

2020 ANNUAL SCHOOL DISTRICT MEETING DELIBERATIVE SESSION MINUTES

TOWN OF PITTSFIELD SCHOOL DISTRICT DELIBERATIVE SESSION February 5, 2020

The Pittsfield School District Deliberative Session was held at the Pittsfield Elementary School on Wednesday, February 5, 2020. School District Moderator Gerard LeDuc called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M. School Board Vice Chairperson Heidi Asdot led the *Pledge of Allegiance*. Moderator LeDuc explained the rules of procedure. He introduced the School Board members in attendance: Bea Douglas, Heidi Asdot, Adam Gauthier and Ted Mitchell, as well as Superintendent John Freeman, School District Attorney Rick Sager, School District Finance Director Sally Blanchette, and School District Clerk Erica Anthony.

Moderator LeDuc read the introduction to the posted 2020 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 5, 2020
Snow Date: February 6, 2020
Time: 7:00 pm
Location: Pittsfield Elementary School

Second Session of Annual Meeting (Official Ballot Voting)
Date: March 10, 2020
Time: 7:00 am-7:00 pm
Location: Pittsfield Town Hall
85 Main Street
Pittsfield NH

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 (12 yes, 0 no) (Majority vote required)

Article 01 was read by Moderator LeDuc.

Motion made by School Board Member Bea Douglas to approve Article 01 as read, seconded by School Board Member Ted Mitchell.

Moderator LeDuc opened the floor for discussion.

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There being no further discussion, Article 01 shall appear on the ballot as written.

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 (12 yes, 0 no) (Majority vote required)

Article 02 was read by Moderator LeDuc.

Motion made by School Board Member Ted Mitchell to approve Article 02 as read, seconded by School Board Member Adam Gauthier.

Moderator LeDuc opened the floor for discussion.

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

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 \$10,731,265? Should this article be defeated, the default budget shall be \$10,231,764, 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: -\$1.90/thousand; estimated tax impact of the default budget -\$3.79.) **Recommended** by the Pittsfield School Board. **Recommended** by the Pittsfield Budget Committee (12 yes, 0 no) (Majority vote required)

Article 03 was read by Moderator LeDuc.

Motion made by School Board Vice Chairperson Heidi Asdot to approve Article 03 as read, seconded by School Board Member Bea Douglas.

Moderator LeDuc opened the floor for discussion.

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

ARTICLE 04 Special Education Capital Reserve Fund

To see if the school district will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$50,000 to be added to the Special Education Capital Reserve Fund previously established in March 1996 to fund special education programs for identified students of the district under the provisions of RSA 35:1. This sum to come from June 30 fund balance available for transfer on July 1. No amount to be raised from taxation. (Current account balance, approximately \$226,800) **Recommended** by the Pittsfield School Board. **Recommended** by the Pittsfield Budget Committee (12 yes, 0 no) (Majority vote required)

Article 04 was read by Moderator LeDuc.

Motion made by School Board Member Adam Gauthier to approve Article 04 as read, seconded by School Board Vice Chairperson Heidi Asdot.

Moderator LeDuc opened the floor for discussion.

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

ARTICLE 05 Buildings Maintenance Capital Reserve Fund

To see if the school district will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$100,000 to be added to the Capital Reserve Fund previously established to maintain the school buildings of the district under the provisions of RSA 35:1. This sum to come from June 30 fund balance available for transfer on July 1. No amount to be raised from taxation. (Current account balance, approximately \$200,000). **Recommended** by the Pittsfield School Board. **Not Recommended** by the Pittsfield Budget Committee (2 yes, 10 no). (Majority vote required)

Article 05 was read by Moderator LeDuc.

Motion made by School Board Member Adam Gauthier to approve Article 05 as read, seconded by School Board Member Heidi Asdot.

Moderator LeDuc opened the floor for discussion.

Budget Committee Chairman Bob Schiferle stated the majority of the Budget Committee did not recommend this article because they felt there was a sufficient amount of money currently in the fund to cover any unexpected needs that may come up during the upcoming year. They believed any additional funding needed a more long-term plan and should be reviewed by the Capital Improvement Plan Committee next year.

There being no further discussion, Article 05 shall appear on the ballot as written.

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ARTICLE 06 Technology Capital Reserve Fund

To see if the Pittsfield School District will vote to establish a Technology Capital Reserve Fund under the provisions of RSA 35:1 for the purchase of computers, other technology equipment and technology materials for use by students and teachers in the district and to raise and appropriate the sum of \$50,000 to be placed in this fund. Further, to name the Pittsfield School Board as agents to expend from said fund. (Estimated impact of this article: \$.19/thousand.)

Recommended by the Pittsfield School Board. **Not Recommended** by the Pittsfield Budget Committee (5 yes, 7 no) (Majority vote required)

Article 06 was read by Moderator LeDuc.

Motion made by School Board Member Ted Mitchell to approve Article 06 as read, seconded by School Board Member Adam Gauthier.

Moderator LeDuc opened the floor for discussion.

Budget Committee Chairman Bob Schiferle stated the majority of the Budget Committee did not recommend this article because they believed funding for technology should be accounted for in the operating budget. They did not believe it was appropriate to fund technology through a capital reserve fund expendable by the School Board.

Louie Houle asked how long it had been since we had funded technology.

Dean of Operations Derek Hamilton responded \$2,000 was allocated last year, \$2,000 for this year, and approximately \$65,000 has been proposed for the 2020-2021 school year.

Superintendent John Freeman stated that, unfortunately, technology is an area that tends to get cut.

Louie Houle stated the town received a one-time gift from the State this year that could have been used for raises or a number of other long term needs, but was used to offset taxes instead. He believed it just made sense to put the \$50,000 into this fund.

Tracy Huyck asked to submit an amendment to Article 06 removing the School Board as agents of the fund. She stated she supported the technology capital reserve fund, but felt it should be up to the voters to decide when to expend the funds. She believed it is important to build up the account so future technology needs could be met.

Moderator LeDuc responded the amendment must be submitted in writing and signed by at least five registered voters.

Moderator LeDuc read the proposed amendment:

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Amended ARTICLE 06 Technology Capital Reserve Fund

To see if the Pittsfield School District will vote to establish a Technology Capital Reserve Fund under the provisions of RSA 35:1 for the purchase of computers, other technology equipment and technology materials for use by students and teachers in the district and to raise and appropriate the sum of \$50,000 to be placed in this fund. (Estimated impact of this article: \$.19/thousand.)

Motion made by Mike Cabral to accept the amendment to Article 06 as written, seconded by Jillian Gauthier.

Moderator LeDuc asked School District Attorney Rick Sager to explain the proposed amendment.

School District Attorney Rick Sager explained that if the amendment passes, the School Board would not be able to expend from this capital reserve fund without voter approval. In order to expend, it would need to be voted upon next year or a special election would need to be called.

Moderator LeDuc opened the floor for discussion on the amendment.

Merrill Vaughan asked for confirmation that, if the amendment passes, the School Board would not be able to use the money if there is an emergency. It was confirmed they would not unless there was a special deliberative session and election.

Leslie Vogt asked how much money is set aside in the proposed budget for technology.

School Board Vice Chairperson Heidi Asdot responded \$67,000.

Leslie Vogt asked for confirmation that the proposed \$50,000 for the capital reserve account was in addition to the \$67,000.00. It was confirmed.

Dan Schroth stated he was voting no on this amendment. He does not want to tie the hands of the School Board and Superintendent. He does not believe in micro managing.

Tracy Huyck stated her main reason for the amendment was to build a savings account where funds would grow and be available in the future. She will also be supporting the proposed budget.

No further discussion.

Moderator LeDuc called for the vote on the amendment to Article 06.

Card vote to approve the amendment to Article 06 failed.

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Moderator LeDuc re-opened the floor for discussion on Article 06 as originally written.

There being no further discussion, Article 06 shall appear on the ballot as originally written.

ARTICLE 07 Dumpster replacement reserve fund

To see if the Pittsfield School District will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$3,000 to be added to the Dumpster Replacement Capital Reserve Fund previously established to fund replacement of dumpsters at the schools of the district. (Estimated tax impact of this article: \$0.02/thousand. (Current account balance \$3,000). **Recommended** by the Pittsfield School Board. **Recommended** by the Pittsfield Budget Committee (12 yes, 0 no) (Majority vote required)

Article 07 was read by Moderator LeDuc.

Motion made by School Board Member Bea Douglas to approve Article 07 as read, seconded by School Board Member Ted Mitchell.

Moderator LeDuc opened the floor for discussion.

There being no further discussion, Article 07 shall appear on the ballot as written.

ARTICLE 08 School Warrant Tuition Request (by petition)

Are you in favor of instructing the Pittsfield School Board, to in good faith, investigate and pursue viable options for tuitioning all students grades 9 through 12 to another high school(s) and to cease educating all high school students in Pittsfield?

Article 08 was read by Moderator LeDuc.

Motion made by School Board Member Bea Douglas to approve Article 08 as read, seconded by School Board Member Ted Mitchell.

Moderator LeDuc opened the floor for discussion.

Dan Schroth stated this has been studied twice before. He didn't like it then, but was encouraged to look at it again. He still doesn't like it. He stated he understands there is a concern of the limited class selection, but he does not think shipping the students out is the answer. He trusts the School Board and the Superintendent. He asked the cost to educate a student in Pittsfield.

Superintendent John Freeman responded it costs approximately \$16,000.00 to educate a student, very close to the state average.

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There being no further discussion, Article 08 shall appear on the ballot as written.

Dan Schroth encouraged the Body to invest in our kids.

Motion to adjourn made by School Board Member Adam Gauthier, seconded by School Board Member Ted Mitchell.

Meeting adjourned 7:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Erica Anthony
School District Clerk