

# **2023 ANNUAL SCHOOL DISTRICT MEETING DELIBERATIVE SESSION MINUTES**

## **TOWN OF PITTSFIELD SCHOOL DISTRICT DELIBERATIVE SESSION February 9, 2023**

School District Moderator Gerard LeDuc called the First Session of the 2023 School District Meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. in the Pittsfield Middle High School library media center Thursday, February 9, 2023.

After explaining the rules of procedure, School District Moderator LeDuc introduced the School Board members: Adam Gauthier, Adam Cote, Sandra Adams, Sarah Duval and Molly Goggin. He also introduced School District Attorney Barbara Loughman. He then read the introduction to the warrant and Article 01:

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 Annual School District Meeting will be held as follows:

The first session of the annual meeting (deliberative session), to be held in the Pittsfield Middle High School Media Center at 23 Oneida Street in said Pittsfield on Thursday, February 9, 2023, at 6:30 p.m. The second session of annual meeting (official voting) to be held in the Pittsfield Middle High School gymnasium on Tuesday, March 14, 2023 from 7:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m.

### **ARTICLE 01:**

To choose by ballot the following officers:

- one School Board member for a three (3) year term
- one School Board member for a one (1) year term
- one School District Treasurer for a three (3) year term

### **ARTICLE 02 Operating Budget**

To see if the Pittsfield School District will vote to 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 \$10,379,918. Should this article be defeated, the default budget shall be \$10,267,480, 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: \$0.39

Majority vote required.

Recommended by the Pittsfield School Board (5 Yes, 0 No)

Recommended by the Pittsfield Budget Committee (8 Yes, 2 No)

## 2023 ANNUAL SCHOOL DISTRICT MEETING DELIBERATIVE SESSION MINUTES

Article 02 was read by School District Moderator LeDuc.

Louie Houle III called for a point of order. He stated School District Moderator LeDuc read the default budget was \$10,219,159.00, but according to the handout, the default budget states \$10,267,480.00. Superintendent Bryan Lane responded there was an error, and that the correct default budget amount is \$10,267,480.00

Motion made by School Board Chairperson Gauthier to approve Article 02 as read, seconded by School Board Member Adams.

School District Moderator LeDuc opened the floor for discussion.

School District Board Chairperson Adam Gauthier welcomed the Body. Accompanied by the PowerPoint presentation, he explained that the proposed budget is a 2.12% increase over the 2022 budget. However, the School District is expected to receive an additional \$77,416.00 from Federal and State adequacy grants reducing the increase to the taxpayer to 1.4% resulting in an estimated tax rate increase of \$0.39. For a property valued at \$200,000.00, that would equal an estimated increase of \$78.00. The default budget is \$10,267,480.00. This is \$103,365.00 more than the current 2022 budget, and \$117,385.00 more than the proposed 2023 budget. If the 2023 proposed budget does not pass, the estimated tax rate increase would be \$0.14. The tax impact figures are estimates and may change depending on the setting of the tax rate in October of 2023.

School District Board Chairperson Gauthier explained the major areas impacting the budget increase are out of the School District's control: There is a 15% increase in health benefit costs and a 3% increase in dental benefit costs. The School District is estimating an 8% increase in utility costs and a 6% increase in transportation costs. These cost items total \$165,293.00. Other items added to the budget include:

- Reinstatement of funding for the Drake's Field summer program
- Addition of a reading specialist, a position required by the Department of Education
- An increase of the minimum hourly wage from \$14.50 to \$15.00 per hour
- Continuation of the replacement programs for furniture, technology and carpet removal at the elementary school.

Louis Houle asked if the \$77,000.00 was a one-time grant or would it be renewed each year. Superintendent Lane responded there are no guarantees, but suspects the School District would probably receive a similar amount going forward.

Budget Committee Chairwoman Katie Bocash explained the Town warrant shows the total estimated tax impact and the School District warrant shows the estimated tax rate increase. She noted this may cause confusion.

## **2023 ANNUAL SCHOOL DISTRICT MEETING DELIBERATIVE SESSION MINUTES**

Mike Cabral asked if contracts go out to bid. Superintendent Lane responded stated School Board policy dictates that all projects over \$5,000.00 go out to bid.

Dan Schroth made a motion to increase the proposed budget by \$1.00. He explained he had asked BCEP, the Selectmen, and the voters attending the Town Deliberative Session to each support a \$10,000.00 increase to their proposed operating budgets to form a committee to work toward combating climate change. He was not successful. He is now asking for \$1.00 to create a line item. He would like to create a committee including a student from each grade 7-12 to address climate concerns and possible steps that could be taken to mitigate the impact of climate change. He feels it is very important to have the students be a large part of the committee, because this issue will impact them the most. It is important to act now. He gave an example of the Hollis School District, that instituted a food waste reduction program. Since November 2022, they have kept 3500lbs of food waste out of the landfill. He stated food waste is a large contributor to methane gas. He stated that he has learned we need to "fail fast and fail better." It is the fastest way to success. He read a quote: "to do nothing is to deny the existing of others." Andrea Riel seconded his amendment. School District Moderator LeDuc called for a hand vote. He determined the vote was too close to call, and asked the Supervisors of the Checklist to count the votes.

11 yes votes. 14 no votes. Amendment fails by hand vote.

**There being no further discussion, Article 02 shall appear on the ballot as originally written.**

### **ARTICLE 03 FOOD SERVICE 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

Majority vote required.

Recommended by the Pittsfield School Board. (5 Yes, 0 No)

Recommended by the Pittsfield Budget Committee (10 yes, 0 no)

Article 03 was read by School District Moderator LeDuc.

Motion made by School Board Member Adams to approve Article 03 as read, seconded by School Board Member Goggin.

School District Moderator LeDuc opened the floor for discussion.

Accompanied by the PowerPoint presentation, School Board member Adams explained that this warrant article asks the voters for permission to accept federal funds to support the food service program. There is no tax impact should this warrant article pass.

## **2023 ANNUAL SCHOOL DISTRICT MEETING DELIBERATIVE SESSION MINUTES**

Louis Houle asked for clarification. Superintendent Lane explained that the federal government requires approval from the voters to disperse grant funds.

Carl Anderson asked if the proposed \$330,000.00 was the same amount that was approved by the Budget Committee. Superintendent Lane confirmed it is the same amount. It was also the same amount last year.

Scot Palmer asked if there was any money left over last year. Superintendent Lane responded that there was not. The food service program runs in a deficit annually.

**There being no further discussion, Article 03 shall appear on the ballot as written.**

### **ARTICLE 04 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

Majority vote required.

Recommended by the Pittsfield School Board. (5 Yes, 0 No)

Recommended by the Pittsfield Budget Committee (10 yes, 0 no)

Motion made by School Board Member Cote to approve Article 04 as read, seconded by School Board Member Duval.

School District Moderator LeDuc opened the floor for discussion.

Accompanied by the PowerPoint presentation, School Board member Adams explained this warrant article asks the voters to give the School District permission to accept federal funds to support academic programs. There is no tax impact should this warrant article pass.

**There being no further discussion, Article 04 shall appear on the ballot as written.**

School District Moderator LeDuc asked if there was any other business to be brought before the Body.

## 2023 ANNUAL SCHOOL DISTRICT MEETING DELIBERATIVE SESSION MINUTES

Mike Cabral asked why capital reserve funds that were on the warrant in previous years were excluded this year. Superintendent Lane explained that the special education capital reserve fund, the building project capital reserve fund and the technology capital reserve fund currently all have enough in them. The dumpster capital reserve fund had over \$12,000.00 last year. The School District bought two new dumpsters with that money and with unexpended funds. Fred Hast asked what happened to the old dumpsters. Superintendent Lane responded that the previous dumpsters belonged to the town and presumes they were disposed of.

There being no further business, School District Moderator LeDuc adjourned the meeting at 6:59p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Erica Anthony".

Erica Anthony  
School District Clerk

