA Watkins: 39.

Moderator Harb: No one at the mics, Article Six will appear on the ballot

Ryan Labrecque: I'm at the mic.

Moderator Harb: as written.

Ryan Labrecque: Well, I think the point is the previous article was an average of \$12,000 and

Moderator Harb: Mr. Labrecque you weren't at the mic when I called the article and said this is going on the ballot has written so thank you, but I appreciate

<unheard comments from Mr. Labrecque>

Article 6 would appear on the ballot as written.

ARTICLE 7 – Authorization for Special Meeting on Cost Items

Shall the voters of the 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? (MAJORITY VOTE REQUIRED)

Recommended by the School Board 7-0-0

MOTION: Kristin Savage made a motion to put Warrant Article 7 on the ballot as written, seconded by Brian Boyle.

Moderator Harb: Motion made and seconded. This has to appear as written because it's a require, language required by law. Moving on to Article 8.

Article 7 would appear on the ballot as written.

ARTICLE 8 – Three Year Collective Bargaining Agreement (Timberlane Support Staff Union)

Shall the voters of the 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 and benefits at the current staffing levels over the amount paid in the prior fiscal year:

Fiscal Year	<u>2023-24</u>	<u>2024-25</u>	<u>2025-26</u>
Estimated Increase	\$459,669	\$307,786	\$293,841
3-Year Total			\$1,061,296

And further to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$459,669** for the 2023-24 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 7-0-0

Recommended by the Budget Committee 7-0-0

MOTION: Brian Boyle made a motion to put Warrant Article 8 on the ballot as written, seconded by Kristen Savage.

Moderator Harb: Motion made and seconded. Does anyone wish to discuss this article?

TRSB Chair Brian Boyle: This is a three-year contract the Timberlane Support Staff Union. So after a period negotiations this is the agreement we came to.

Amanda Knight: How many people are in this union?

<"not enough" yelled from the floor to some laughter followed by applause>

BA Watkins:168

Amanda Knight 168 and support staff. Could you give me quick? Who is that?

TRSB Sheila Lowes: Paraeducators

Laurie Herchenroder, 28 Partridge Ln, Plaistow: Good evening, I am Laurie Herchenroder of Plaistow, President of the Timberlane Support Staff Union, TSSU. I am here tonight on behalf of TSSU to ask our voting public to please support our paraeducators with a YES vote on Warrant Articles 8 & 9. TSSU organized in 2013. We are proud Union members of AFT, AFT-New Hampshire, and AFL-CIO. Most of our members reside right here within our District. We are family members, friends, and neighbors, dedicated to supporting the students of Timberlane. We are deeply invested in the betterment of our community. Paraeducators support students ranging in age from 3 through 22, academically, socially, and emotionally, under the guidance of teachers and administrators. We help ensure the safety and wellbeing of all students, every day. We are vital members of the village our students need. When our last contract was graciously passed by voters of the District in March of 2020, we never could have foreseen what would occur in our world and the effect it would have on our public education system. A global pandemic intensified a critical shortage of paraeducators. Retaining and attracting quality paraeducators is more difficult now than it has ever been. This fact is proven in the district's recent decision to contract out some of our unfilled paraeducator positions for the remainder of this school year.

What I publicly stated here three years ago applies even more today. It's no secret that the classroom we adults remember is vastly different now. Student needs have dramatically increased. Safety concerns in our schools today are something none of us could have ever imagined would develop and continue. Safety of all students and staff should be at the forefront of every school. Academic expectations are constantly evolving and the demand for excellence is always increasing. For student safety, support, and success! We need quality paraeducators. The goal in negotiations was to settle a contract that was respectful both to taxpayers and paraeducators. TSSU believes this goal will be accomplished in passing this fair contract. Please support paraeducators, vote yes on Warrant Articles 8 & 9. Thank you!

With no further discussion Moderator Harb declared Warrant Article 8 would appear on the ballot as written.

ARTICLE 9 – Authorization for Special Meeting on Cost Items

Shall the voters of the School District, if Article 8 is defeated, authorize the Timberlane Regional School Board to call one special meeting, at its option, to address Article 8 cost items only? (MAJORITY VOTE REQUIRED)

Recommended by the School Board 7-0-0

MOTION: Brian Boyle made a motion to put Warrant Article 9 on the ballot as written, seconded by Kristen Savage.

Moderator Harb: Motion made and seconded. This is by law, this language.

With no further discussion Moderator Harb declared Warrant Article 9 would appear on the ballot as written.

ARTICLE 10 – One Year Collective Bargaining Agreement (Timberlane Teachers’ Association)

Shall the voters of the School District approve the cost items included in the collective bargaining agreement reached between the Timberlane Teachers’ Association and the Timberlane Regional School Board, which calls for the following increases in salaries and benefits at the current staffing levels over the amount paid in the prior fiscal year:

Fiscal Year	<u>2023-24</u>
Estimated Increase	\$404,485

1-Year Total \$404,485

And further to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$404,485** for the 2023-24 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 7-0-0
Recommended by the Budget Committee 7-0-0

MOTION: Brian Boyle made a motion to put Warrant Article 10 on the ballot as written, seconded by Kristen Savage.

TRSB Chair Brian Boyle: This is a one-year agreement as alluded to earlier by Sheila. The school board and the TTA were unable to reach full agreement on a three-year contract so what we came up with, recognizing we did not want to see the teachers go without anything, we came up with this amount which they agreed to. This is important article. I think this board wishes it was higher. You would have to be in these negotiations, I think to really appreciate what goes on. Obviously the TTA and the future school board will be back at it again next year so hopefully it goes well.

Louis Broad, President of the Timberline Teachers Association: Thank you, Mr. Moderator. The Timberlane Teachers Association represents the professionals that call Timberlane home. On behalf of them, we do want to earnestly thank all the members of the community that continue to support us. Before you we have a simple one-year contract. While the agreement does not make this district more competitive in recruiting quality educators, it does help Timberlane towards retaining experienced and qualified professionals that have made serving Timberlane their calling. I'm asking you to join us in supporting this one-year agreement. It will stabilize the district so that we can move forward with the incoming board on negotiating a longer-term contract that makes Timberlane more competitive, respects the voters and taxpayers, and values the high-quality professionals of the district. For anyone who wants signs for their yard, please find one of our members. We'll hook you up. And to answer the question approximately 365 of the teachers are represented by the CBA. 294 or 81% belong to the Union. Thank you.

William Smith, 24 cottonwood Rd., Plaistow: I appreciate the one-year agreement. I wish it was longer for the teachers that are here. They are putting their lives at risk every day. I don't see anywhere in the budget articles, some of the protections that probably they need during these times, and I think we all know what we're talking about. You have been under appreciated and I want you to know you've made a difference in the lives of the students in Timberlane. I have a severely disabled son. The district the parent educators, the teachers have worked to save this school district an immense amount of money by not out placing my child and keeping him within the district and he would certainly qualify for out placement. You see my son had cardiopulmonary arrest for 45 minutes. And yet these people have worked with him, you know who you are, and it hasn't gone on unappreciated. Your salary may look like you're unappreciated.

But that is not all the picture is of what you do every day and please hold that near and dear. I hope that these negotiations over the next three year contract can be amicable, that you are valued for what you have, for what you bring to the students in Timberlane each and every day. The energy that you bring. There's members here that have helped save my son's life that are trained nurses who have called me to say this doesn't look good.

We are not paying these people nearly enough. And if you don't believe me look south of the border three miles. Look what their pay chart looks like. If you're looking, look what the cost is to train an educator these days. Why are schools like UNH not having education programs nearly as full as they were? Well because it costs about \$35,000 a year to go and now you need to get a master's degree. \$35K x 6. Let's do some quick math. \$210K.

Let's not fool ourselves that we're going to be filling the high school, middle school, Pollard Sandown, Danville with quality people soon. We're not if we don't do something about it to reward what they do. They're not just teaching anymore. They're doing a lot more than they ever thought they would have to do. Many of them, I'm sure, are at their breaking point. But you have made a difference and it is appreciated. So do not leave here this evening with the impression that what you do doesn't matter. Because it does. And in my son's case, that TA, that nurse, that teacher may be the only friend that he has that day because he's different. He talks a different, he acts different. But man if you know my son, he's the happiest kid in the world. And I see that that he brings that to you each and every day. I can't buy that. Double my taxes. I can't buy it. Get rid of an iPhone. Take what you need to take. I'll sacrifice some of those things so that these people feel like they're appreciated, and they're wanted. I've wrote and written to Mr. Kellan many times. Have the tone be positive. We all want the same thing. We want to raise a citizenry, who debates articles, who has disagreements, has different outlooks, but then can come together for a common good, which is what this town in this community and this regional school district is supposed to do. I'm over my five minutes and I apologize.

Moderator Harb: It's alright, thank you.

With no further discussion Moderator Harb declared Warrant Article 10 would appear on the ballot as written.

ARTICLE 11 – Authorization for Special Meeting on Cost Items

Shall the voters of the School District, if Article 10 is defeated, authorize the Timberlane Regional School Board to call one special meeting, at its option, to address Article 10 cost items only? (MAJORITY VOTE REQUIRED)
Recommended by the School Board 7-0-0

MOTION: Brian Boyle made a motion to put Warrant Article 11 on the ballot as written, seconded by Kristen Savage.

Moderator Harb: Motion made and seconded.

With no further discussion Moderator Harb declared Warrant Article 11 would appear on the ballot as written.

Amanda Knight: With regard to Article 11, I just wanted to say that I do have a lot of issues and reservations about the cost of this school district and I'm not in favor of doubling, that sounds scary, but I do support the unions. I do support our employees and I do hope that they are well taken care of; that is non-negotiable for me.

Jim Garrity:

MOTION: Jim Garrity made a motion to restrict consideration on Articles 4 through 11, seconded by Kristen Savage. **PASSED**

Moderator Harb: We have a motion to restrict reconsideration articles four through 11, inclusive, made and seconded. All in favor of restricting reconsideration of articles four through 11 signify by saying aye. Opposed? The ayes have it. Thank you.

ARTICLE 12 – Capital Reserve Fund By Surplus

Shall the voters of the School District raise and appropriate up to \$250,000 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 those funds in the June 30, 2023 unassigned fund balance available for transfer on July 1 of this year which

were apportioned as Capital Expenses in 2022-2023 in accordance with Article 6 of the Timberlane Regional School District Articles of Agreement? No amount to be raised by additional taxation. (MAJORITY VOTE REQUIRED)

Recommended by the School Board 7-0-0

Recommended by the Budget Committee 7-0-0

MOTION: Brian Boyle made a motion to put Warrant Article 12 on the ballot as written, seconded by Kristen Savage.

DISCUSSION:

Moderator Harb: We have a motion made and seconded. Who wishes to speak on this?

TRSB Chair Brian Boyle: Briefly, this appears annually on your ballot. It's almost like a housekeeping thing that we should be, as far as I'm concerned should be higher than this, but the key to this thing is there's no additional taxes being raised here. So, if anyone has any questions about that?

Ryan Labrecque: What's the balance of the fund currently?

TRSB Dr. Farah: It's a little over a \$1M currently.

Ryan Labrecque: Okay, so this should raise it to \$1.25M?

TRSB Dr. Farah: No, it does not. If there's any unexpended capital money in the budget at the end of the fiscal year, that money, up to \$250,000 would be placed in the capital reserve fund. We have been spending that money, almost nearly, down to what it should be because if we're raising and appropriating money for capital projects, we're using it now. The reason there was money in that fund was previous boards or just administrations were not spending the capital reserve funds and they were going back into that that particular reserve fund, which actually is not a good thing. You should spend the money that's in your budget on an annual basis for repair and maintenance and capital improvements.

Ryan Labrecque: So only at the end of the year, if there's a surplus \$250,000 of that surplus. would go into this capital reserve fund?

TRSB Dr. Farah: Correct. Yes. If there's still money remaining, there's certain lines that are designated as capital lines.

Ryan Labrecque: Okay, so it's just remaining in those capital lines?

TRSB Dr. Farah: Correct.

Ryan Labrecque: Not the overall budget.

TRSB Dr. Farah: Correct. I don't know, Maria, wasn't like \$20, 000 or \$30,000? I mean, it's almost impossible to spend it exactly down to zero.

BA Watkins: Yes. \$12,000, \$6,000, \$30,000. Depends. I can pull a report.

Ryan Labrecque: I'm not completely following but that's ok.

Tom Geary: Last year, how much was contributed of the \$250,000?

BA Watkins: Nothing. I think we had \$6,200 left in the capital line.

Tom Geary: I was looking to raise the amount so clearly.

BA Watkins: We didn't we didn't do any transfer. We didn't transfer any money last year or the year before.

Tom Geary: Are we forecasting that we'll have less than \$250,000 again?

BA Watkins: Oh, absolutely. Because right now the capital money is being spent because we have so many things.

Tom Geary: My motion to increase the amount would be moot.

Jack Sapia; Point of order. Should that be just appropriate? Not raise and appropriate?

TRSB Sheila Lowes: That's just appropriate.

TRSB Dr. Farah: No, no that's raise and appropriate. That's the language that we always use. I'm sure we ran that by counsel.

Moderator Harb: It likely went to the DOR too probably for their review.

Attorney O'Shaughnessy: That's DRA language so I wouldn't change it.

With no further discussion Moderator Harb declared Warrant Article 12 would appear on the ballot as written.

Article 13 - General Acceptance of Reports

Shall the voters of the School District accept reports of agents, auditors, and committees as written in the 2022 Annual Report? (MAJORITY VOTE REQUIRED)

Recommended by the School Board 7-0-0

MOTION: Brian Boyle made a motion to put Warrant Article 13 on the ballot as written, seconded by Kristen Savage.

Moderator Harb: Motion made and seconded. Any discussion on reports?

With no further discussion Moderator Harb declared Warrant Article 13 would appear on the ballot as written.

ARTICLE 14 – Emergency Contingency Fund

Shall the School District establish a contingency fund for the upcoming fiscal year for the purpose of covering the cost of unpredictable cost escalations as well as emergencies and further raise and appropriate \$500,000 with such amount to be transferred from those funds in the June 30, 2023 unassigned fund balance available for transfer on July 1 of this year; no amount to be raised by additional taxation. Any appropriation left in the fund at the end of the year will lapse to the general fund and used to offset the local education property tax rate. (MAJORITY VOTE REQUIRED)

Recommended by the School Board 7-0-0

Recommended by the Budget Committee 7-0-0

MOTION: Brian Boyle made a motion to put Warrant Article 14 on the ballot as written, seconded by Kristen Savage.

Amanda Knight: I'm on the Budget Committee for my town and I am new to this whole process. And I always thought it was strange that we didn't have some kind of fund for emergency but then they said that we can't have a rainy-day fund. What? Like why is this not already a thing?

Attorney O'Shaughnessy:

All right. Towns actually can have a contingency fund by statute. They don't require legislative body approval. School districts can ask the legislative body each year to approve a certain dollar amount to put into a contingency fund, which is what this article is doing. Without asking the voters they can't do it. So that's why this article is here. There's another article on the warrant that actually makes sense to talk about now to some degree, but it actually asks the voters to authorize the school board to retain fund balance and set up a contingency fund in future years, which would mean that they wouldn't

have to continually come back every year and ask for permission to set up a contingency fund. The voters would just be authorizing them to do it every year automatically.

Ryan Labrecque: I assume this was a \$500,000 fund last year? That correct? How much was the fund last year? So there's no emergency fund voted on last year.

BA Watkins: No. This is a one-time emergency fund that we're proposing. And the difference between these, because I know some people had this question, the difference between these and the 2% return retention fund is that these will give the voters the opportunity to vote to form this one-time fund of \$500,000. It's just for emergencies. It doesn't have a tax impact. It will come out to the from the fund balance. If it's not used, it will go back to taxpayers for tax rates.

Ryan Labrecque: How has the emergency has been handled prior to having an emergency contingency fund.

BA Watkins: The board has the authority to retain up to 2.5% for any emergency or need that the district has. Again, the board can do that. The thought behind doing it this way is to give the voters the opportunity to have a voice in this one-time fund that we are proposing because as we all know, prices are going above and beyond what we can expect. I mean if you go to a grocery store right now and buy a carton of eggs, it's \$7.00. Two months ago, it was \$3.50. We don't know what to expect. Again, if it doesn't get spent, it goes back to the taxpayers.

Ryan Labrecque: Right and in my house, I just don't buy something else. But that's beside the point. The current budget includes some projections for cost escalations, I assume?

BA Watkins: The ones that are allowed by the law.

Ryan Labrecque: In other words, the budget line items have some money in there. You're expecting things to cost more. So, in the current budget, you increased the budget with that expectation of things that cost more like fuel, paper, like whatever.

BA Watkins: In the proposed budget, yes, we have some assumptions. In the default budget, you cannot have anything that you contract

Ryan Labrecque: Right, the proposed budget

BA Watkins: Yes for the proposed budget but for the default budget, no because it's from it's two years ago.

Ryan Labrecque: So 2.5% is 2.5% of what?

BA Watkins: Of the unreserved down fund balance at the end of the year, of the surplus at the end of the year.

TRSB Dr. Farah: Okay, say we have an \$80M budget and we spend all of it except for \$2M. The board can retain up to two and a half percent of the total operating budget. So if it's \$80M, they can retain \$1.8M. So if we have \$2M left you could say we could retain \$1.8M. We don't usually do that because we try to give as much back to the taxpayers as we can to offset the tax rate for the coming year.

Ryan Labrecque: If this article is passed, does that change your ability to also retain two and a half percent in addition to the \$500,000?

BA Watkins: No, not at all. This is a one-time one \$500,000 fund.

Ryan Labrecque: So theoretically, you could get this \$50K and you could also retain two and a half percent if decided to. Correct?

BA Watkins: You could. I don't think the board would do that because like Dr. Farah just said they have not authorized that because they always try to get the money as much as they can to the taxpayers.

Ryan Labrecque: So we can reword this to basically say that by passing this we're also agreeing to eliminate the ability of the board to retain the two and a half percent.

BA Watkins: No, that cannot be eliminated. And like I said at the beginning of my statement, the difference between these other two and a half as that in this one, the voters will have the opportunity to vote for or not vote for it. In the two and a half, it's at the discretion of the board.

Ryan Labrecque: Right but if the board needed it they use it so I don't think this is needed at all because there is a method to fund contingencies if needed and that's why the 2.5%.

TRSB Dr. Farah: If the default budget were to pass, and we ran our budget down to almost zero and we had an emergency, there's no more money left. We only have an unassigned fund balance to save if there's something to save but we could be in a position, especially if the default budget passes where we don't have the money and then you'd have to have another special meeting and go back to the voters.

Ryan Labrecque: So we don't really have confidence in your budget passing.

BA Watkins: We have two budgets. One is the default budget, which is a budget that was created two years ago, two years ago, and we have the proposed budget, which is the budget that we all collectively created based on the needs of our students, our staff and our district. If we end up with a two-year-old budget, I can guarantee you that we'd not have enough to run this district for a year with a two-year-old budget.

Ryan Labrecque: We're anticipating the default budget passing therefore we need a \$500,000 contingency fund as well.

TRSB Mark Sherwood: Do you put on your seatbelt?

Moderator Harb: We're not talking here. You're off record. We're not talking to default budget here. We're talking this article and you've exceeded your time and we had two people standing at the mic so I'd ask you to let your friends speak.

Ryan Labrecque: They may speak and thank you.

Nolan Pelletier: I just had a quick question. You were saying that if there was unassigned funds, those would go back to the taxpayers, when's the last time that happened?

TRBC Todd McCormick and several board members: Every year.

Nolan Pelletier: Every year? I thought that there was a one article that went back into the capital reserve?

TRBC Todd McCormick: Millions go back to the taxpayers every year.

BA Watkins: This year was \$3.6M.

Nolan Pelletier: So the budget last year was \$75M and then there's a there's a \$3M excess?

BA Watkins: That went back to the taxpayers.

Nolan Pelletier: And we're looking to increase it to \$81M?

BA Watkins: You have to keep in mind that last year, we got a lot of COVID relief money. So that changed last year.

Nolan Pelletier: Last year the COVID money was the exception is basically what you're saying?

BA Watkins: The last two years we have gotten unexpected money between COVID and additional adequacy aid that the State gave us so you have to keep that into consideration for the last two years.

Nolan Pelletier: Prior to the last two years, what was before that, what was the return on that?

BA Watkins: About \$ 2M. It has changed between \$1 - \$2M.

Nolan Pelletier: Thank you.

Kat Lancaster, 4 Lancer Ln., Danville: I just have two comments. One, I came from Newton, where we had the default budget and the roof caved in on the school. So, guess what, there wasn't a whole lot of money and we had to move sixth graders to the high school. So, it does happen, and we need to plan for it and lastly, can we call the question please?

Moderator Harb: Sit down and I can call it because there's nobody else at the mic. So nobody else... I know, you don't want this question to go forward.

TRBC Liz Kosta: So just for Mr. Labrecque's and Mr. Pelletier clarification: Have we ever had to do something with the funds? When I was on the school board, Mr. Woodworth, I'm going to call you in to help me out a little and any school board member who was on the board. We had to freeze funds minus what we absolutely had to pay for salary in needs because the septic system went at the high school. We did not have the funds and we had to freeze everything but what we needed to. So, this warrant article I 100% agree with because there was no rainy-day fund because we can't have a rainy day fund. Like you said, you give something up. We had to give some stuff up that year. It was a struggle as we sat on the board, so you know some of these things that putting them in because our buildings are so fragile. Thank you.

Ryan Labrecque: We all have to give some things up. But regardless of that, if we're running \$2-\$3.5M budget surplus every year, then why do we keep increasing our budgets to the levels that we're increasing them.

<From the crowd> Because costs keep going up! It costs money to...

Moderator Harb: Can you not speak from the floor? If you want to speak up and get to the mic, please. I don't want yelling back and forth in a debate. He asked the question. It's a legitimate question. Does somebody want to answer that?

TRBC Chair Todd McCormick: A lot of people like to compare things to how they budget in their home. We're budgeting for 18 months out. Things happen over 18 months. People leave the district. People come into the district. The GMR rate might get lowered; it might be higher. So things fluctuate. We're voting in March, but the fiscal year doesn't actually start until July and it doesn't end until June of 2024. So to come in with some kind of a surplus at the end of a \$76M or an \$80M budget that's very small in a percentage would be the equivalent in somebody's home example, for example, of spending every dime you have and having maybe \$10 left at the end. That is why we traditionally have surpluses, and then that goes back to the taxpayers to offset the tax rate for the next year.

Ryan Labrecque: But if you see a trend...

TRBC Chair Todd McCormick: It would be impossible to spend it all the way down and we wouldn't want that it wouldn't be prudent budgeting.

Ryan Labrecque: If you have a trend of \$2 M surplus every single year, then that's a trend. So maybe reduce the budget by a million dollars and you'll only have a million-dollar surplus and you'll still have some emotional contingency. In addition to this.

TRBC Chair Todd McCormick: If we fill every position and then we don't have enough money to pay the payroll for all the teachers.

Ryan Labrecque: We'll figure it out. I figured out you figure it out at home, right? We all figured out.

<crowd noise>

Moderator Harb: A speaker at the mic asked the question that was answered, and I am not really a fan of this debate back and forth. All questions should come to me but I'm letting you guys talk because it's an open house, but I think his questions answered.

TRSB Mark Sherwood: So if you could with your own home, forecast out 18 months in the future what your outlays would be and again remember a lot of these outlays are required by law, we don't have an option about them. Can you predict with any certainty what your cable bill will be 18 months from now? What your cell phone bill will be? What your car insurance will be? How much a gallon of gasoline to get to work will be?

Ryan Labrecque: Yes, zero. I work from home, I don't have cable.

Mark Boyd, 3 Shannon Ln., Plaistow: I'd like to call the vote please.

Moderator Harb: I had a man standing at the mic. He waived his time to let you speak but I think I have to let him speak. Our rules say if he is at the mic, I can let him speak before I go to the call of the question. On this article only.

Nolan Pelletier: Yes, it was just a question. There is a mechanism if there is an issue, correct? You could call a special warrant or a special election. If something arose that needed to be attended to, you could actually do it that way. You don't need to build this in if an issue arises like a roof collapses. You could call a special, I don't know what the correct term would be a special election or special warrant article or whatever. special meeting to resolve that. That is correct? Thank you.

With no further discussion Moderator Harb declared Warrant Article 14 would appear on the ballot as written.

ARTICLE 15 – Fund Balance Retention

Shall the School District vote to authorize, indefinitely until rescinded, to retain year-end unassigned general funds in an amount not to exceed, in any fiscal year, **5%** of the current fiscal year's net assessment, in accordance with RSA 198:4-b, II. (MAJORITY VOTE REQUIRED)

Recommended by the School Board 6-1-0

Recommended by the Budget Committee 7-0-0

MOTION: Brian Boyle made a motion to put Warrant Article 15 on the ballot as written, seconded by Kristen Savage.

Ryan Labrecque: I'd like to propose an amendment to reduce to zero percent.

MOTION: Ryan Labrecque made a motion to amend warrant article 15 to 0%; seconded by Nolan Pelletier.
FAILED

Moderator Harb: Any discussion on this motion? Seeing none, all in favor of this motion say “aye”. All opposed Nay.
Motion Failed.

With no further discussion Moderator Harb declared Warrant Article 15 would appear on the ballot as written.

Moderator Harb: But in the event, you all take off after article 16. I want to draw your attention if you got the pamphlets when you came in where you're voting. The last two pages of the pamphlet talks about the voting hours. Don't forget to vote on March 14th. As I mentioned in the beginning, all the voting hours and places and times, please again, note that Plaistow changed its place and time. Also ,after this meeting, the Timberlane Regional School Board will meet following this session to finalize any recommendation actions for the official ballot, and the Timberlane regional budget committee will meet following this session to finalize any recommendation action for the official ballot.

ARTICLE 16 – Use of Capital Reserve Fund

Shall the voters of the School District appropriate the sum of **\$950,000** to repair, maintain, improve, or replace the High School’s boilers and related facilities to authorize the District to withdraw the sum of **\$950,000** from the existing School Building Construction, Reconstruction, Capital Improvements and Land Purchase Capital Reserve Fund? No amount to be raised by additional taxation. (MAJORITY VOTE REQUIRED)

Recommended by the School Board 7-0-0

MOTION: Brian Boyle made a motion to put Warrant Article 16 on the ballot as written, seconded by Kristen Savage.

Moderator Harb: Motion made and seconded I guess, very briefly.

TRSB Chair Brian Boyle: It was mentioned earlier in the meeting tonight that we're trying to put money into our facilities. We're long, long overdue here. We have over a million dollars in this reserve fund right now. We're asking the voters to take \$950K out of that to immediately put this into high school boilers and related facilities repairs. We have money there. We want the ability to use it. And that's about it. Thank you.

Tom Geary: Are the high school boilers and associated facilities included within the lease purchase agreement?

TRSB Chair Brian Boyle: No, they're not included in the \$25M. No.

Tom Geary: No. Okay. I would like to see if there a possibility to study improvements to the high school athletic fields including but not limited to artificial turf installation, and a new track.

TRSB Chair Brian Boyle: different subject matter, different subject matter.

Tom Geary: Okay, now Fair enough. I'm going to try anytime I can.

Ryan Labrecque: It seems like structural repairs needed we don't need turf, but that's just me. \$950,000 what's currently wrong with the boilers? How old are the boilers? What's the justification? Can you speak to that quickly about their current condition, operating capacity? Are they breaking down regularly? Et cetera, et cetera?

Moderator Harb: We have a speaker approaching the mic to answer your question.

Karl Ingolsby, Director of Plant Operations: Good evening. To answer your question on the boilers right now we have eight Eriko boilers in the high school. Today, the two newest ones were put in 2004. The rest were put in in 1997. So they're both 35 years old, 20 years old. And as far as their shape, we only have four running right now. Does that answer your questions?

If one of those goes down, we will not be heating the high school and to be honest with you the HVAC systems and everything are over 20 years old, so everything is kind of cool in the schools. We have one room that an HVAC unit that's running at 100% Open hot water and it's only putting out about 65 degree air so the rooms are cold. Radiators are working but we have single pane of glass in the building so it's not really keeping up with the needs of the schools.

That's in the entire building, middle school and high school. The middle school just got new boilers we just put in new windows. We've addressed the HVAC systems over there are getting upgraded or we're going to try to do with the funds, not just the funds that we're raising with the \$25M. We're also doing capital improvements. We're doing controls. We're looking at boilers at other schools. What you see on that \$25M isn't the only thing we've been doing. We've been really addressing a lot of the major issues we talked about the structural integrity, I'm sorry, from taking too much of your time.

But the point is, we the structural integrity of some of the walls are falling apart. Well, I wouldn't say falling apart, but water is infiltrating and it's been infiltrating since at least 2012. from the reports I've read, I've only been here a year and a half. So instead of putting the \$25 M up and putting up putting the study under those walls into that \$25 M, we're taking it out of our capital improvement funds that we have in the district that we get. They talk about the million every year this is what we're doing where we're really digging hard to find as much money as we can to do as much good as we can in these buildings. And if you have any questions, please come see me and talk to me in my office. Let's walk the buildings. Don't wait till we have 150 people here so you can get up and talk to these people. You know, come see me.

Jack Sapia: So we're going to put a million dollars into the boilers. Well needed. How are we going to coordinate that with a single pane of glass because what I hate to do is get up and efficient and save all this money with the boilers and then blow it out the walls.

Karl Ingoldsby: How much money can I go for? \$25M is the limit that we've decided on.

Jack Sapia: It was going to give you another five.

Karl Ingoldsby: Thank you, Jack. As you see we have \$116M worth of identified items that need to be done. It changes every day. Cost of everything change every day. But we have looked at the windows in the high school we already changed them in the middle school. It only makes sense that you start to make your buildings warmer, but we had to take care of some other issues before we address the windows. They are on the list. But they're not on the \$25 M list. Any other questions while I am here?

Ryan Labrecque: Just a response. Again, I'm just confused why? Why we are not targeting fixing structural leaking walls in advance of the other \$25M in projects. I know we're funding a study but how we're going to pay for those repairs if we're not targeting in the \$25M?

Moderator Harb: We are not talking about the \$25M, we are talking about \$950,000.

Ryan Labrecque: He's talking about the \$25M so I can as well. In any case, it should be part of that amount if that's a needed repair immediately. Why wasn't that a priority project and then \$25M.

Karl Ingoldsby: Because we don't know what we need with those buildings. We have to do a study on it first. We have to do our due diligence to find out what's actually wrong with those walls.

Moderator Harb:

With no further discussion Moderator Harb declared Warrant Article 16 would appear on the ballot as written.

I want to thank you all for your patience tonight and for being a good crowd at the deliberative session. And we'll help you all go to the polls on March 14. I'm going to declare this deliberative session closed.

The 2023 Deliberative Session of the Timberlane Regional School District concluded at 10:56 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Kat Lancaster
Timberlane Regional District Clerk
Approved as amended by the School Board on 3/9/23.