

Benton School District Meeting - 2022

School Warrant State of New Hampshire March 8, 2022

The meeting opened at 7:04 PM.

Article 1

To choose a Moderator for the ensuing year.

Gilbert W. Richardson was elected by voice vote.

Article 2

To choose a School Clerk for the ensuing year.

Michael P. Stiebitz was elected by voice vote.

Article 3

To choose one School Board Member for a term of three years expiring in 2025.

Dwight A. Swauger was elected by ballot vote.

Article 4

To choose a Treasurer for the ensuing year.

Penny Chicoine was elected by voice vote.

Article 5

To hear reports of Agents, Committees, or Officers chosen and pass any vote relating thereto.

Motion made to accept article as written, seconded.

Sam Gregory asked SAU #23 Superintendent Laurie Melanson to discuss the proposed NH House Bill 1671 dealing with courses that have to be taught as opposed to those that some consider “electives”. Laurie read the synopsis and then stated that although the bill hasn’t passed yet, she believes that removing subjects like “World Languages” and others from the required course list would be a mistake.

Sam then asked about the renovated addition at the high school, specifically whether “core courses” would be taught there. Laurie said that there would be “Family and Consumer Science” courses taught there, as well as vocational courses. She offered to give a guided tour if anyone is interested.

Regarding HB1671, Wayne Chevalier stated his opinion that this bill will help insure that students learn “core subjects” and can learn “fluff” elsewhere.

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Benton School Board member Tim Hickey felt that this bill also seeks to address school funding issues.

Benton School Board Chairman Joe Boutin stated that the School Board needs to identify a Deputy Treasurer to fill in for the Treasurer during any periods when she is absent from Town and there is an urgent financial issue which needs to be dealt with. He said that the person can be appointed by the Board and as such would not require a Town Election.

Moderator Gil Richardson amplified Joe's request and urged anyone interested to contact the Board.

The article then passed unanimously on voice vote.

Article 6

To see if the school district will vote to raise and appropriate Six Hundred Seventy-Seven Thousand, Seven Hundred and Forty-Six Dollars (\$677,746.00) for the support of schools, the payment of salaries of school district officials and agents, and the payments of statutory obligations of the district. This article is exclusive of any other article on the warrant. (The school board recommends this article.)

Motion to accept article as written, and seconded.

There was no discussion and the article then passed unanimously

Article 7

To see if the district will raise and appropriate up to the sum of Twenty Thousand dollars (\$20,000.00) to be added to the previously established Tuition and Education Expendable Trust Fund. This sum to come from the June 30, 2022 fund balance available for transfer on July 1, 2022 in excess of \$30,000. (The first \$30,000.00 of the June 30, 2022 unassigned fund balance will be used to reduce the school tax rate in 2022). No amount to be raised from taxation. (The school board recommends this article).

Motion to accept article as written, and seconded.

SAU #23 Business Manager Kathy Ducharme reported that the current expected end-of-year surplus will be approximately \$32,000.

The article then was passed unanimously by voice vote.

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Article 8

To see if the school district will vote to authorize, indefinitely until rescinded, to retain year-end unassigned general funds in an amount not to exceed, in any fiscal year, five percent (5%) of the current fiscal year's net assessment, in accordance with RSA 198:4-b, II. (Majority vote required)

Motion made to accept article as written, seconded.

Discussion ensued.

Selectboard Chair Bill Darcy stated that 5 years ago, the Education Expendable Trust Fund had approximately \$35,000 in it. Today the balance is closer to \$200,000. He believes that amount should suffice.

Joe Boutin pointed out that there are no contingencies in the current budget for any unforeseen students coming into the system for the remainder of this year. He shared that a new Special Needs child moving to Town could take a large bite out of the Trust Fund balance and that having the 5% rather than the current 2.5% provision would give the Board extra money to deal with such an eventuality.

Bill pointed out that any withholding of surplus school funds would increase the Town tax rate, whereas paying for unforeseen school expenses from the Education Expendable Trust Fund would not.

The article was then denied by unanimous voice vote.

Motion was made to close the meeting and the meeting adjourned at 7:46 PM.

A true copy
Attest:

Michael P. Stiebitz

Michael P. Stiebitz - Benton School District Clerk - Benton, New Hampshire