

Newfound Area School District
First Deliberative Session
February 4, 2017
10 a.m.
Newfound Regional High School Auditorium
Minutes

School Board Present: Jeff Levesque, Chair, Groton; Don Franklin, Hebron; Sue Cheney, Alexandria; Vincent Paul Migliore, Bridgewater; Jason Robert, Bristol; Sharon Klapyk, Danbury; Christine Davol, New Hampton.

Budget Committee Present: Ruby Hill, Danbury; Jeff Bird, Bridgewater; Christen Dolloff, Bristol; Gina Rescigno, Groton.

School Administrators Present: Stacy Buckley, Superintendent; Michael Limanni, Business Administrator.

District Attorney Present: John Teague

School District Moderator: Ned Gordon

Ned Gordon greeted everyone and called the 2017 annual meeting of the Newfound Area School District to order at 10 a.m. This is the first portion of the annual meeting to hear, discuss, debate, and/or amend warrant articles.

The “Second Session” of the annual meeting, to elect officers, to vote on questions required by law to be inserted on said official ballot, and to vote on all warrant articles from the “First Session” by official ballot will be held on Tuesday, March 14, 2017 (Election Day) at each polling place in the towns of Alexandria, Bridgewater, Bristol, Danbury, Groton, Hebron, and New Hampton at the times and locations posted.

Pledge of Allegiance followed by Invocation.

School Board members and Budget Committee members introduced themselves, while Ned introduced School Administrators and District Council Representative in attendance.

ARTICLE 1: To choose all necessary School District Officials for the year ensuing.
(Second Session, March 14, 2017- Election Day)

Moderator announced the filing date closed yesterday so no discussion.

ARTICLE 2 (BY PETITION): TAX CAP RESCISSION: Shall we rescind the provision of RSA 32:5-b, known as the tax cap, as adopted by the Newfound Area School District on March 13, 2012, so that there will no longer be a limit on increases to the recommended budget in the amount to be raised by local taxes? (3/5 Majority required)

Ned explained this article could not be amended today.

Introduction: Lucille Keegan, Bristol wrote the petitioned article because she believes the school boards’ hands are tied and can’t pass a budget that reflects what our buildings, children and teachers need.

Discussion: Steve Spafford, Groton, questioned how Hill tuition revenue is spent. He explained why he is against rescinding the tax cap. “There’s a reason why the tax cap was put in place couple of years ago to

keep the budget from running away. Now it's running away and I can't afford to get rid of the tax cap that was voted in."

Susan Duncan made a motion to close debate on Article 2. Archie Auger seconded. ***Motion Passed.***

ARTICLE 3 (BY PETITION): SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICER: Shall the Newfound Area School District raise and appropriate the sum of no more than Seventy-Two Thousand Dollars (\$72,000) for the hiring of a School Resource Officer for the Newfound Area School District? If approved, this amount will become part of the Default Budget for the 2019 Fiscal Year.

Introduction: Bryan Richardson helped author the petitioned article and as a representative of Standup Newfound he is qualified to speak to the article. Bryan lamented the loss of the D.A.R.E. program in the schools. The purpose of the petitioned article is to bring an officer to school to create a relationship with our students to keep them safe and to mentor them.

Discussion: Steve Spafford, Groton, questioned to what budget the hiring of the SRO would be added. Michael Limanni, Business Administrator, answered to whichever budget is passed, the operating budget. Stacy Buckley, Superintendent, explained the intent of the petitioned article was to make it a continuous position into the next budget year, not just one year.

Steve Spafford, Groton, acknowledged we need to stop a problem but expressed concern that the \$72,000 may not be money well spent.

Janet Cote, Bristol, "where will the officer come from and did the D.R.A. look at this?"

Les Dion, Bristol, said, "The department will be retiring a car to be used so no new expenses will be incurred. Vehicle repairs are included in the \$72,000. The SRO will be a Bristol officer."

Paul Manganiello, Bristol, gave a brief history of former SRO positions in 2002 and another officer added in 2006 and spoke to the funding of those positions.

Bryan Richardson, Alexandria, wants to amend article 3. Janet Cote seconded. The new wording should be, "...part of the operating and default budget for the 2019 fiscal year."

Michael Limanni suggests changing the wording to "...default and operating budget for 2018 fiscal year."

Bryan Richardson amends it to say, "...2018 fiscal year." Janet Cote seconded.

Vincent Paul Migliore, Bridgewater, asked if the Department of Revenue Administration had approved the wording.

Bryan Richardson replied the wording was similar to the last warrant article.

Vincent Migliore said the wording is correct if the article is passed then the next budget will include this so it doesn't matter if it's 2018 or 2019. Mr. Migliore's opinion is that the amendment is not needed. Bryan Richardson withdrew his amendment. Janet Cote seconded on the withdrawal of the amendment. Back to the original article currently as written.

Bob Brooks, Hebron, asked if the SRO would be just for the school year or during the summer too.

Les Dion, Bristol, said four weeks of training can be done in the summer, plus two weeks summer programs and the officer will take time off in summer and not during the school year.

Bob Brooks asked how to put in money for a vehicle when it is not in the article even though a retired vehicle is available for the officer.

Moderator examined the wording of Article 3 and said the \$72,000 is for the hiring of an officer only. Ned addressed a question to the attorney in attendance, "could other money be expended?" John Teague, attorney, replied, "Yes."

Janet Cote, Bristol, asked if the Town of Bristol had approved these expenditures.

Ned Gordon answered, "Bristol has to make appropriations in town meeting."

Paul Manganiello said the police chief had mentioned \$3500 in additional charges to make this work at a recent select board meeting.

Ned agreed the town would have some expenditures.

Sue Duncan asked a question about collective bargaining.

Paul Manganiello answered her question and said we have nine officers and this will be ten if the new officer is employed.

Susan Duncan addressed the tax impact for the Town of Bristol if the article passed. She fully supports a Licensed Drug and Alcohol Counselor with a Master's degree in the schools to practice preventative safety.

Stacy Buckley, Superintendent, clarified that we do have a part time Licensed Drug and Alcohol Counselor now at the high school and we will make that position full time next year.

Les Dion agreed with Sue Duncan that an SRO could deal with prevention in the elementary schools. Susan Colby made a motion to close discussion on article 3. Archie Auger seconded. ***Motion Passed.*** Article 3 will appear on the ballot on March 14 as it appears on the warrant today.

ARTICLE 4: EXPENDABLE TRUST FUND: BUILDING MAINTENANCE: To see if the Newfound Area School District vote to raise and appropriate up to the sum of One Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$100,000) to be added to the Expendable Trust Fund, Building Maintenance, and to authorize the use/transfer in that amount from the undesignated fund balance available July 1, 2017 for this purpose?

Introduction: Don Franklin, Hebron, Chairman of the Facilities Committee, said the money can only be used for building maintenance and it can only be taken from funds after all else is funded from the budget at the end of the school year. Approving this article won't increase 2016 taxes because they have already been paid. Smaller amounts in past years have been made but \$100,000 is not nearly enough to fix major repairs like the high school roof that has lasted 28 years and Bridgewater-Hebron Village School, a newer school not owned by the district, has already replaced a roof and boiler. We may have to pass a bond to make repairs so to prepare for the future the school may want to put in money in order to level the budget later. Don added in addition to the roof replacement about \$400,000 in repairs is also needed. Don Franklin strongly recommends approval of this warrant article because of the age of buildings.

Janet Cote asked if the board had considered a bond for the repairs and suggested that since we had voted for an expendable trust fund in past years maybe it is time to use it to take care of these issues.

Steve Spafford suggested age of our school buildings is irrelevant considering Europe's schools are centuries old. Steve asked the Bridgewater School Board Representative why he opposed this article 4.

Vincent Migliore answered with points of clarification. B-HVS is maintained by the towns of Bridgewater and Hebron and B-HVS did replace a roof and boiler but the reason was because of warranty manufacturing problems not the age of the school. The reason he opposed article 4 is because traditionally we put in \$60,000 and a few years ago we took advantage of an RSA that said we could retain some funds at the end of the year and we took advantage of that. The maintenance trust fund is at \$280,000 and we put aside \$250,000 in the retained fund balance, so while it is not \$800,000 for what has been quoted to fix the entire high school roof, it is still a substantial sum to maintain five buildings that we own as taxpayers in the district. Mr. Migliore would also like to address the \$800,000 when it comes up for discussion. He believes the money mentioned to be cut from the budget was money that was cut from the originally proposed budget. He thinks cutting things out is a semantic thing and that's the basis for his negative vote. He thinks we have adequate funding already.

Discussion followed on building repairs needed, the funds that are available, and the process by which those funds can be expended.

Vincent Migliore explained to Janet Cote that the retained fund balance can only be used for emergencies and was set aside as \$350,000 this year but has checks and balances. The Maintenance Trust Fund is at \$280,000 and article 4 adds \$100,000 to this fund.

Fred Robinson, Danbury said this body can make a motion to increase or decrease this amount.

Ben LaRoche made a motion to close debate on article 4. David Hill seconded. ***Motion Passed*** Article 4 will appear on the ballot on March 14 as it appears today on the warrant.

ARTICLE 5: TEACHER CONTRACT: To see if the Newfound Area School District will vote to approve the cost items included in the collective bargaining agreement reached between the Newfound Teachers Union and the Newfound Area School Board that calls for the following increases in salaries and benefits at the current staffing level:

Fiscal Year 2017-18 Estimated increase \$248,042

Fiscal Year 2018-19 Estimated increase \$214,551

And further to raise and appropriate the sum of Two Hundred Forty Eight Thousand and Forty Two Dollars (\$248,042) for the current 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 current staffing levels.

Introduction: Sue Cheney spoke to this article. Both the teachers' union and the school board ratified the contract. Sue Cheney continued, "The school board unanimously supports this article as fair and reasonable for teachers, taxpayers, and the district to keep the teachers we have."

Discussion: Ann Learned spoke in favor of article 4.

Janet Cote made a motion to close debate on article 4. Les Dion seconded. ***Motion Passed*** Article 5 will appear on the ballot on March 14 as it appears on the warrant.

ARTICLE 6: OPERATING BUDGET: To see if the Newfound Area School District raise and appropriate as an operating budget, not including 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 Twenty-Two Million, Seven Hundred Fifty –Two Thousand, Five hundred Eighty-Four Dollars (\$22,752,584)? Should this article be defeated, the Default Budget shall be Twenty-Three Million, One Hundred Eighty-Four Thousand, Three Hundred Fifty-Two Dollars (\$23,184,352) which is the same as last year, with certain adjustments required by previous action of the Newfound Area 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.

Introduction: Jeff Levesque, School Board Chair spoke to this article. “The goal of the budget for 2017 is to continue what works and what we have. The Teachers Contract is an important two year proposal.” Jeff Levesque continued to review the entire Operating Budget and explained that the existing tax cap forces us to make cuts that impact the students. To meet the tax cap, a total of \$1,800,000 was cut and Jeff went over things to be eliminated or reduced if the tax cap is kept in place. The proposed budget stays within the tax cap

Discussion: Paul Manganiello, Bristol, hopes the high school roof isn’t leaking over the gymnasium floor. Stacy Buckley replied that the gym floor just needs refinished and not because the roof is leaking on it. Archie Auger, Bristol, made a motion to amend article 6 by increasing the operating budget by \$800,000. Barbara Greenwood seconded.

Discussion: Archie Auger proposes we use the additional \$800,000 to replace the high school roof even though he understands there is flexibility on the board to not spend the \$800,000 on a roof. “It’s important for the voters to have input and this amendment makes it possible. This amendment takes care of the roof and maybe other funds could address these other issues listed.”
Tax rates for the seven towns was discussed.

Paul Manganiello said, “The amendment can pass but with the added money, this will be a Twenty-Four Million Dollar budget if all other articles pass.

Don Franklin explained that all but the petitioned warrant articles are included in the operating budget.

Paul Manganiello asked if the Teachers’ Contract was included. Don Franklin said no.

Stacy Buckley said the operating budget was \$22,752,584 plus \$800,000 if the amendment passed.

Vincent Migliore spoke in opposition to the amendment. He said the board discussed bonding the roof, it is still a possibility and voters will have a say. If there is a surplus next June, maintenance related projects will be covered minus the roof. The amendment will hurt the children if this article passes and raises the budget higher than the existing one, coupled with proposed additions, we may risk losing everything, and we need to retain high quality teachers by passing the Teachers’ Contract. Vincent Migliore believes if we increase the budget by \$800,000 and if we rescind the tax cap, all other articles may fail.

Archie Auger, Bristol, says Bristol will follow through given reliable information. We need to support building maintenance. It is important that voters have the opportunity to decide and in Archie’s opinion, this amendment will not hurt the children.

Sue Cheney, Alexandria, said the roof is 27 years old and if it went to bond, the interest would also have to be added to tax cap.

Sue Duncan asked for a commitment from the school board to follow through if the \$800,000 is added for the purpose of a roof replacement.

Jeff Levesque said if we pass the amended article for an \$800,000 roof on this building it will be spent on this roof.

Sue Cheney added that the board is not required, but will vote for the roof.

Janet Cote encouraged the voters to pass the amendment and for the board to take action as intended. She said we need to educate the voters about the reason for the increased budget.

Al Blakely made a motion to close debate on the amendment to article 6. David Evans seconded. Voice vote closed debate.

The moderator announced the amendment changes the amount of the operating budget to an increase of \$800,000. A yes vote would increase the operating budget from \$22,752,584 to an amount of \$23,552,584. A no vote will keep the amount the same. Voice vote was too close to call so a hand vote was taken. Vote was affirmative. ***Motion Passed***, amendment adopted.

Now back to the original article 6 as amended. Mr. North moved to close debate on article 6. Megan McGrath seconded. Voice vote was in favor of closing debate on article 6. ***Motion Passed*** Moderator announced that article 6 as amended would appear on the ballot March 14.

Archie Auger thanked the school board and budget committee for their hard work.

Ron Preble made a motion to adjourn at 12:02 p.m. Sue Cross seconded. ***Motion Passed***

Respectfully submitted by Ruth Whittier, School Board Clerk