

SAU #13  
TOWN OF MADISON, NH  
DELIBERATIVE SESSION  
FEBRUARY 3, 2014  
MADISON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL  
JAMES NOYES AUDITORIUM

The Meeting was called to order at: 7:00 PM  
By: George Epstein, Moderator

Moderator George Epstein explained that this is the deliberative session and that under SB2 we do not vote articles up or down; we vote on how the articles will appear on the ballot. He said we would go through the articles with an opportunity to discuss and amend where permitted. He noted that Candidates night is Tuesday, March 4 at 7:00 in the Chick Room of the Madison Library. Mr. Epstein asked school board chair Jim Curran to introduce the board members: Bruce Brooks, Wendy Grzesik, Sloane Jarell, and Ray O'Brien, as well as Attorney Matt Upton, Student Services Director Raina Chick, Business Administrator Michael O'Neill, Principal Brian Ernest, and School Clerk Pat Ambrose. Moderator Epstein then introduced budget committee members present: David S. Chase, Cheryl Littlefield, and Hersh Sosnoff.

To the inhabitants of the School District of the Town of Madison qualified to vote in district affairs. You are hereby notified of the ANNUAL MEETING.

First Session of Annual Meeting (deliberative).

In accordance with SB2 (RSA 40:13), you are hereby notified to meet in the James Noyes Auditorium at Madison Elementary School on Route 113 in Madison. The first session for the transaction of all business other than voting by official ballot shall be held on Monday, February 3, 2014 at 7:00 PM. The first session shall consist of explanation, discussion, and debate of warrant articles II through X. 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 final vote on the main motion, as amended.

Second Session of Annual Meeting (voting by Official Ballot).

Voting on warrant articles I through X shall be conducted by official ballot and will occur in conjunction with the Town meeting to be held on Tuesday, the 11<sup>th</sup> day of March 2014 at the Madison Elementary School on Route 113 in Madison. The polls shall be open from 8:00 AM and will not close before 7:00 PM.

ARTICLE I: To choose all necessary School District Officers by ballot and majority vote, including:

One Clerk for one year

One Moderator for one year

One Treasurer for one year

Two members of the School Board for three years

ARTICLE II: Shall 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 \$5,562,784?

Should this article be defeated, the default budget shall be \$5,597,295 which is the same as last year, with certain adjustments required by previous action of the 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. (The School Board recommends this appropriation 5-0.) (The Budget Committee recommends this appropriation 7-0.)

DISCUSSION: Mr. Epstein asked everyone to turn to page 27 in the book and he then proceeded to introduce the major categories of the budget. He noted that the SAU #9 Tuition is a 20-year contract with nine years to go that was entered into in 2003 and which is now available to be viewed on the Madison School District website. He noted that the tuition is a large part of our budget that goes to Conway. He then asked board chair Jim Curran to comment on the increase on the Transportation line. Jim responded that this is due to special education transportation needs. Mike Benoit asked why the special education line went down but special education transportation went up. Jim Curran responded that this is due to out of district placements as well as placements inside the building. Raina Chick added that the overall costs of Madison special education is lower than in the past, but because of unique programming for a handful of students with special education needs there is a higher cost of transporting Madison students who require specialized transport out of the Madison district. Noreen Downs asked for an explanation of the decrease in the elementary tuition and Jim Curran said it was due to a decrease in 1.5 teaching staff. The board confirmed that enrollments continue to decline.

RESULTS: Article II will be printed on the ballot as it appears in the book per Mr. Epstein.

Article III. To see if the School District will vote to approve the cost items included in the Collective Bargaining Agreement reached between the Madison School Board and

the Madison Employees' Association, which calls for the following increases in salaries and benefits at the current staffing levels:

	Estimated Increase
Year 2014-2015	<u>\$44,528</u>
Year 2015-2016	<u>\$45,467</u>
Year 2016-2017	<u>\$45,138</u>

And further raise and appropriate the sum of \$44,528 for the 2014-2015 fiscal year, such sum representing the additional costs attributable to the increase in salaries and benefits over those of the appropriation at current staffing levels paid in the fiscal prior year. (The School Board recommends this appropriation 5-0.) (The Budget Committee recommends this appropriation 7-0.)

DISCUSSION: Henry Forrest asked if there had been any philosophical consideration of negotiating a budget that would reduce compensation levels by 10%. Bruce Brooks responded that we did start low, but not 10% low, and the union started high. He said we began negotiations in August and it was December before we came to an agreement by meeting approximately in the middle. Mike Benoit questioned if we are being asked to approve the entire contract or only the funding for next year's contract, due to the wording "at current staffing levels." George Epstein said we vote for this as a separate warrant article and we are voting for all three of those amounts for those three years. He said next year the \$45,467 will appear in the main operating budget and you will have the opportunity of voting that up or down but it will not be separate. Attorney Matt Upton noted that current staffing levels change each year and in the meantime many things can occur, so this is the language that the DRA mandates that we use. He said if these amounts turn out to be less the district will spend less money. The board confirmed that if there is one less teacher next year the amount likely won't be \$45,467.

RESULTS: Article III will be printed on the ballot as it appears in the book per Mr. Epstein.

Article IV. Shall the voters of Madison School District adopt a school administrative unit budget of \$770,336 for the 2014-2015 school year in which \$202,338 is assigned to the school budget of this district?

This year's adjusted budget of \$766,567 with \$201,035 assigned to the School District budget will be adopted if the article does not receive a majority vote of all the district voters voting in this administrative unit. (The School Board recommends this appropriation 5-0.) (The Budget Committee recommends this appropriation 5-2.)

DISCUSSION: No discussion.

RESULTS: Article IV will be printed on the ballot as it appears in the book per Mr. Epstein.

Article V: To see if the School District will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$9,000 to be added to the previously established Bus Capital Reserve Fund. (The School Board recommends this appropriation 5-0.) (The Budget Committee 7-0.)

DISCUSSION: No discussion.

RESULTS: Article V will be printed on the ballot as it appears in the book per Mr. Epstein.

Article VI. To see if the School District will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$10,000 to be added to the previously established Technology Capital Reserve Fund. (The School Board recommends this appropriation 5-0.) (The Budget Committee does not recommend this appropriation 3-4.)

DISCUSSION: Henry Forrest noted that the budget committee did not approve this article and asked what the current balance is in this fund. Mike O'Neill said the balance is \$8,048.88. Hersh Sosnoff said the budget committee discussed this for quite a while and that although as a group the budget committee was very supportive of tech, they felt it was important to evaluate the success or failure of the new Kuno tablet program before setting aside money for replacing them. Jim Curran explained that all the students in the school have received android-based tablets, that the teachers had received training for the tablets and that there will be additional training with money received from the state. Noreen Downs asked what the plans would be for the tech funds and who makes those decisions. Jim Curran said we are trying to set up a replacement schedule for the next few years so that it will not be necessary to replace all the tablets at once. Ms. Downs then asked if there were funds for replacements of PCs in the operating budget, and Jim said it is in the budget to replace a couple of laptops in the building. He said those come up on a year to year basis. Marcia McKenna, a teacher in Tamworth, said no money had been budgeted to buy apps or programs and she was hoping that there would be some money in capital reserve that could be used to purchase curriculum and appropriate apps. Principal Brian Ernest said we have set aside funding in this operating budget to purchase apps; the warrant article is strictly for replacement of tablets.

RESULTS: Article VI will be printed on the ballot as it appears in the book per Mr. Epstein.

Article VII. To see if the School District will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$12,000 for the purpose of updating the security of the Madison Elementary School. (The School Board recommends this appropriation 5-0.) (The Budget Committee recommends this appropriation 6-1.)

DISCUSSION: Noreen Downs asked for an explanation of what has been spent for security and what enhancements would be needed. Jim Curran said last year we approved \$12,000 for an electronic lock on the front door and cameras throughout the building. He said this warrant article would add another electronic lock to the back door and more strategically placed cameras. He said there is also grant funding available for matching funds that would help us reach that goal. Ms. Downs asked if any issues or problems had been detected by the security system or if anything had been prevented because of it. Jim said not to his knowledge. George Epstein asked if cameras are monitored throughout the day and Principal Ernest said they are.

RESULTS: Article VII will be printed on the ballot as it appears in the book per Mr. Epstein.

Article VIII: To see if the voters of the School District will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$500 for use by the Cooperative School District Planning Committee for the purpose of investigating the creation of a Cooperative School District. (The School Board recommends this appropriation 5-0.) The Budget Committee recommends this appropriation 7-0.)

DISCUSSION: George Epstein noted that there is a report on page 18 in the book about this. Ray O'Brien added that the committee was formed last year by vote with no money attached and that the committee was asking for \$500 from each district to take care of clerical things.

RESULTS: Article VIII will be printed on the ballot as it appears in the book per Mr. Epstein.

Article IX: To see if the School District will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$65,000 to be placed in the capital reserve fund previously established for the purpose of Building Capital Repairs. (The School Board recommends this appropriation 5-0.) (The Budget Committee recommends this appropriation 7-0.)

DISCUSSION: George Epstein asked for the balance in this fund. Mike O'Neill said the balance is \$30,024.22. Mr. Epstein noted that in the past we have sometimes struggled to get numbers quickly and he wanted to thank Mike O'Neill for doing a great job. Henry Forrest asked what the fund is for and Jim Curran said we need such items as a walk-in freezer, roof repairs, and a heating system/boiler.

RESULTS: Article IX will be printed on the ballot as it appears in the book per Mr. Epstein.

Article X: Shall the School District vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$45,181 to implement an all-day kindergarten option? (The School Board recommends this appropriation 5-0.) (The Budget Committee recommends this appropriation 4-3.)

DISCUSSION: Charlotte Emmel said she was for an all-day kindergarten but did not want to vote for it as an option. The board confirmed that kindergarten is an option in New Hampshire; New Hampshire law does not require a child to go to kindergarten. Nicole Nordlund asked if there would be one class for a full day and one for a half day. Sloane Jarell said it would be one full-day class but parents would have the option of taking the child out. Ms. Nordlund asked for a comment by the budget committee. David Chase said he has always been against all-day kindergarten, although because of decreased enrollment this would be a good year to do it by extending one half-day class to a full day. But he added that once this is instituted, if enrollment numbers go back up you will need two teachers. Ms. Nordlund asked about Mustang Academy and said in the past there has been a warrant article to fund it. Jim Curran said in the general budget under Co-curricular Activities we have added \$10,000 to that line. He said the program itself is going to change in some ways and we will be able to offer programs to students throughout the year. He noted that in the past the warrant article for Mustang Academy was a petitioned warrant article for \$1,250, which was a gesture by the town for a non-profit. Deb Parsons asked to speak to the kindergarten warrant. She said as a long-time Madison teacher she felt that Madison historically was a progressive town ahead of the curve but that now we are the only town in the valley that does not have full-day kindergarten. She said we try to put a full-day kindergarten in a half-day program and it is not possible. She said it does not allow for the opportunity of music and art as well as free time and socialization. She encouraged everybody to support the warrant article. Noreen Downs asked why the warrant article was in the amount of \$45,181. David Chase said this represents the accurate cost. Jim Curran added that it represents a half-time teacher. He said in our budget we cut 1.5 teachers and that half teacher would be made full time. He said this represents the salary and benefits of the second part of a half time teacher. Mike Benoit noted that approval of this warrant article would be unwinding a third of the proposed staffing cuts. Ray O'Brien noted that the budget committee did vote 4-3 in favor of this. Hersh Sosnoff added that the four

members of the budget committee who voted in favor felt that kindergarten did give the children a leg up and was something the town should be doing.

RESULTS: Article X will be printed on the ballot as it appears in the book per Mr. Epstein.

ADJOURNMENT: Motion by Jim Curran to adjourn, seconded by Mike Benoit. The meeting adjourned at 7: 50 PM

Total number of Madison voters participating in this meeting: 39.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia H. Ambrose  
School District Clerk  
Town of Madison