

Bethlehem Elementary School Board Annual Meeting Minutes

March 19th 2024

To the inhabitants of the Bethlehem School District in the Town of Bethlehem qualified to vote

in District affairs:

You are hereby notified to meet at Bethlehem Elementary School on Tuesday, March 19th, 2024,

at 7:00 in the evening (polls are to be open from 7:00 P.M. until all have voted).

Business

meeting for consideration of the Articles of the Warrant will be called to order at 7:30 P.M. to act

upon the following subjects:

Moderator Mary Lou Krambeer opened the voting at 7:00 PM, polls were closed at 7:40 PM

for the annual meeting.

At 7:40 pm, Moderator Mary Lou Krambeer called the meeting to order.

ARTICLE 01:

To choose all necessary officers for the School District for the ensuing year.

BY BALLOT

Discussion Article 01: None.

ARTICLE 02:

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

Discussion Article 02: None.

ARTICLE 03:

To see if the District will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Three Million, Eight Hundred Ten Thousand, Eighty-Eight Dollars (\$3,810,088) for the support of schools, for

the payment of salaries of School District Officials and Agents, and for the payment of statutory obligations of the District. This article does not include appropriations contained in special or individual articles addressed separately. (Majority vote required.)

Recommended by the Bethlehem School Board.

Discussion Article 03: Chair Bob Weir explained the role of the finance committee and provided information about the process of determining the annual budget each year. The proposed budget summary was explained line item by line item. Bryan Smith, the STEM teacher, gave a presentation on his work with the students.

Public Input on Article 01:

Patrick Doughty asked, "How much are you carrying over on your current budget?" He would like to make a motion to flatline the budget at \$3,563,854 (a reduction of \$246,234).

Skye Champagne-Bissonette asked if the board has a plan for a situation where, if a motion for a budget cut passes, where would the cuts come from? Bob Weir responded, saying that if this were the case, this cut would have to come from a place such as cutting teacher salaries; this would amount to perhaps two to three teachers.

Mary Jackson asked what the tax impact would be if the budget reduction was passed. The estimated number would be similar to the 9.20 per thousand rate of this current year.

A request was made for a secret ballot; it was signed by Patrick Doughty, Brian Charland, Ernie Ferland, Maureen Ferland, and Dan Tucker. The secret ballot for the amendment was 96 Nay, 34 Yay. Motion fails.

Michael Bruno proposed that the budget be reduced by \$81,056, which would bring the budget to \$3,729,032. Rebecca Porges is opposed to this amendment. Erica Smith commented that, prior to COVID, the technology teacher's salary was written into the budget, and noted that BES can't run without a technology teacher. Skye Champagne Bissonette spoke to the value in these programs. Patrick Doughty is supportive of the amendment and pointed out that the position does not have to go away but that cuts could happen elsewhere. Nancy Strand asked about the tax impacts of the amendment. The rough estimate would be 15 cents per thousand of a person's assessment. A request was made for a second secret ballot; this was seconded by Allegra Wright. It was signed by Michael Bruno, Daniel Murphy, Chris McGrath, Patrick Doughty, and Brian Charland. Michael Bruno is asking for the board to look for another way to fund the position. The secret ballot results were 34 Yay and 91 Nay. The motion fails.

Sam Talcott proposed that we vote on Article 03. This was seconded by Tess Woods. The Yays have it. Veronica Morris made a motion to restrict consideration on Article 03, with Clayton Morris seconding; the Yays have it. The motion passes.

VOTE: YAYS/ NAYS - YAYS

MOTION CARRIES.

ARTICLE 04:

To see if the school district will vote to raise \$239,969 to reduce the general fund deficit pursuant to RSA 194:3-6. (Majority vote required.)

Recommended by the Bethlehem School Board

Discussion 04: Chair Bob Weir outlined the situation that lead up to the above general fund deficit.

Nancy Strand asked if would it be possible to break up the payment into, theoretically, three different payments. A note was made that an amendment cannot be made that affects an annual budget beyond the upcoming school year. Cheryl Jensen asked for clarification on Nancy Strand's previous question and comments. Chris McGrath asked if the school or SAU has a "rainy day fund" like the town does. The answer is no. Patrick Doughty suggested changing article 04 to read "up to" but this was shot down by the SAU's lawyer on site – it has to be written with a specific sum. Mike Culver asked what checks and balances have been put into place to keep this from happening again. Superintendent Kate Segal stated that it will not happen again, and that the SAU is following their auditor's advice. Cassandra Qui asked if the warrant article passes, how much would it affect the tax bill. The answer is 46 cents per thousand. Veronica Morris clarified that the SAU and BES are separate legal entities from the town. John Miller moved the question, seconded by Chuck Phillips. There was a request for a secret ballot. It was signed by Charles Phillips Betsy Phillips, Chris Jensen, Cheryl Jensen, Allegra Wright, and Sally Fitzgerald. The results were 80 Yays and 27 Nays. The motion failed.

Cheryl made a motion to restrict consideration of Article 04, with Chuck Phillips seconding.

VOTE: YAYS/ NAYS – YAYS

MOTION CARRIES.

ARTICLE 05:

To transact any other business that may legally come before this meeting.

Discussion 05: None

VOTE: YAYS/ NAYS - YAYS

MOTION CARRIES.

At 9:52pm Moderator Krambeer adjourned the meeting. A motion was made by Clayton Morris, with Allegra Wright seconding. The motion passes.

BETHLEHEM ELEMENTARY SCHOOL BOARD

Robert Weir, Chairman

Margaret Hocking

Sarah Storella

Jennifer Lucas

James Noyes

Results from Article 01:

Moderator: Mary Lou Krambeer

Clerk: Tana LeClair

School Board: Margaret Hocking & Dr. James Noyes

Treasurer: Patrick Bays

Respectfully submitted,

Tana LeClair

Board Clerk