

MINUTES
TOWN OF HALIFAX
ANNUAL TOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT MEETING
MARCH 1, 2016

Pursuant to notice the inhabitants of the Town of Halifax, Vermont, who are legal voters in the Annual Town School District Meeting met at the West Halifax Elementary School multi-purpose room in West Halifax, Vermont, on Tuesday, March 1, 2016. The meeting was called to order by Moderator Patricia Pusey at 1:03 P.M. Moderator Pusey introduced the School Directors - Homer K. Sumner, Paul Blais and Kimberly Tefft; School Principal - Sandie Pentak and the Superintendent; and Town Clerk - Patricia Dow.

RECESS: Moderator Pusey called a brief recess to hear a report from District Representative Ann Manwaring.

Representative Ann Manwaring thanked Patti Pusey for all her years of support. Ann Manwaring shared some data about our community. Some successes of our agriculture in Vermont are a number one brewery in the world and a cheese maker named # 1 in the world. Vermont is the second healthiest state in the country. We are number 2 in the world in regard for infant mortality rate and Vermont is # 5 in the country for business start-ups. Manwaring left the rest of the discussion up to the assembly for an opportunity to ask questions.

Moderator Pusey brought the meeting to order, gave the guidelines for the conduct of the meeting and read the Annual Town School district Warning in its entirety.

The following business was transacted:

ARTICLE I: The results of the election by Australian Ballot for school district officers were as follows:

Moderator - one year

School Director - three years

Vicki Allen

Homer "Chum" Sumner

ARTICLE II: Arthur Copeland moved that the voters of the Halifax School District appropriate \$ 1,474,535 necessary for the support of its schools for the year beginning July 1, 2016. Linda Combs seconded the motion.

Marilou Parkhurst asks what the Principal salary covers? Homer Sumner says this is a full time salary, part time Principal and part time Title 1 teacher which is funded by the State. Marilou Parkhurst also asks about the salary for the 7-8 grade teacher. Sumner states this teacher teaches 2 grades full time. It has been moved and seconded to call the question.

Article II was so voted and Moderator Pusey declared Article II passed.

ARTICLE III: Arthur Copeland moved that the Halifax School District vote to authorize the School Directors to borrow money on the notes of the Town School District or otherwise in anticipation of taxes. Linda Combs seconded the motion. The article was so voted. Moderator Pusey declared Article III was approved.

ARTICLE IV: To transact any other nonbinding business brought before the meeting.

Homer Sumner spoke about act 46 and 156. Act 46 states that 900 students are needed to have an education district. Readsboro, Stamford and Halifax are working on becoming a school district. This merger would mean a 6 cent reduction in our tax rate. If we do nothing we would have a 5 cent increase in our tax rate and we would lose our small school grant. Which is about 71K per year. If we form this merger there would be one budget and one school board for the three towns. The total budget would be divided by the number of students and that would be the per pupil cost.

Bonnie Brown asks what happens if the per pupil cost does not support the individual schools budget. Sumner stated that would be up to the board and they might say that with a low enrollment the school might have to be closed. Options

would be looked at, at sending our students to other districts. School choice would be lost. Each school would raise tax dollars based on one per pupil cost.

Dave Moore asks if there would be one member of each town to be on the board. Sumner stated that the number of board members a town had would be based on either the population or the number of students. This would make up a 10 member board, 4 from 1 town and 3 from each of the other 2 towns.

Sue Kelly asks how does Halifax's budget compare to Readsboro and Stamford. Sumner stated that their budgets are lower. The difference is the number of high school students each town has. Halifax has the most.

The superintendent of our school district, Christopher A. Pratt, spoke. He addressed act 46 and 156. We have less than 900 students supervisory union wide. This is a small union. The choices come down to the voters. After July 1, 2017 if a plan is not adopted, the State will tell us what to do. We have a lot to lose if we do not come up with a solution. The small school grants will turn into a consolidation grant. If the other two towns (Readsboro and Stamford) vote the merger down, and Halifax votes yes, then Halifax won't get penalized because we could not move forward. We would not get the small school grant, but we would not get the 5 percent penalty either. The Halifax School board did a great job this year in keeping the budget down to avoid the penalty.

Arthur Copeland moved that the meeting be adjourned. Linda Combs seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 1:46 P.M.

Attest: Patricia Dow
Town Clerk

We, the undersigned, approve and attest that the record of the Annual Town School District Meeting of the Town of Halifax held at the West Halifax Elementary School multi-purpose room on Tuesday, March 1, 2016 is a true record of all action taken at that meeting.

Attest: Patricia A. Dow
School District Moderator

Attest: Lewis J. Johnson
Other Election Official