

TIMBERLANE REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
Atkinson, Danville, Plaistow and Sandown, New Hampshire

Minutes of the Deliberative Session
February 10, 2017

District Moderator Steven Ranlett called the February 10, 2017 Deliberative Session, held at the Timberlane Performing Arts Center, 40 Greenough Road, Plaistow, NH, to order at 7:02 PM. He led the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance. Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Metzler introduced the High School Select Ensemble who performed the National Anthem.

School Board Members in attendance: Peter Bealo (Chair), Robert Collins (7:35 pm) Stefanie Dube, Donna Green, Daniel Guide, Jack Sapia, Susan Sherman, Gregory Spero, and Kelly Ward (Vice Chair).

Budget Committee Members in attendance: Alan David, Kate Delfino (Vice Chair), Lee Dubé (Chair), Thomas Geary, W. David Gerns, Julie Hammond, John Hughes, and George Manos.

Also seated on the stage this evening is Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Earl Metzler, District Legal Counsel, Attorney James O’Shaughnessy, Business Administrator, George Stokinger and student representative Niko Nifakos.

Moderator Ranlett reviewed the rules of the meeting outlining that each person will treat all other participants with courtesy and respect at all times; he directed all persons wishing to speak to state and spell their names as well as indicate their town for the record.

MOTION: Arthur Green of Sandown motioned that all presentations, including those by the district officials, be limited to three (3) minutes; seconded by Peter Bealo of Plaistow.

Discussion: Jack Sapia of Atkinson inquired if any presentations would exceed the three minute limit. Lee Dubé of Sandown, who will present on the budget, would be glad to comply with a three minute limit. Leon Artus of Atkinson expressed his support for the motion.

VOTE: Moderator Ranlett called for the vote on limiting all presentations to three (3) minutes. The motion PASSED by a card vote of 95 in favor and 61 opposed.

The Moderator then presented a list of non-residents who might be called on to make presentations, or who may wish to speak during the Deliberative Session. With no objections he announced the list of non-residents will be allowed to speak at the meeting. He declared this session shall consist of explanation, discussion, and debate of warrant articles number 2 through number 8. 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. He warned of a zero tolerance for any disrespectful or negative comments regarding another person; discussion would be focused on the business at hand. He read aloud the warrant relating to the second (voting) session:

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

Second Session of Annual Meeting (Voting)

Voting on warrant articles number 1 through number 8 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, 2017, at the Town election polls in Atkinson, Danville, Plaistow, and Sandown, New Hampshire.

Atkinson Voting will be conducted at the Atkinson Community Center from 7am-8pm

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

Article 1 - Election of Officers

To choose the following school district officers:

Atkinson Voters	School Board Member	3-Year Term
Danville Voters	School Board Member	3-year Term
Plaistow Voters	School Board Member	3-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
All Voters	School District Moderator	3-Year Term

Article 2 – Operating Budget

Shall the voters of the Timberlane Regional School District raise and appropriate as an operating budget, not including appropriations by special warrant articles and other appropriations voted separately, the amounts set forth on the budget posted with the warrant or as amended by vote of the first session, for the purposes set forth therein, totaling **\$71,328,092**? Should this article be defeated, the operating budget shall be **\$71,559,011** 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 7-0-1

Recommended by the Budget Committee 10-0-0

MOTION: Lee Dubé motioned to put Article 2 on the floor for discussion; Dan Guide of Plaistow seconded the motion.

Lee Dubé presented PowerPoint slides on the proposed budget that included the state status, budget development process, previous five years of budgets, the Capital Improvement Plan, enrollment, and budget drivers.

MOTION TO AMEND: Arthur Green motioned to amend Article 2 by striking the amount of \$71,328,092 and replacing it with the amount of \$69,714,514; seconded by Leon Artus.

DISCUSSION: Arthur Green presented signatures of six (6) registered voters of Sandown requesting Moderator Ranlett to hold a SECRET BALLOT per RSA 40:4-(a) on Article 2 and any and all motions to amend Article 2. Mr. Green then opined the default budget should be \$1.5m less by removing one-time expenditures and \$150,000 in new positions and stipends. Peter Bealo noted the amendment to Article 2 on the floor is about the proposed budget not the default budget which cannot be amended or adjusted this evening. Chris Longchamp of Sandown agreed the default budget should not include one-time expenditures. He thanked the Budget Committee and School Board for their hard work on developing the operating budget; but would like to see the budget reduced by \$700,000 in capital improvements.

Donna Green of Sandown spoke to Mr. Green's motion to reduce the proposed budget and expressed the budgeted money is not being managed well. Ann Gerns of Plaistow articulated how well the School Board and Budget Committee has served this district. She inquired how much of the budget cannot be changed, for example, contractual or union agreements. Leon Artus noted since 2011 the surplus amounts each year have been on average \$2m. He supports Mr. Green's amendment. Chris True of Sandown spoke on the default budget being higher than the proposed budget.

Rob Collins of Danville explained the original proposed budget was \$73m, the Budget Committee cut \$1m in positions, \$240,000 in benefits and \$260,000 in paving costs as well as several other capital and utility amounts. An additional blind cut of \$200,000 was done after the public hearing. This resulted in a 1.6% increase from last year's budget. Mark Sherwood of Sandown inquired about surplus. Peter Bealo explained the surplus process and the timeframe in which budgets are developed (20 months in advance). If there is a surplus, it is subtracted from the amount needed from taxation in the following year. He noted surplus has not always been \$1m and above.

Jack Sapia spoke on the need to improve the facilities. David Hammond of Atkinson asked if the amendment on the floor affects the \$250,000 in capital reserve and how the money in the capital reserve fund is used. Donna Green explained money in the Capital Reserve account could only be disbursed with a majority vote from the taxpayers on a warrant article. Susan Sherman of Plaistow stated she has worked with the Capital Improvement Plan Committee (CIP) for over a year and can vouch the district defers maintenance and repairs regularly; this leads to the deterioration of the facilities.

Business Administrator George Stokinger reported the paving of the property is included in the default budget, which is being done over a five-year cycle, as agreed upon by the school board. The capital reserve amounts do not get deposited until the voters have approved it by a warrant article. W. David Gerns of Plaistow inquired if anyone could answer what categories would be affected by this proposed amendment to the budget. Mr. Green did not have an answer for Mr. Gerns' question. He suggested items he would cut including computer equipment, other types of equipment and repairs, \$150,000 reduction in positions and stipends and \$100,000 in administrative charges and legal fees. Dan Guide noted any line item reductions would be the decision of new board after the election.

Lee Dubé called the question. The Moderator rejected his request referencing others who are waiting to speak on the matter. Sarah Machermer of Plaistow stated her objections to any cuts to the budgeted equipment and projects lines, citing the air handlers and windows are needed in buildings for students. Mark Pasquini of Plaistow, also a PE teacher at the high school, noted the district is responsible for providing a healthy working environment that is suitable for students and staff. Lisa Withee of Plaistow stated her frustration that the majority of discussion has been on the default budget and not on the amendment on the floor. Tricia Collins of Plaistow inquired how the proposed amendment would affect the safety, happiness and quality of the education of the students. Wayne Randall of Atkinson declared he is in favor of the amendment. Dennis Heffernan of Plaistow declared he is against this amendment; he noted his support of the hard work of the Budget Committee. Kim Farah of Danville stated the default budget is intended to give people a choice. Dan Guide noted Mr. Green's reference to an *honest* budget in his presentation is insulting to all who worked on this budget. Kate Delfino of Atkinson confirmed the CIP plans projects five or six years in the future, which provides structure and planning. She is alarmed that someone would cut this amount from the budget without any consideration for students.

Jon Goldman of Sandown requested the Moderator call the question. Moderator Ranlett rejected the request, he asked for new information and/or comments regarding the amendment on the floor. Leon Artus of Atkinson stated the district has more money than they had last year; there have been no reductions or cuts. Moderator Ranlett ended the discussion and provided instruction on the secret ballot process.

SECRET BALLOT RESULTS: 50 voters were in favor of the amendment and 178 voted against. The amendment to change the amount of the budget from \$71,328,092 to \$69,714,514 failed.

MOTION: Jack Sapia motioned to limit reconsideration; Rob Collins seconded. The motion passed by voice vote.

MOTION: Brian Stack of Plaistow motioned to move Article 2 to the warrant; Dan Guide seconded. There being no comments, Moderator Ranlett declared Article 2 would be placed on the ballot as read.

MOTION: Pete Bealo motioned to limit reconsideration; W. David Gerns seconded. The motion passed by voice vote.

Article 3 – Capital Reserve Fund

Shall the voters of the Timberlane Regional 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, 2017 unassigned fund balance available for transfer on July 1 of this year which were apportioned as Capital Expenses in 2016-2017 in accordance with Article 6 of the Timberlane Regional School District Articles of Agreement? No amount to be raised by taxation. (MAJORITY VOTE REQUIRED)

Recommended by the School Board 7-1-0

Recommended by the Budget Committee 10-0-0

[Intent: This article puts money aside for future capital improvements. Money is only put into this Capital Reserve Fund if it is available at the end of the fiscal year. Capital expense appropriations are calculated in accordance with the Timberlane Regional School District Articles of Agreement (Article 6) apportionment formula as follows:

“The capital expenses of the Timberlane Regional School District payable in each fiscal year shall be apportioned on the equalized valuation as most currently available as determined by the State Tax Commission”.]

MOTION: W. David Gerns motioned to put Article 3 on the floor for discussion; Kate Delfino seconded.

Rob Collins reviewed the intent statement for Article 3. Christopher Wall of Plaistow requested a current balance of the Capital Reserve Fund. Mr. Stokinger provided the current amount in the Capital Reserve Fund; \$1,116,000.

MOTION TO AMEND: Barbara Kiszka of Plaistow motioned to amend Article 3 by removing the intent statement; seconded by Raymond Fournier of Atkinson.

Discussion: Raymond Fournier, Atkinson questioned if it is legal to add the intent statement to the ballot. Peter Bealo indicated advice received from legal counsel confirms the intent statement is legal and can be added to

the ballot. Donna Green noted she had reason to believe the intent statement on the ballot is not legal. Susan Sherman noted the wording was carefully considered and is the factual intent statement provided for voters who may not have a clear understanding of the article. Jack Sapia expressed he is in favor of intent statements. James Garrity of Atkinson claimed the intent statement cannot be on the ballot and requested that counsel review the RSA.

District Counsel James O'Shaughnessy stated currently there is no statute prohibiting the placement of intent statements. In recent years some have moved to interrupt the authority to put certain things on the ballot, e.g. tax impact status. It is ok to provide the information to the voters. If anyone would like to remove the intent statement they would need to make an amendment to remove the language. Kim Farah declared that she is in favor of removing the intent statement from the ballot. Jack Sapia stated if it legally cannot appear on the ballot the Department Revenue Administration will remove it. Myra Hogan of Plaistow suggested if it is illegal, the district might provide a separate information piece for voters. Robert Harb of Plaistow stated he has an opinion letter from the Attorney General and will provide it to counsel. But, it is an opinion only.

VOTE: By a voice vote, the amendment to remove the intent statement failed.

Kim Farah asked the board how the Capital Reserve fund is invested; with response from George Stokinger confirming the Capital Reserve Fund is invested with Danville Trustees of the Trust Fund. Rob Collins stated information was requested from the Danville Trustees; the district has a spreadsheet with investment details if anyone is interested. Kim Farah stated she only wanted to know if anyone on the board knew how the money is invested.

MOTION TO AMEND: David Hammond to amend the amount of funds on article 3 from up to \$250,000 to Up to \$500,000 into the Capital Reserve Fund; seconded by Jack Sapia.

David Hammond explained his reason to increase the amount is to put away more money for planned repairs instead of emergency repairs. Chris Longchamp asked what is the money actually used for and how does it get used. Donna Green stated although a well intention motion, she would not support a contribution of this amount at this time. Rob Collins noted a few years ago we increased the amount to \$300,000 and the warrant article failed. Mike Trasatti of Atkinson asked about the excess; how much was not spent and why? Chris Longchamp opined the school district should have spent all the money budgeted. Julian Kiskua of Plaistow asked why the money is not used to fund the necessary projects now. Susan Sherman clarified the money would come from monies not spend by June 2016. She explained that estimates are done for budgeting, after the vote then projects goes out to bid. The projects sometimes come in lower and money is saved. Budgeting and spending concepts were discussed. Susan Sherman stated she is opposed to increasing the amount up to \$500,000 but does supports prudent savings.

VOTE: By a voice vote the amendment to increase the amount to the Capital Reserve Fund from \$250,000 to \$500,000 failed.

MOTION TO AMEND: Barbara Kiszka motioned to amend Article 3 to change "no amount to be raised by taxation to "no amount to be raised by new taxation"; seconded by Robert Nickerson of Sandown.

Discussion: Susan Sherman informed the public that legal counsel has reviewed the statement and confirmed it is legal.

VOTE: Motion to amend failed by a show of voter card count. Moderator Ranlett declared Article 3 would appear as read on the warrant.

**Article 4 – Three Year Collective Bargaining Agreement
(Timberlane Support Staff Union)**

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

Fiscal Year	<u>2017-18</u>	<u>2018-19</u>	<u>2019-20</u>
Estimated Increase	\$181,323	\$177,907	\$181,864
3-Year Total			\$541,094

And further to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$181,323** for the 2017-18 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 7-1-0

Recommended by the Budget Committee 10-0-0

[Intent: This article will allow the school district to enter into a successor three-year contract with the Timberlane Support Staff Union. The proposed contract ratified by the union and the school board represents a 2% increase in wages and overall costs in year one, a 2.5% increase in year two, and a 2.5% increase in year three.]

MOTION: Susan Sherman motioned to put Article 4 on the floor for discussion; seconded Daniel Guide.

Susan Sherman reviewed the cost breakdown for the Timberlane Support Staff collective bargaining agreement; she outlined \$181,000 is a 2% increase in wages and overall costs. The increase in wages for the first year would be \$129,000 and insurance would increase \$51,000. Dr. Metzler expressed his support of the union members who perform a great job for all students. He noted paraeducators support accountability and rigor while working with our students and teachers. He then thanked the support staff for all they do and requested the community support this contract.

Discussion: Tracey Di Marco of Plaistow and TSSU member stated she is a proud parent of two students in the district and a union member. She has one child who has succeeded and secured honors because of special education and tutor assistance over the past years. She declared paraeducators are professionals who are friends, family and community members that go above and beyond for our students. Dennis Heffernan, Plaistow inquired why one board member did not support the contract? Donna Green explained she could not support the article because the paraeducators should be paying more of the cost for their health insurance. Susan Sherman noted the paraeducators average \$13 per hour, they work part time to full time hours, and we should provide the additional support for the cost of their insurance. She noted full time is 32.5 hours per week.

There being no further discussion on the motion, Moderator Ranlett declared Article 4 would appear on the ballot as written.

Article 5 - Authorization for Special Meeting on Cost Items

Shall the voters of the Timberlane Regional 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? (Without

this Article the District would have to petition Superior Court for a Special School District Meeting. This saves the District the expense of attorney fees and court costs). (MAJORITY VOTE REQUIRED)

Recommended by the School Board 8-0-0

[Intent: This article is suggested by the NH Department of Revenue Administration as a cost saving measure.]

MOTION: Kelly Ward motioned to put Article 5 on the floor for discussion: seconded by W. David Gerns.

There being no discussion on the motion, Moderator Ranlett declared Article 5 will appear on the warrant as written.

Article 6 – General Acceptance of Reports

Shall the voters of the Timberlane Regional School District accept reports of agents, auditors, and committees as written in the 2016 Annual Report? (MAJORITY VOTE REQUIRED)

Recommended by the School Board 8-0-0

MOTION: Daniel Guide to put Article 6 on the floor for discussion: seconded by Rob Collins.

There being no discussion on the motion, Moderator Ranlett declared Article 6 will appear on the warrant as written.

Article 7 – Change Auditing Firms on Warrant Petition by Donna Green et al

In being subject to RSA 21-J:19, shall the Timberlane Regional School District be required to change auditing firms every four years or fewer, starting with the 2016-17 audit year, and that no auditor or firm be reappointed within eight years of their last appointment? (MAJORITY VOTE REQUIRED)

Not recommended by the School Board 6-0-0

MOTION: Donna Green motioned to put Article 7 on the floor for discussion: seconded by Rob Collins.

Donna Green announced she cannot determine when the last time there was a change in audit firms.

MOTION TO AMEND: Daniel Guide motioned to change the article to read: Shall the Timberlane Regional School Board continue to select the auditing firm as needed for its annual audit? Noting it is advisory and non-binding: seconded by Peter Bealo.

Discussion: Peter Bealo opined it would not make sense to change firms this year whereas Business Administrator Stokinger will be retiring in June 2017. The SAU, Hampstead and TRSD would need the new Business Administrator to set up a new auditing firm as the first order of business. Donna Green stated it is a perfect time to change auditors. Ty Vitale of Plaistow explained he does not appreciate the citizen's amendment being changed on the floor.

VOTE: Amendment passes by a card count of 103 in favor and 75 against.

There being no further discussion, Moderator Ranlett declared Article 7 would appear on the ballot as amended.

MOTION: Rob Collins to restrict reconsideration: seconded Daniel Guide.

VOTE: There being no discussion, the motion passed.

Article 8 – Vote of Confidence in Timberlane Regional School District Superintendent on Warrant Petition by Shawn O’Neil et al

Do the voters have confidence in Timberlane Superintendent, Dr. Earl Metzler?

Recommended by the School Board 6-0-0

MOTION: Jack Sapia to put Article 8 on the floor for discussion: seconded by Nola Whitman of Danville.

Jack Sapia explained he does not support this article; believing it is personal in nature.

MOTION TO AMEND: Peter Bealo motioned to change Article 8 to read: Do the Citizens of the Timberlane Regional School District have confidence that the Superintendent of Schools will continue to advance the school district’s core values of rigor, accountability, evaluation and support as he has over the last five years? This article is advisory and non-binding; seconded by Lee Dubé.

Discussion: Chris Longchamp explained his support of the amendment, noting he has two children in the district and because of Dr. Metzler it is the best school system he has been involved with.

Nola Whitman attempted to read a prepared letter from Shawn O’Neil but was stopped by the Moderator as its content violated the rules of the meeting. Attorney O’Shaughnessy outlined a few issues associated with this article explaining Dr. Metzler is an employee of the SAU which is governed by two school boards, and to discuss an employee at a public meeting with slanderous, demeaning comments or personal attack would be improper.

Donna Green stated she does not like a citizen’s petition article being changed. Barbara Kiszke inquired why it states “recommended by the School Board 6-0-0.” Daniel Guide explained school board members voted as if they were voting on the ballot. Kathie Dayotis who has worked for the district for 43 years expressed her support of Dr. Metzler, explaining she has never worked harder; he is a strong boss which is the reason our schools have improved, and they continue to improve.

VOTE: The amendment passed by a voice vote.

Moderator Ranlett declared with no further discussion Article 8 will appear on the ballot as amended.

MOTION: Peter Bealo motioned to restriction reconsideration; seconded by W. David Gerns.

VOTE: The motion passed.

Other Business:

Dr. Metzler recognized Brian Stack, the Principal of Sandown High School, who has been named Principal of the Year.

Donna Green opined during the Deliberative Session two (2) citizen’s petitions were gutted and she does not know why anyone would submit a citizen’s petition or attend the deliberative sessions.

The 2017 Deliberative Session of the Timberlane Regional School District adjourned at 10:10 pm.

Respectfully submitted,


Nancy Louiselle
School District Clerk