

# 2019 ANNUAL SCHOOL DISTRICT MEETING DELIBERATIVE SESSION MINUTES

## TOWN OF PITTSFIELD SCHOOL DISTRICT DELIBERATIVE SESSION February 6, 2019

The Pittsfield School District Deliberative Session was held at the Pittsfield Elementary School on Wednesday, February 6, 2019. School District Moderator Gerard LeDuc called the meeting to order at 7:04PM. School Board Chairman Wolfe led the *Pledge of Allegiance*. Moderator LeDuc pointed out the emergency exits. He stated there was a change in legislation requiring those who make a motion and then the second identify themselves for the record. He introduced Superintendent John Freeman, School District Attorney John Teague and School Board members in attendance: Bea Douglas, Heidi Asdot, Adam Gauthier, and Chairman Michael Wolfe.

Moderator LeDuc read the introduction to the posted 2019 School District Meeting Warrant:

The inhabitants of the School District of Pittsfield Local School in the state of New Hampshire qualified to vote in School District affairs are hereby notified that the Deliberative Session will be held as follows:

Date: February 6, 2019  
Snow Date: February 7, 2019  
Time: 7:00 p.m.  
Location: Pittsfield Elementary School

Second Session of Annual Meeting (Official Ballot Voting)  
Date: March 12, 2019  
Time: 7:00 am-7:00 p.m.  
Location: Pittsfield Town Hall  
85 Main Street  
Pittsfield NH 03263

Governing Body Certification: We certify and attest that on or before January 28, 2019, a true and attested copy of this document was posted at the place of meeting, and at SAU 51 Office, Pittsfield Middle High School, Pittsfield Post Office, and the Pittsfield Town Hall and that an original was delivered to the Clerk.

### **ARTICLE 01 School Lunch Program**

To see if the Pittsfield School District will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$330,000 for the support of the School Lunch Program. This appropriation will be funded by a like amount of revenue from the sales of food and State and Federal sources. (Estimated tax impact of this article: \$0) **Recommended** by the Pittsfield School Board. **Recommended** by the Pittsfield Budget Committee (10 yes, 0 no). (Majority vote required.)

## 2019 ANNUAL SCHOOL DISTRICT MEETING DELIBERATIVE SESSION MINUTES

Article 01 was read by Moderator LeDuc.

Motion made by School Board member Asdot to approve Article 01 as read, seconded by School Board member Gauthier.

Moderator LeDuc opened the floor for discussion.

Budget Committee Chairman Robert Schiferle explained the reason behind the required wording of the warrant articles. He explained the food program is paid for through the sale of food, and state and federal funding. There is no tax impact. He stated that he wanted to offer an explanation because at the election last year, our first year of SB2, a significant number of people voted against this Article and Article 02, and he wanted to clear up any confusion created by the wording.

No further discussion.

### **ARTICLE 02 Receive and expend grant funds**

To see if the Pittsfield School District will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$850,000 for the support of Federal and private foundation grant-funded educational programs of the Pittsfield School District. This appropriation is contingent upon receiving revenue from Federal grants and private foundations and will be expended in accordance with Federal and State requirements upon approval by the NH Department of Education or private foundation requirements. (Estimated tax impact of this article: \$0) **Recommended** by the Pittsfield School Board. **Recommended** by the Pittsfield Budget Committee (10 yes, 0 no). (Majority vote required.)

Article 02 was read by Moderator LeDuc.

Motion made by School Board Chairman Wolfe to approve Article 02 as read, seconded by School Board member Asdot.

Moderator LeDuc opened the floor for discussion.

No discussion.

### **ARTICLE 03 Operating Budget**

Shall the Pittsfield 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 \$10,399,738? Should this article be defeated, the default budget shall be \$10,245,905, which is the same as last year, with certain adjustments required by previous action of the Pittsfield 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. (Estimated tax impact of this article:

## 2019 ANNUAL SCHOOL DISTRICT MEETING DELIBERATIVE SESSION MINUTES

\$0.83/thousand.) **Recommended** by the Pittsfield School Board. **Recommended** by the Pittsfield Budget Committee (10 yes, 0 no). (Majority vote required.)

Article 03 was read by Moderator LeDuc.

Motion made by School Board chairman Wolfe to approve Article 03 as read, seconded by School Board member Douglas.

Moderator LeDuc opened the floor for discussion.

Budget Committee Chairman Schiferle stated last year the proposed budget failed and the default budget went into effect. It was necessary to eliminate a number of staffing positions and educational programs which has had a direct impact on our students. In an effort to keep the budget down as requested, the School Board did not add the programs or positions back into this proposed budget. If this proposed budget does not pass and the default budget goes into effect, there is a possibility that even more positions and programs would need to be cut. He stated there were members of the Budget Committee who felt the School Board proposed budget should have been larger.

Louie Houle asked people to look at the school ballot first in the voting booth. It will be much shorter than the town ballot. He strongly encouraged people to vote in favor of this proposed budget. He stated foreign language is currently taught by Rosetta Stone® instead of a teacher. Good colleges want a minimum of three years of foreign language and Rosetta Stone® at most, provides two years. He no longer has children in school, but believes students today should have at least the same opportunities as they had, not less. He urged everyone to vote yes for this article.

Dan Schroth expressed his trust in the school and wants to support what they do. He believes kids will need more educational support to succeed in the workforce.

Jason Isabelle stated he is in the front line of hiring students from the school, and we need to do more to support their education. He stated the students cannot succeed if we do not provide the financial support needed for their education.

No further discussion.

### **Article 04 3 year Collective Bargaining Agreement**

To see if the school district will vote to approve the cost items included in the collective bargaining agreement reached between the Pittsfield School Board and the Educational Association of Pittsfield Teachers which calls for the following increases in salaries and benefits at the current staffing level:

Fiscal Year 2019-2020 Estimated Increase \$144,977 Estimated Tax Impact \$0.55/thousand

Fiscal Year 2020-2021 Estimated Increase \$153,308 Estimated Tax Impact \$0.58/thousand

## 2019 ANNUAL SCHOOL DISTRICT MEETING DELIBERATIVE SESSION MINUTES

Fiscal Year 2021-2022 Estimated Increase \$160,611 Estimated Tax Impact \$0.61/thousand and further to raise and appropriate \$144,977 for the upcoming fiscal year, such sum representing the additional costs attributable to the increase in salaries and benefits required by the new agreement over those that would be paid at current staffing levels. **Recommended** by the Pittsfield School Board. **Recommended** by the Pittsfield Budget Committee (10 yes, 0 no). (Majority vote required.)

Article 04 was read by Moderator LeDuc.

Motion made by School Board member Douglas to accept Article 04 as read. School Board member Gauthier seconded the motion.

Moderator LeDuc opened the floor for discussion.

Budget Committee Chairman Schiferle stated the Budget Committee reviewed the proposed contract. He stated the teachers will pay more for health insurance and the proposed pay increase basically covers the cost of the increased insurance costs. He believes this is the best deal the taxpayers can ask for. He reminded the Body that our teachers are some of the lowest paid in the state. He stated the Budget Committee overwhelmingly recommends the voters support this contract.

Dan Schroth thanked those who worked on the contract. He appreciates that this is a 3 year contract and not a 1 year contract. He feels it is much more efficient. He believes we need to support the teachers.

Fred Hast stated that the teachers will pay 12% toward their health insurance costs the first year of this contract, but the town employees are paying 2%. He stated we have dedicated people working in our schools. They could go elsewhere for a lot more money. He encouraged voters to support this contract.

School Board Member Bea Douglas stated she negotiated this contract on behalf of the School Board. She thanked the teachers for working with the Board. They had to work hard to make sure the teachers were not going to take home less pay. She stated she heard the concerns last year that there should be a 3 year contract, and they worked toward a 3 year contract. She heard concerns that the teachers should pay more for their health insurance, and they agreed to pay more for their health insurance. She stressed that we need to support our staff. They are dedicated and committed to our students and our community. She asked that the Body support this contract.

Fred Hast stated the teachers will be paying a larger percentage of their insurance costs each year of this contract.

Louie Houle stated he testified at the State Legislative hearings on school funding and the adequacy grant. He is disappointed in a few legislators who he feels do not have a sense of

## 2019 ANNUAL SCHOOL DISTRICT MEETING DELIBERATIVE SESSION MINUTES

reality. He stated we don't pay our teachers nearly enough. Students come to school without socks or boots and there are teachers who are using their own money to buy them the needed items. Students come to school hungry and their teachers make sure they get breakfast. This is all before school starts. He stated we are hearing all these great things from the Governor and the Department of Education about how wonderful ELO (Extend Learning Opportunities) programs are and the availability of college credit courses in high schools. Pittsfield School District was at the forefront of ELO program development and offered courses for college credit, but we can no longer afford those programs. He would like to invite the Governor and the head of the Department of Education to anonymously come in and sit in classrooms and walk the halls for a week and see what things are really like not only in Pittsfield's schools, but many other school districts. He said he is seeing some movement in Concord. We are fortunate to have our State House Representative Jim Allard on the education committee, and there are others who are talking about change. He stated Superintendent Freeman and School Board Chairman Wolfe also testified at the hearing. Mr. Houle stated a Representative mentioned the beautiful artwork on the walls from Pittsfield High School, and Dr. Freeman agreed how nice it was and encouraged them to enjoy it now. We may not have an art program next year. Mr. Houle hopes the legislators are listening and that they not only freeze the adequacy grant, but restore it to its previous level.

No further discussion.

### **Article 05 To allow a special meeting if the collective bargaining agreement is defeated/amended**

Shall the Pittsfield School District, if Warrant Article #4 is defeated, authorize the governing body to call one special meeting, at its option, to address Warrant Article #4 cost items only? **Recommended** by the Pittsfield School Board. **Recommended** by the Pittsfield Budget Committee (10 yes, 0 no). (Majority vote required.)

Article 05 was read by Moderator LeDuc.

Motion made by School Board member Douglas to accept Article 05 as read. School Board Chairman Wolfe seconded the motion.

Moderator LeDuc opened the floor for discussion.

Fred Hast stated we only have 50 people in attendance, but will have significantly more voting in March. He voiced his concern that people will not have all the information when they vote.

Ed Trzcinski suggested moving the school district meeting from a week night to a weekend so it would be more convenient to attend.

No further discussion.

## 2019 ANNUAL SCHOOL DISTRICT MEETING DELIBERATIVE SESSION MINUTES

### **ARTICLE 06 Establish a dumpster replacement reserve fund**

To see if the school district will vote to establish a Dumpster Replacement Capital Reserve Fund under the provisions of RSA 35:1 for replacement of dumpsters used at the schools and to raise and appropriate the sum of \$3000 to be placed in this fund. Further, to name the Pittsfield School Board as agents to expend from said fund. (Estimated Tax impact of this article: \$0.02. **Recommended** by the Pittsfield School Board. **Recommended** by the Pittsfield Budget Committee (10 yes, 0 no). (Majority vote required.)

Article 06 was read by Moderator LeDuc.

Motion made by Fred Hast to accept Article 06 as read. School Board Chairman Wolfe seconded the motion.

Moderator LeDuc opened the floor for discussion.

Fred Hast stated the solid waste committee put the dumpsters at the schools in Pittsfield, Barnstead, Chichester and Epsom. The revenue from recyclables covered the cost in the past, but that revenue source has dropped significantly and the BCEP can no longer offer the dumpsters for free. He stated the life span of a dumpster is approximately 10 years.

Budget Committee Chairman Schiferle stated this capital reserve is a lot smaller than other reserve funds, but still important. A capital reserve fund was created instead of adding a new dumpster to the operating budget so we can set aside money in increments until dumpsters are needed instead of paying for them in one lump sum.

No further discussion.

### **ARTICLE 07 Tennis court resurfacing and fence replacement**

To see if the Pittsfield School District will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$35,000 for the purpose of resurfacing the tennis courts and replacing the fence of the tennis court located at Drake Field. (Estimated tax impact of this article: \$0.14/thousand. **Recommended** by the Pittsfield School Board. **Recommended** by the Pittsfield Budget Committee (10 yes, 0 no). (Majority vote required.)

Article 07 was read by Moderator LeDuc.

Motion made by School Board Chairman Wolfe to accept Article 07 as read. School Board member Gauthier seconded the motion.

Moderator LeDuc opened the floor for discussion.

Ed Trzcinski asked why this expense is not in the town general operating budget.

## 2019 ANNUAL SCHOOL DISTRICT MEETING DELIBERATIVE SESSION MINUTES

School Board Chairman Wolfe explained that Drake's Field is School District property. It was gifted by Colonel Drake to the school.

Fred Hast stated it used to be one of the best tennis courts in the state. He believes this would be money well spent. A lot of people in town and outside of Pittsfield use the facility.

Budget Committee Chairman Schiferle stated this article demonstrates transparency. The School Board did not try to bury the issue in the proposed operating budget, but is leaving the decision up to the voters.

Louie Houle stated the amount raised by tax dollars for the school is not much different than for the town. He stated it is a bigger budget, but the School District also receives offsetting funds from other sources including grants, and state and federal sources.

No further discussion.

### **ARTICLE 08 Petition article to rescind SB2**

Shall we RESCIND the provisions of RSA 40:13 (known as SB2) to allow official ballot voting on all issues before the school on the second Tuesday of March? (3/5-majority ballot vote required)

Article 08 was read by Moderator LeDuc.

Motion made by School Board Chairman Wolfe to accept Article 08 as read. School Board member Gauthier seconded the motion.

Paul Nickerson moved to amend Article 8 to read as follows: "Shall we rescind the provisions of RSA 40:13 (known as SB2), as adopted by the Pittsfield School District on March 14, 2017, so that the official ballot will no longer be used for voting on all questions, but only for the election of officers and certain other questions for which the official ballot is required by state law?"

(3/5 majority ballot vote required)

School Board member Gauthier seconded the motion.

Moderator LeDuc opened the floor for discussion on the amendment.

Louie Houle believes the experiment of SB2 has run its course. He encouraged voters to vote in favor of this article. He once again urged people to look at the school ballot first, because after the voter looks at the town ballot they are going to be frustrated at its length. He stated this form of government is meant for much larger communities. We were told we would have a lot of people at these deliberative sessions. But there are far fewer people in attendance. It is frustrating to go over the articles and not have a final vote. He stated its only purpose is to cut.

## **2019 ANNUAL SCHOOL DISTRICT MEETING DELIBERATIVE SESSION MINUTES**

It is easy to go into a booth, not know what you are looking at, and vote no. He urged voters to end it. Mr. Houle explained that the proposed amended verbiage is what is required by state statute.

No further discussion.

Moderator LeDuc called for a vote on the amended wording of Article 08.

**The amended language of Article 08 passed by card vote.**

No further discussion.

School Board Chairman Wolfe made a motion to adjourn the meeting. School Board member Douglas seconded the motion.

Moderator LeDuc adjourned the meeting at 8:24 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Erica Anthony  
School District Clerk