

MINUTES
TOWN OF HALIFAX
ANNUAL TOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT MEETING
MARCH 7, 2017

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 7, 2017. The meeting was called to order by Moderator Paul G. Blais at 1:00 P.M. Moderator Blais introduced the School Directors - Homer K. Sumner, Paul Blais and Kimberly Tefft; School Principal – Sandie Pentak and the Superintendent; and Town Clerk - Patricia Dow and Patricia Pusey, Parliamentarian.

Moderator Blais 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	Paul G. Blais
School Director – Three years	Paul G. Blais

ARTICLE II: Mitch Green moved that the voters of the Halifax School District approve the School Board to expend \$1,486,738 which is the amount the School Board has determined to be necessary for the ensuing fiscal year. It is estimated that this proposed budget, if approved, will result in education spending of \$14,395 per equalized pupil. This projected spending per equalized pupil is 7.3% higher than spending for the current year. Marilou Parkhurst seconded the motion.

Homer Sumner amended the article to decrease the budget by \$ 30,000 making the amended budget \$ 1,456,738. The amendment was seconded. Sumner stated we had \$50,000 in the budget for a new roof on half of the gym. A quote came in at \$20,000. It was asked if this amount could be used for arts or music? Sumner stated that this reduction makes this more in line with last years' budget and brings down our per pupil cost down to \$ 13,985. Saving on our tax rate.

Amendment was so voted and Moderator Blais declared the amendment so passed.

Cara Cheyette asked what is the consequence if we vote down the budget? Would it have any effect on the upcoming vote on the merger. Sumner stated the ramifications will be to have another Special Town Meeting to approve another budget, if not approved after June 30 we would go back to the previous years' budget. The merger would not stop, but it would send a message that they may not want to join a merger with a town that won't approve their budget.

Article II was so voted, Moderator Blais declared Article II so passed.

ARTICLE III: Margo Avakian 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. Andy Rice seconded the motion. Article III was so voted and Moderator Blais declared Article III so passed.

ARTICLE IV: To transact any other business which may legally come before the meeting.

Doug Parkhurst asked if it could be explained how a side by side district works? Sumner explained that to form a side by side, one side has to be the same. A unified district called Southern Valley would be Halifax, Readsboro, Stamford are all K8 schools that would be one side and Whitingham/Wilmington being a K12 would be the other side. A Superintendent would be shared. We would still have school choice we would keep our small schools grant and keep our hold harmless. To come up with a per pupil cost of education you take the total budget deduct

revenues and divide by number of equalized students. Last year we got \$ 398,314 this year will be \$ 295,993 dollars. \$103,000 lost on revenues this raised our per pupil cost by over \$1,000. To lose \$70,000 small schools grant looking at about another \$750 to \$800 per pupil spending.

Ray Combs asked if we are in the penalty phase? Sumner stated no, \$17,386 is the penalty phase and Halifax is at \$13,900.

Marilou Parkhurst stated we don't have any students in first grade, are we going to have a kindergarten next year? Sumner stated yes, we know of roughly 7 new Kindergarteners for next year and we have projections for Kindergarteners for the next 2 years. July 1 we started funding preschool and we get reimbursed. We had 10 participants this year.

Mary Brewster asked about the governor freezing budgets on education. Sumner stated the Governor put a proposal to freeze all school budgets. The school board budgets in the state are down 1.67%, tax rates are up 3.14%.

Andy Rice moved that the meeting be adjourned. Margo Avakian 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 7, 2017 is a true record of all action taken at that meeting.

Attest: _____
School District Moderator

Attest: Leves Sumner
Other Election Official