

Minutes of the School District Deliberative Session of February 11, 2017
Community Center, Lions Avenue
Hudson, New Hampshire 03051

1. **CALL TO ORDER BY THE MODERATOR**, the Honorable Paul Inderbitzen called the meeting to order at 9:04 a.m.
2. **POSTING OF THE COLORS** by the Alvirne Airforce Jr. ROTC Cadets
3. **THE NATIONAL ANTHEM** sung by The B Naturals
4. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE** recited by Meagan Pollack
5. **REMARKS BY THE MODERATOR**

Moderator Inderbitzen

This is the Deliberative Session of the Hudson School District meeting where this body will act as the legislature for the purpose of the final form of all the warrant articles that will appear on the ballot on March 14th. I'd also like to point out that is our voting day. I'd like to point out that there will be a Candidate's Night on Tuesday, the 21st of February, here at the Community Center so you can hear, speak, and ask questions of the candidates for office in the town.

When you checked in, you were all issued a yellow School District voter card. I will use that for voting if you haven't been here before. We'll always use our voter cards for any votes for amendments or anything like that. Don't lose them you won't get another one. Also in your handout is a list of the Moderator's Rules that we will use today. If you're unfamiliar with this meeting or haven't been to one before, please take a look at that. Those are the procedures we're going to use. We'll bring each article up for discussion. It will be presented by a member of the School Board or in case of the budget by the Budget Committee. Then anyone can ask questions, make amendments of the particular warrant article. After the discussion has ended, we will close that and then that article will appear on the ballot as presented or as amended if that be the case. Please put your cell phones on vibrate or turn them off if you can so we don't have that interrupting.

As the legislature, there's a certain decorum in debate. Please follow that. There's the rules in my rules there that we will not refer to people by individual names but by the previous speaker or the School Board member or Budget Committee member. If you have any questions during this process, please don't hesitate to call for a point of order and ask a question if you're not sure what we're doing. It does happen occasionally that we get confused even me. If there's no further discussion, we'll ask for the introduction of the people up front just so everyone knows who they are. I'll ask Chairman Langlais to introduce the members of the School Board at the head table here.

6. SCHOOL BOARD

Patti Langlais, Chairwoman

Good morning everybody. We have Phyllis Schlichter, Interim Superintendent. We have Mr. Lee Lavoie; Stacey Milbouer, Vice-Chair; Meaghan Pollack. We have Shane Coughlin who is our Student Representative. We have Karen Burnell our Business Administrator; Gordon Graham who is our Legal Counsel.

I just want to take the moment because it's not just the people up here so I'm going to introduce the people that are sitting here that are critical to putting together our budget and running our school. We have Erin Cannamucio who is in our Financial Department. We have Kyle Hancock who is our Tech. IT Director. We have Mary Wilson our Assistant Superintendent. We have Kathy Brackett who is our Administrator to Assistant Superintendent. We have Gail Porter who is our Assistant Administrator to the Superintendent. We have Sandie Gasper who works in our Financial Office and last but not least we have our new incoming Superintendent and current head of Special Ed. Larry Russell sitting right here. If you haven't met him, please take an opportunity to come up and introduce yourself to him. Thank you very much.

Moderator Inderbitzen

I'll ask Mr. McDowell, Vice-Chair, of the Budget Committee to introduce the Budget Committee members.

7. BUDGET COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Eric McDowell, Vice-Chairman

Thank you Mr. Moderator. Chairman Malcolm Price, myself Eric McDowell, Vice-Chairman, Geoffrey Keegan, Ted Trost, Jim Barnes, Joe Fernald, Bob Guessferd, Shawn Murray, Norm Martin, and Selectman Representative Angela Routsis.

Moderator Inderbitzen

Thank you. There are staff members here that if there are questions that come up in the budget or questions about the School District that you'll be able to ask those questions and there are staff members. Some of them who are non-voters who will be allowed to answer questions from the meeting. I'll now ask the School Board Chairperson to return the warrant to the District Clerk.

8. DELIBERATIVE SESSION OF TOWN MEETING

Moderator Inderbitzen

To the inhabitants of the School District of Hudson, New Hampshire, qualified to vote in district affairs. The first session of the Annual Meeting the Deliberative. You are hereby notified to meet in the Community Center of said District on the 11th day of February at 9 a.m. for the first session

of the Annual School District meeting for explanation, discussion and debate on Warrant Articles 1 through 5. Warrant Articles may be amended subject to the following limitations. A warrant article whose wording is prescribed by law shall not be amended and warrant articles that are amended shall be placed on the official ballot for final vote on the main motion as amended and no warrant article shall be amended to eliminate the subject matter of an article.

The second session of the Annual Meeting you are hereby notified to meet at the Community Center in said district on Tuesday, March 14, 2017, between the hours of 7 a.m. and 8 p.m. for the second session of the annual School District meeting to vote by official ballot on the following subjects:

School District's Articles

Warrant Article 1 – Operating Budget. Shall the Hudson School District vote to raise and appropriate as an operating budget, not including appropriations by special warrant article and other appropriations voted separately, the amount set forward on the budget posted with the warrant as amended by the vote of the first session totaling \$52,534,706? Should this article be defeated, the operating budget will be \$52,366,374 which is the same as last year with certain adjustments required by previous action of the Hudson School District or by law or the governing body may hold one special meeting under RSA 40:13 X and XVI to take up revised operating budget only. Recommended by the School Board 5-0. Recommended by the Budget Committee 9-1.

I'll recognize Vice-Chairperson McDowell to present Warrant Article 1 the operating budget.

Eric McDowell, Vice-Chairman

This year in reviewing the School District's budget while not much in the way of Budget Committee cuts were required, we did review the overall process, make sure that fiscally sound, and quality decisions were made. There were a number of areas where the State reduced our funding and those cuts were made actually by the School Board with review from the Budget Committee and then final approval as well. At this point, we are recommending to move forward with the budget as it is.

Moderator Inderbitzen

Thank you. I'll recognize School Board Chairperson Langlais for the School Board's position.

Patti Langlais, Chairwoman

The proposed budget was created through a joint effort between each school, the SAU staff, and the School Board. The proposed budget reflects an increase of \$684,546 over the 2016/2017 budget or 1.32 percent. The anticipated tax rate will be \$14.66. After taking all funds into account as well as anticipated revenue, the town appropriation is proposed to increase by \$1,419,123. The increase to the general fund combined with the decreased in revenue will result in a tax increase of 30 cents. The default budget is \$168,332 less than the proposed budget. Areas of contractual obligations within the general fund include \$722,641 in salaries, \$450,311 health and dental insurances, \$461,411 New Hampshire Retirement and all other contractual benefits, and \$75,171

transportation and other. The above obligations equal an amount greater than the total increase in the budget excluding these contractual obligations, the budget is down \$971,433.

Other factors. The most significant driver is in our technology budget which is the proposed replacement of our student information system. The system is used by every school to track, manage, and report all student data including parent contracts, schedules, and grades. We will have to keep our old system in place next year and while we transfer into the new system. So this was the reason that we have needed an extra person to do this. Although facilities does show a decrease in building repairs that's due to the Alvirne track and the CTU roof which was done this year in 2017, projects include window replacement at the ALC, BCT tile projects, locker room renovation at HMS, annual landscaping costs, as well as physics lab renovation at Alvirne High School. We have plans for these for 5-year plans. We try to stay with them. We need to keep our buildings in good condition.

The next slide explains the budget process. The budget begins with the district administration and moves on to the School Board. The School Board with recommendations from administration made budget cuts totaling \$380,663 to the general fund. The Budget Committee in turn made \$212,150 in additional cuts with recommendations from the administration. In total during the budget process, \$592,813 was cut from the budget.

As you can see, the community combined tax rate in comparison with other communities in this region remains lowest with the exception of Pelham.

Cost per pupil State average is \$14,902 for Fiscal Year 2016. The cost per pupil in Hudson is \$11,966. It is grossly under the State average in comparison to other communities. Thank you.

Moderator Inderbitzen

We will now open Warrant Article 1 – the operating budget to questions, comments, or amendments. Anyone wish to speak on the operating budget? Please give us your name and address please.

Kristina Young

I'm Kristina Young from 7 Teloian Drive. I've never been here before. If I'm out of order, let me know. I didn't know if under estimate tax rate if we could also put what the actual increase is? I looked at it and it usually says increase of tax rate there.

Moderator Inderbitzen

Do we have that number? I think it was in the – it's a 30 cent increase over last year.

Kristina Young

Can we put that when people vote on it?

Moderator Inderbitzen

No. It's not allowed in fact the estimated tax rate will not be on the warrant itself when you vote because that's not allowed by the State.

Kristina Young

Gotcha. It's just on other ones and I wasn't sure if it be put there.

Moderator Inderbitzen

Well they put it here for information purposes.

Gary Gasdia

Gary Gasdia, 4 McCann Road. I come here every year and it's exhausting. I say the same exact thing. If you do the math, we're once again going to debate for the next however long or if we remain the status quo or if we take a step back. If I read that correctly, its 30 cents if we pass what you guys are suggesting. Its 23 cents if we go back to the default budget. So we're talking about 7 cents a thousand. If you own a \$500,000 home, that's \$35 this year. If you can't afford \$35 in your \$500,000 home, you shouldn't be living in a \$500,000 home. It's that simple. I want to thank everybody that's here because you guys are phenomenal for being here because we do have an inch of snow. What's sad, and I know some people are watching this at home, there will be more people talking about what a terrible job you guys are doing at T-Bones tonight. There will be more people talking at every school place about what a terrible job these guys are doing.

The reality is it's our fault. We always point the mike this way and say defend this budget. We need to point this way and say why are they giving us a budget that's going up one percent when inflation went up two percent. That's a step backwards. You wouldn't allow that in your family. Every single one of us wants our kids to be better. Wants our grandkids to be better and we're going to sit here forever long and I hope there's no debate but there might be over \$35 if you live in a big house. If you live in a \$100,000 house, \$200,000 house, even less but we do this every year. Then we going to debate should we put a roof on our school. We're going to debate our teachers and our administrators. Let me tell you, I've been involved in this town for a long time now. One thing I can tell you is despite those numbers which frankly should embarrass every single one of us about how little we spend on our kids. We have phenomenal teachers. We have phenomenal administrators. We have a phenomenal School Board. We have a phenomenal Budget Committee. It's up to us to say to them next year give us what it will take to make this something special to make Hudson a destination.

What we hear every year is well its special education budget. Well you know Amherst has special education budget. Bedford has a special education budget. They find a way. Their people care. We hear it's about busing. We hear it's about this. We hear it's about that. I see posts on Facebook all the time about how much we can cut from the budget. If that's true, I hope we can do it. I hope you guys find \$20 million we can cut from the budget and if so, I want to see zero back into my taxes. I want you guys to find every cent and make it better and spend it on our students. I think as we stand here today as we stand here every year, status quo or step back. I think Ms. Langlais you said it was \$900,000 that we cut from the budget this year.

We're not in a recession. The economy is cranking. Unemployment in the State of New Hampshire is next to nothing. These are the years we should be increasing the budget by \$1 million, \$2 million, \$3 million because we're going to have a recession and we don't do it. I thank all of you for everything you've done. I thank all of you for showing up today and for everybody that's going to talk about what a terrible job everybody is doing at T-Bones and all these other places tonight, where were you today. You should have called me. I hate shoveling snow but I would have shoveled you out.

Moderator Inderbitzen

Thank you. Any further discussion on Warrant Article 1. Please be in order.

Lindsay Benson

Lindsay Benson. I'm at 13 Par Lane. This is also my first meeting. I'm a relatively new resident of Hudson. I moved here a few years ago just about the time where the restructuring happened. It actually surprised me when I saw special education being one of the things that was cut. I just want to agree with the previous speaker that kind of making this a call to action to all families with young children to show up. I find it very embarrassing too that our cost per pupil is so low as if it's something we should be proud of. I don't find that something to be proud of. I want as much money as possible to go towards our future.

I have a 5 year old son right now who is in kindergarten. He's at PMA right now because we wanted him in full day kindergarten but he's going to be going into the Hudson school system soon and I have 2 year old twins as well who I also want to – we want to stay in this town. We want to be in a town where our children are cared for and the future of this town depends on our youth so let's show up. Like this is embarrassing. I hope people are watching at home but from what I've experienced, I have voted every single time since I've moved in this town. The things that are passed – great – but the things that aren't passed hurt our kids and our students and it just upsets me. Thank you for all that you do and I hope people will finally show up.

Moderator Inderbitzen

Thank you. Further discussion on Warrant Article 1? Anyone else. If not, we will close the discussion on Warrant Article 1.

Warrant Article 2 - Collective Bargaining Agreement between the Hudson Board and the Teamsters. Shall the Hudson School District vote to raise and appropriate the cost items in the collective bargaining agreement between the Teamsters Local No. 633 of NH for the Hudson School District Custodians, Electricians, HVAC Technicians and Maintenance staff and the Hudson School Board, which calls for the following increase in salaries and benefits at the current staffing levels over the amount paid in the prior fiscal year: 2017-2018 \$20,877; 2018-2019 \$9,471; 2019-2020 \$36,872 and to further raise and appropriate \$20,877 for the upcoming fiscal year, such sum representing the additional costs attributable to the increase in salaries and benefits required by the new agreement that would be paid under current staffing levels. Recommended by the School Board 4-0. Recommended by the Budget Committee 9-1.

I'll recognize School Board Member Lavoie to speak to Warrant Article 2.

Lee Lavoie

Good morning Mr. Moderator. First off Mr. Moderator I'd like to thank you for your hard services to the District and Town for many years. The Budget Committee here they all serve with – there's no salary for them. The School Board has a small stipend but all these people serve our town. Speaker Jasper is out there and Selectman Luszey is over there. I just want to thank you guys for serving our town.

This is a collective bargaining agreement between the Hudson School Board and the Teamsters. He first year is a \$20,877 – Karen did you find that information out? There's 36 employees in this bargaining group. For the second year in the 2018-2019 is \$9,471 and the third year in 2019 is \$36,872. They changed their health care to a consumer driven healthcare which will in the end will save the District money. No one knows what is going to happen in 2018 with the Cadillac tax that is part of the Affordable Care Act. There's all kinds of stories that it will be changed. We were just gearing up and preparing in case there is no change in that. That's about it.

Moderator Inderbitzen

Thank you very much. I will now open Article 2 for discussion. We can't amend this one. This one is a State law required that you cannot amend however we can discuss and you ask questions if you want on Warrant Article 2 the collective bargaining agreement with the Teamsters. Anyone wish to discuss Warrant Article 2? If not, we'll close the discussion on Warrant Article 2.

Warrant Article 3 – Collective Bargaining Agreement between the Hudson School Board and the Leadership Team. Shall the Hudson School District vote to raise and appropriate the cost items in the collective bargaining agreement between AFSME Local 1906, School Administrators, and the Hudson School Board which calls for the following increases in salaries and benefits at the current staffing levels over the amount paid in the prior fiscal year: 2017-2018 \$114,773; 2018-2019 \$132,678; 2019-2020 \$136,232 and to further raise and appropriate \$114,773 for the upcoming fiscal year, such sum representing the additional costs attributable to the increase in salaries and benefits required by the new agreement that would be paid under current staffing levels. Recommended by the School Board 3-0-2. Recommended by the Budget Committee 8-2.

I'll recognize School Board Member Pollack to present to Warrant Article 3.

Meaghan Pollack

Before I start I want to clarify one piece on the School Board voting on this – 3-0-2 just for anyone not familiar with this format and how we write on the Warrant Articles. This does not mean that two board members voted against this. It means that two board members abstained from the vote due to relationships with administrators in the district.

This is a three year agreement between the Hudson School District and the AFSME Local 1906, Council 93 AFL-CIO, the leadership collective bargaining unit that includes Principals, Assistant Principals, Directors, Deans, Department Heads, School Psychologists, Associate Principals,

Library Media Specialists, and School Counselors. This agreement negotiated in good faith is for three years starting with the 2017-2018 school year. The total cost increase is \$383,683 over the three year agreement including considerations for health benefits. This includes an increase of 2.25 percent in year one; a projected increase of 2.75 percent for year two; and year three has a projected increase of 2.75 percent as well. There is no step increase in this contract.

The union agreed to accept a consumer driven health plan at a rate of 93 percent employer and 7 percent employee. This is a high deductible program with an overall deductible of \$4,000 for a family or a two-person plan and a \$2,000 deductible for a single plan. Our vendor will absorb half of the cost of the deductible if the employee meets specific requirements. The movement to the consumer driven health plan helps the District move towards meeting the requirements of the Affordable Health Care Act and moving away from what is considered to be a Cadillac plan and incurring large penalties in accordance with the federal law in 2018. The length of the work here in this contract was decreased by two days. This is necessary to keep pace with the teacher contract as well as to balance the per diem daily rate.

Moderator Inderbitzen

Thank you very much. I'll now open Warrant Article 3 to discussion, questions on the collective bargaining agreement for the leadership team. Does anyone have any questions? If now, we'll close the discussion on Warrant Article 3.

Warrant Article 4 – Replacing the roof of the Gymnasium and Library at Alvirne High School. Shall the Hudson School District vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$175,000 to replace the roof of the gymnasium and library at Alvirne High School and authorize the withdrawal of that amount from the Capital Reserve School Renovation Fund. No amount to be raised from taxation. Recommended by the Hudson School Board 5-0. Recommended by the Budget Committee 10-0.

I'll recognize School Board Member Lavoie to present Warrant Article 4.

Lee Lavoie

Again good morning. As you can see, this is estimated tax rate of zero. This is coming out of our school renovation account which right now has \$200,000 in it. Part of the reason you have these capital reserve funds is for situations like this. If anyone knows the gymnasium at the high school, you can see there's bubbles in the floor and that's because of leakage in the past. Last year you probably heard me asking about if the roof would be white. This would be a white rubber roof which is pretty much the standard now in roof. Everyone is going to white because it actually lasts longer and it saves energy.

Moderator Inderbitzen

Thank you Mr. Lavoie. I'll now open Article 4 the roof replacement for the gym and the library at Alvirne for questions, comments, or amendments. Anyone wish to address Warrant Article 4? This is going to be a fast meeting. I'll close the discussion on Warrant Article 4.

Warrant Article 5. Increasing the fund in the Capital Reserve School Renovation Fund. Shall the Hudson School District vote to raise and appropriate a sum of up to \$50,000 to be added to the Capital Reserve School Renovation Fund? This sum is to come from June 30 fund balance available for transfer on July 1. No amount to be raised by taxation. Recommended by the Hudson School Board 5-0. Recommended by the Budget Committee 10-0.

I'll recognize School Board Member Milbouer to present Warrant Article 5.

Stacey Milbouer

Hi. I want to again thank everybody for coming out and participating and to urge people again to show up and vote. It's the most direct way to affect your children's and your grandchildren's education.

The Capital Reserve School Renovation Fund was created to provide for building needs that may or may not be anticipated. This fund was established in September of 1999. In the 2016-2017 school, \$150,000 was approved to be released from the fund to replace the roof on the career and technical center at Alvirne High School. The current balance of the fund is \$200,875. There is a proposal to use up to \$175,000 of the current funds to replace the roof over the gymnasium and library at Alvirne High School. If that Warrant Article is approved by the voters, the balance in this fund would be \$25,875. The goal of the School District is to have a balance in this fund annually of between \$300,000 and \$400,000. Expenditure of these funds require voter approval.

Moderator Inderbitzen

Thank you. We'll open Warrant Article 5 increasing the funds to the Capital Reserve School Renovation Fund for comments, questions or amendments. Anyone wish to speak on Warrant Article 5? Any questions? There being none, I will close the discussion on Warrant Article 5.

Before I take a vote to adjourn, I just want to remind people especially those watching us or who will be watching us in the future, this will be replayed a number of times. We have positions on the ballot that are unfilled. No one filed. There are three 3-year positions on this Budget Committee that are open. If you are interested in taking part in this process, I would urge you to make it known in the papers or friends that you could do a write-in. We do take write-ins on our ballot for all positions. If anyone gets a total of 10 votes or more, they would be a write in candidate and they would win based on that. We have three positions open on the Budget Committee. I would urge you to do that at this time to think about that if you want to take part in the budgetary process.

I may have been incorrect saying that they couldn't post the tax impact on the warrant as it actually will appear on the district ballot. I'm told by our legal counsel that that's an old issue and apparently they can put the tax impact on. I think they have to put the total tax impact and not just the increase. I'm not sure about that. The governing body makes those decisions which is the School Board.

9. ADJOURNMENT

**MOTION BY LEE LAVOIE, SECONDED BY NORMAND MARTIN, TO ADJOURN
MOTION CARRIED**

The meeting is adjourned at 9:40 p.m.

Transcribed by Donna L. Graham

Patti Barry, Town Clerk/Tax Collector