

MINUTES OF THE DELIBERATIVE SESSION  
ANNUAL SCHOOL DISTRICT  
KINGSTON, NEW HAMPSHIRE  
FEBRUARY 3, 2021

The Meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM by Jim McCarthy, Chair of the Budget Committee followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. The meeting took place at the Sanborn Regional High School Gymnasium at 17 Danville Road in Kingston, New Hampshire. Mr. McCarthy introduced the Budget Committee members.

Moderator Kurt Baitz introduced the panel as follows: Superintendent, Thomas Ambrose, Legal Counsel, Diane Gorrow, Business Administrator, Matthew Angell, School Board members, Jamie Fitzpatrick, Larry Heath (via remote connection), Dawn Dutton, Peter Broderick (excused), Vice Chair Tammy Mahoney and Chair Jim Baker. Budget Committee Members followed: Chair, Jim McCarthy, Vice Chair Moira Bashaw, Anne Collyer, Christine Kuzmitski (via remote connection), Mary Cyr, Vanessa Matias and Rick Edelman.

Mr. Baitz asked that anyone coming to the microphone to please state their name for the record and address any questions for the Board and Budget Committee through him. He also announced that the Second Session of the Annual Meeting for the ballot vote will be held on Tuesday, March 9th from 8 AM to 8 PM at the Swasey Gym for Kingston Voters and at 8D Merrimac Road (Fire Rescue Station) for Newton Voters, also open from 8 AM to 8 PM.

Moderator read Article 1 concerning election of school district officers to appear on the ballot in March. For School Board: one member from Kingston for three years, and one member from Newton for three years, For Moderator-one elected for one year and for Budget Committee: one member from Newton for three years, one member from Kingston for three years.

Moderator read Article 2-General Acceptance of Reports

*Article 2. Shall the reports of school district agents, auditors, committees, or officers chosen be accepted and placed on file?*

Moderator announced that the Article 2 will appear as presented.

Moderator announced Article 3-Operating Budget

Mr. Fitzpatrick made a Motion that we accept the Operating Budget and place it on the ballot as written.

Mr. Fitzpatrick read Article 3-Operating Budget as follows:

*Article 3.* - Shall the Sanborn Regional 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 at the first session, for the purposes set forth therein, totaling Thirty-five Million, Five hundred and Twenty-five Thousand, Nine Hundred and Forty-two Dollars (\$35,525,942)? Should this article be defeated, the default budget shall be Thirty-five Million, Five Hundred and Twenty-seven Thousand, Nine Hundred and Forty-two Dollars (\$35,527,942), the same as last year with certain adjustments required by previous action of the Sanborn Regional 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. (This warrant article does not include appropriations in any other warrant article.)

*Recommended by the Budget Committee In Favor: 8 Opposed: 0*

*Recommended by the Sanborn Regional School Board In Favor: 6 Opposed: 0*

*Operating Budget Estimated Tax Impact: Kingston: \$ 0.87 /\$1,000 Newton: \$ 0.94 /\$1,000*

*Default Budget Estimated Tax Impact Kingston: \$ 0.88 /\$1,000 Newton: \$ 0.95 /\$1,000*

The Moderator asked for if there was a second on the Motion. Mr. Baker seconded the Motion.

(The Moderator mentioned a previously forgotten thank you to Assistant Moderator, Kevin St. James for moderating in the adjacent room provided for those not wearing masks).

Moderator Baitz turned the meeting over to Mr. McCarthy, Chairperson for the Budget committee, who will present the Fiscal Year 2021-2022 Budget Proposal. Mr. McCarthy prefaced by saying that the RSA that governs the Budget Committee operations is RSA 32:1. The purpose of the Budget Committee is to assist its voters with prudent appropriation of public funds. Through that we go through a process in this district where the School Board sets goals and the administration recommends a budget to the school board. The School Board and the Budget Committee ask a lot of questions and get detailed answers for the administration. The School Board recommends a budget to the Budget Committee. The Budget Committee deliberates and recommends a budget that meets the educational needs and respects the burden to the taxpayer. All agree on this proposed operating budget.

Mr. McCarthy reviewed a slide presentation of the Operating Budget presented at the Public Hearing and explained each line item The Proposed Operating Budget is \$2000 less than the Default Budget. To view the slides of the Fiscal Year 2021-2022 Budget Proposal, [please click here.](#)

Moderator asked for any questions or discussion on article 3.

Cheryl Gannon (Kingston) – Good evening. (Question 1) On slide #4 under *More Professional Development* for \$50K, do we know what the current amount is for Professional Development? (Question. 2) on slide #6, *2021 School Board Goals, #2 Choose a New Grade Reporting System, including a new report card*. Is that a budget item and is that in the current budget? (Question 3) *Transportation Costs* (20K) the contract is going up and the cost is going up. I am assuming that's because enrollment is going up which I was surprised to see because we seemed to be trending down for the last 10 years. (Question 4) how was the projection of increased enrollment arrived at?

Chair Baker (School Board) addressed question 4 on the enrollment saying in 2018 we had a NESDEC study done which studied the births and building permits and looked back at the trends in Newton and Kingston and projected continued declines in enrollment (the including first the next few years) but because of homeschooling and COVID-19, the actual attendance dropped below what the NESDEC projected for this current year. The reason there's an increase is because we're estimating that those students will return to school next year but the decline it's still a decline in enrollment and it's pretty much matching what the NESDEC had estimated for the trend for the two towns in the district.

Business Administrator Matt Angell responded to Question 1 regarding Professional Development saying I have \$145,836 and that would be Professional Development for the teachers and administrators.

Superintendent Ambrose asked if that includes the amount in their Collective Bargaining Agreement. Mr. Angell answered, yes it does.

Mr. Ambrose clarified saying that money is not allocated by the administration for the purpose of increasing student achievement. It is selected rightfully and I'm fine with this, it's selected by the teachers so there's certain money that's in their Collective Bargaining Agreement and then there's other money that's allocated for the purpose of attaining the district goals and so I also want to clarify that the amount that was on the slide of \$50K is a future request that we wanted people to be aware of. It is not included in this year's budget. So if you read that slide carefully it says future requests. That's very important. That is not in the budget and it is a definite need

Superintendent Ambrose addressed Question 3 on the transportation saying the increase in the busing is not relative to student enrollments. The increase in the business is because the contract has expired and we're anticipating that costs will go up when we go out to bid.

The Moderator asked for any more comment, debate or discussion on Article 3. Seeing none, he announced it would appear as printed on the ballot in March.

Prior to reading Article 4- Administrators Collective Bargaining Agreement, Mr. Baker asked Mr. Heath for a Motion to approve it. Mr. Heath moved that we approve Article 4, Professional Staff Collective Bargaining Agreement as it reads.

*Article 4-* Shall the Sanborn Regional School District approve the cost items included in the collective bargaining agreement for professional staff reached between the School Board and the Sanborn Regional Education Association which calls for the following increases in salaries and benefits at current staffing levels over the amount paid in the prior fiscal year:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Estimated Increases</u>
1) 2021-2022	\$ 459,155
2) 2022-2023	\$ 536,340
3) 2023-2024	\$ 535,804

and further, to raise and appropriate the sum of Four Hundred Fifty-nine Thousand, One Hundred and Fifty-Five Dollars (\$459,155) for the 2021-22 fiscal year, such sum representing the additional costs attributable to the increase in salaries and benefits required by the new agreement over those of the appropriation at the current staffing levels?

*Recommended by the Budget Committee      In Favor: 8 Opposed 0*

*Recommended by the Sanborn Regional School Board   In Favor: 6 Opposed: 0*

*Estimated Tax Impact    Kingston: \$0.30/\$1,000    Newton: \$0.32/\$1,000*

Moderator asked for a second on the Motion. Motion seconded by Ms. Mahoney.

Moderator asked for any further discussion.

Mr. Fitzpatrick (School Board) said this is a tough year for the community, unprecedented times as we hear time and again, a lot of financial difficulties for a lot of families in our communities. This is a big ask. This is a lot of money and I know that there's a lot in the community that have been hurting and are going to see this and say I just can't do it. I know this because I get emails to that effect. I just want to point out a few things because I do understand those concerns. Between the Board and the Administration, we returned 2.3 million dollars to the taxpayers this year. We came up with a budget with the Budget Committee also which is a million-dollar decline from the budget from the prior year, just under a million. These are done in recognition, these difficult times and what we need to do. Ultimately though, we need to bring our teachers to parity with surrounding districts, both in pay and in student teacher ratios. One of the things that the budget does is it increases the student teacher ratios; 8.5 total head counts will be coming out. The goal is

to attrition as other adjustments have been made but we're losing good teachers to surrounding communities and the single greatest correlation to student performance and student output is good teachers it isn't low student teacher ratios. It is good teachers and though this is a big ask, ultimately we as a community need to try and find that parity so that we can keep our good teachers. We owe our students a better education than we're achieving today. If you look at our testing, we are not getting performance levels that are acceptable. The administration is working to address that; funding for a new curriculum is in the budget for Math and we've hired a new Math Coordinator. We're focused on these areas. We're looking at increasing the amount of time on instruction for Math and for English Language Arts. We understand that these have to be better for the taxpayers. A stronger school district with children performing will help property values. So though this is a big ask I am making it anyways. I think it's the right thing to do. We are being prudent with the money that we're spending, we're reducing budgets, we are turning money back to the taxpayers. We are changing student teacher ratios and the flip side of that is we need to pass this contract, so it's a big ask but that's what we're asking and I hope that people will support that. Thank you.

The Moderator asked for questions or comments from the public.

Michael Gannon (Kingston)-What is the percentage of increase for those 3 years?

Superintendent Ambrose responded 1.5% year 1, and 2% for years 2 and 3. There are also steps included in the contract.

Ms. Bashaw (Budget Committee Vice Chair) made a Motion to restrict reconsideration of Article 4. Moderator Baitz said she could do that after we complete discussion of the Article.

Mr. Baitz asked if there were any more questions. Seeing none he said Article 4 would be placed on the ballot as written.

Mr. Baker made a Motion to restrict reconsideration of Article 3-Operating Budget. Motion seconded by Ms. Collyer.

Liz Beebe (Kingston)- I just want to ask, before we put this as a restricted item, I liked what Michael Gannon had to say about adding the percent increases because it shows that it is not an outlandish increase. It is not even a 3% cost of living increase so I don't know if it is possible to make that adjustment (for Article 4).

Moderator Baitz asked if there are no more questions on restrictions, all this in favor, say aye and those opposed, say nay. The ayes, have it

Moderator referred to Mr. Heath who asked for a Motion to approve as read Article 5-  
**Special Meeting-Professional Staff Collective Bargaining Agreement**

**Article 5. Special Meeting – Professional Staff Collective Bargaining Agreement**

Shall the Sanborn Regional School District if Article 4 is defeated, authorize the governing body to call one special meeting, at its option, to address Article 4 cost items only?

*Recommended by the Sanborn Regional School Board In Favor: 6 Opposed: 0*

Moderator asked for a second on the Motion. Motion seconded by Mr. Baker.

Moderator asked for further questions on Article 5 and with none heard, said the Article will appear on the ballot as written.

Mr. Fitzpatrick made a Motion to restrict reconsideration of Articles 4 and 5, seconded by Mr. McCarthy.

Mr. Fitzpatrick (School Board) said I just wanted to comment on the public comment. I would not be in favor of putting the percentages on because if you put the percentages, you have to say plus steps because it's not just the percentages and if you put percentages plus steps and people don't understand how contracts work, they're very confused They're thinking now what does plus steps mean? What else are they getting? I don't understand this. This is this is something that I'm not comfortable with. I am against it so I don't know but that's why I want to restrict. I want to at least respond to the comments. Thank you

Mr. Baitz said the Motion was to restrict reconsideration of Articles 4 and 5. All those in favor say, aye and those opposed say nay. The ayes have it.

Mr. Baitz moved on to Article 6. Mr. Baker made a Motion that we approve Article 6, seconded by Ms. Dutton. Mr. Baker read Article 6 as follows:

**Article 6-Administrators Collective Bargaining Agreement**

*Article 6* -Shall the Sanborn Regional School District approve the cost items included in the collective bargaining agreement for administrators reached between the School Board and the Teamsters Local 633 which calls for the following increases in salaries and benefits at current staffing levels over the amount paid in the prior fiscal year.

1) 2021-2022	\$26,829
2) 2022-2023	\$47,811
3) 2023-2024	\$48,894
4) 2024-2025	\$49,997

and further, to raise and appropriate the sum of Twenty-Six Thousand, Eight Hundred and Twenty-nine Dollars (\$26,829) for the 2021-2022 fiscal year, such sum representing the additional costs attributable to the increase in salaries and benefits required by the new agreement over those of the appropriation at the current staffing levels?

*Recommended by the Budget Committee      In Favor: 8 Opposed 0*

*Recommended by the Sanborn Regional School Board   In Favor: 6 Opposed: 0*

*Estimated Tax Impact    Kingston: \$0.02 /\$1,000    Newton: \$0.02 /\$1,000*

The Moderator asked if there were any questions for Article 6.

Cheryl Gannon (Kingston)- Could you tell us which administrators are included in this contract and which are not? Question 2: this is a four-year contract which is kind of unusual. We usually see 2, or 3 here, so I was wondering why it was decided to be a 4-year contract and if people are opposed to a 4-year contract, would it be possible (this is a procedural question) at the Deliberative Session, since this is a bargaining agreement, could that be changed or is that not able to be changed?

Mr. Baitz answered that it is non-negotiable for being changed as it is a Collective Bargaining Agreement between the Board and the Collective Bargaining group.

Mr. Ambrose said this Collective Bargaining Agreement includes building level Administrators and Directors; Principals, Assistant Principals, Director of Technology. It does not include Central Office level Administrators.

He went on to say it is a 4-year Agreement year because the Administrators recognize that having multiple Collective Bargaining Agreements on one warrant is difficult to pass, so we are trying to stagger it so that we are negotiating one Collective Bargaining Agreement per year instead of multiple. This year we did two, a couple years ago we had to do two or three. It's very challenging to get them done when we're trying to get it so that the support staff are one year, teachers are in another, administrators are another and just continue to roll forward. In order to do that, we needed to do a four-year agreement with the Administration. I also want to note that if you look at Article 6, the first year is low. That is because the administration recognizes that this is a very difficult year for our community financially, so they asked for less money and also negotiated with their Union to lower their health care costs to offset the cost of the raise in the first year. So, they were team players to try to help our community through these difficult times.

Mr. Baitz asked if there were any further questions on Article 6.

Annie Collyer (Budget Committee)- I just want to point out that the Administrators get cost of living increases only. They do not get steps. So this is their total; just the cost-of – living increase.

Michael Gannon (Kingston)-What would the percentages be on those increases?

Superintendent Ambrose responded 1.5% in year 1 and 2.75% in the other 3 years.

The Moderator asked for any further discussion on Article 6, seeing none he said it will be placed on the ballot as written.

Mr. Baitz moved on to Article 7. Mr. Baker made a Motion that we approve Article 7 as written, seconded by Ms. Mahoney.

#### **Article 7- Special Meeting – Administrators Collective Bargaining Agreement**

*Article 7*-Shall the Sanborn Regional School District if Article 6 is defeated, authorize the governing body to call one special meeting, at its option, to address Article 6 cost items only?

*Recommended by the Sanborn Regional School Board In Favor: 6 Opposed: 0*

Mr. Baker said this Article is basically what I call a do-over. If Article 6 fails at the polls, then the Administration has an opportunity to present another proposal to the public at a special meeting.

The Moderator asked for any discussion on Article 7.

Ms. Mahoney asked to restrict reconsideration of Articles 6 and 7, seconded by Ms. Collyer.

Mr. Baitz said there is a Motion on the floor to restrict reconsideration of Articles 6 and 7. Is there any discussion? Seeing none, he asked for all those in favor, say aye and all those opposed say nay. The ayes have it.

Mr. Baitz moved to Article 8- Capital Reserve Fund-Unanticipated Educational Expenses. Ms. Mahoney made a Motion to place Article 8 on the warrant, seconded by Ms. Collyer.

Ms. Mahoney read Article 8 as follows:

#### **ARTICLE 8.- Capital Reserve Fund-Unanticipated Educational Expenses**

*Article 8*- Shall the Sanborn Regional School District Vote to raise and appropriate up to Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$50,000) to be placed in the Capital Reserve Fund-Unanticipated



Educational Expenses established at the 2019 Annual Meeting. This sum to come from June 30 fund balance available for transfer on July 1 instead of returning the money to the community. No amount to be raised from taxation.

*Recommended by the Budget Committee      In Favor: 8 Opposed: 0*

*Recommended by the Sanborn Regional School Board   In Favor: 6 Opposed: 0*

*Estimated Tax Impact: Kingston: \$0.00 /\$1,000      Newton: \$0.00 /\$1,000*

Moderator asked for questions or discussion on Article 8

Cheryl Gannon (Kingston)- a couple of questions on this and actually I'm going to ask the same question on both of these so if I pose them now maybe you can answer when Article 9 comes up? (Moderator- just keep it to Article 8 and then they'll answer it as we go). So it says up to \$50K. Would there be a reason why you would not put the \$50K in? If so, how would that change the tax impact? (Well there is no tax impact.)

Superintendent Ambrose said it says up to \$50K just in case there isn't \$50K left at the end of the year, so it doesn't obligate the district to raise funds, it only obligates the district to retain the funds should there be an unexpected fund balance.

Cheryl Gannon (Kingston)- Okay and so each year we're asked to put additional funds into this fund and I was wondering what is the anticipated total that you want to see in this fund?

Superintendent Ambrose said thanks for asking Cheryl, that's a great question. It is very important to recognize that in order to run a \$36M organization, the organization has to have Contingency Funds for unanticipated expenses. So for example, if we have class sizes of 18 or 19 or 20 in grades K- 3 and a large group of students move in and we need to add a teacher, that would come from these funds.

So we don't necessarily have the total percentage of Revolving Funds that we should have for these types of unanticipated expenses for capital, the buildings, staff, or any area should be roughly \$1.2M (3-4%) and we're currently far below that. So the total amount for Contingency Funds should be roughly \$1M to \$1.2M and we are just in our infancy of growing these funds annually.

Cheryl Gannon (Kingston)- So I think in the budget it said there was currently like 150K?

Superintendent Ambrose said for that one fund but there are multiple funds; there's a Special Education one, there's one for Facilities.

Cheryl Gannon (Kingston)- How much has actually been expended from these funds?

Superintendent Ambrose said as of yet, zero so we have done very well anticipating student enrollments which means that we have been able to keep things calm but as we tighten up the budget and increase our class sizes, that may not be the case. A good example is we added 2 teachers at the Middle School for next year. Had we had full in-person school this year, we would have had to use those funds to hire a teacher.

Moderator asked for any further questions or discussion on Article 8. Seeing none, that will go on the ballot as read.

Ms. Mahoney moved to restrict reconsideration of Article 8, seconded by Jim McCarthy.

Mr. Baitz said a Motion has been made to restrict reconsideration of Article 8. Is there any discussion? See none, he called for a vote. All those in favor say aye, and those opposed, say nay. The ayes have it.

Moderator moved to Article 9-Capital Reserve Fund-Unanticipated Educational Expenses. Ms. Dutton made a Motion to place Article 9 on the ballot, seconded by Ms. Mahoney. Ms. Dutton read Article 9 as follows:

**Article 9- Capital Reserve Fund-Unanticipated Educational Expenses**

Article 9-Shall the Sanborn Regional School District Vote to raise and appropriate up to Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$50,000) to be placed in the Capital Improvement and Maintenance Capital Reserve Fund previously established. This sum to come from June 30 fund balance available for transfer on July 1 instead of returning the money to the community. No amount to be raised from taxation.

*Recommended by the Budget Committee      In Favor: 8 Opposed: 0*

*Recommended by the Sanborn Regional School Board In Favor: 6 Opposed: 0*

*Estimated Tax Impact      Kingston: \$0.00 /\$1,000      Newton: \$0.00 /\$1,000*

Mr. Baitz asked for any questions on Article 9.

Cheryl Gannon (Kingston)- How much do you anticipate you want to have in this fund?

Superintendent Ambrose said this building (high school) is a \$33M building and I would anticipate having between \$500K and \$600K in this fund at a minimum This would be for things like the roof goes or there is a problem with the boiler.

Cheryl Gannon (Kingston)-But the other fund was \$1.2M?

Superintendent Ambrose- The other fund for \$1M-\$1.2M is a total number between Special Education, Facilities and Staffing.

We had limited reserves when I was hired and you can't run a building like this without them, so we are trying to grow them carefully over a period of years.

Cheryl Gannon (Kingston)- Do you have any idea how much money has been spent from this fund over the past 1-2 years?

Business Administrator Matthew Angell-I can't of the top of my head, but I think we may have withdrawn some funds for a roof. I do anticipate withdrawing some funds for a new boiler at Bakie School.

Moderator asked for any further questions or discussion on Article 9.

Rick Edelman (Budget Committee)- How old is this building?

Superintendent Ambrose- this high school is 16 years old and Bakie School and Memorial School are much older, so you can imagine their boiler. We are having issues here too with a building almost 20 years old. It looks really nice and that is due our custodians, a huge shout out to them. They're fantastic. This building looks brand new because of their hard work and efforts every day and it does not go unnoticed. It is amazing but it is almost like having an older car that looks really nice. There may be some things under the hood that need to be addressed.

Vanessa Matias (Budget Committee)- So the water filtration and the fire alarm system, are they from accounts like this?

Superintendent Ambrose-Yes, if they are not covered by insurance, that helps us.

Moderator asked for any further questions or discussion on Article 9. Seeing none, he said it will go on the ballot as written.

Mr. Fitzpatrick moved to restrict reconsideration of Article 9, seconded by Ms. Mahoney.

Mr. Baitz said there is a Motion to restrict reconsideration of Article 9. Is there any discussion? Seeing none, all those in favor, say aye, all opposed. say nay.  
The ayes have it.

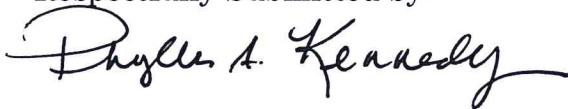
The Moderator thanked everyone for coming, including the Assistant Moderator, Kevin St. James.

He reviewed the dates, locations and times for voting on March 9, 2021. Kingston voters: Swasey Gym from 8 AM to 8PM and Newton voters: 8D Merrimac Road (Fire Rescue Station) from 8 AM to 8 PM.

Meeting adjourned at 7:54 PM by Moderator

Mr. Baker Adjourned the School Board Meeting at 7:54 PM

Respectfully Submitted by:

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Phyllis A. Kennedy". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "P".

Phyllis Kennedy- District Clerk

Mr. Baitz said there is a Motion to restrict reconsideration of Article 9. Is there any discussion? Seeing none, all those in favor, say aye, all opposed. say nay.  
The ayes have it.

The Moderator thanked everyone for coming, including the Assistant Moderator, Kevin St. James.

He reviewed the dates, locations and times for voting on March 9, 2021. Kingston voters: Swasey Gym from 8 AM to 8PM and Newton voters: 8D Merrimac Road (Fire Rescue Station) from 8 AM to 8 PM.

Meeting adjourned at 7:54 PM by Moderator

Mr. Baker Adjourned the School Board Meeting at 7:54 PM

Respectfully Submitted by:

  
Phyllis Kennedy  
District Clerk

Phyllis Kennedy- District Clerk