

## SANBORN REGIONAL SCHOOL BOARD MEETING

January 15, 2014

A special meeting of the Sanborn Regional School Board was held on Wednesday, December 18, 2013. The meeting was called to order at 6:40pm by School Board Chairperson Ms. Jan Bennett, in Room 137 at Sanborn Regional High School, Kingston, NH. The following were recorded as present:

### SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS:

Jan Bennett, Chairperson  
Rebecca Hallisey, Vice Chairperson  
Nancy Ross  
Jon LeBlanc  
Wendy Miller

### ADMINISTRATORS:

Dr. Brian J. Blake, Superintendent of Schools  
Jennifer Pomykato, Director of Student Services  
Carol Coppola, Business Administrator

The meeting began with a salute to the flag.

Ms. Bennett stated that Mr. Ramey is excused from this evening's Board meeting.

### WARRANT

Ms. Bennett explained that the Board will reconvene after the Budget Committee Hearing to consider the budget committee comments and the public's input during the hearing.

Dr. Blake directed the Board to the draft document titled, "Sanborn Regional School District 2014 School District Warrant", specifically Articles #4 – 6.

Article 4, "Fund Balance Retention" allows the district to retain up to 2.5% of the current fiscal year's net assessment. Ms. Miller asked for clarification. Ms. Coppola explained that the amount retained would be determined by the School Board. The Board would decide how to use these monies. They could use a portion of the amount, the whole amount, or return the funds. The funds may be used for district projects or to equalize the tax impact. Ms. Hallisey asked if these monies must be used for an emergency. Ms. Coppola explained that the funds could be used for emergency or planned events. The remaining amount may be returned to offset the tax rate or retained for future projects. Ms. Hallisey asked what the benefits would be should this article pass. Ms. Coppola stated the funds could smooth out the peaks and valleys of the tax rate. Ms. Hallisey reminded the Board of the approximate \$1M return a few years ago. The taxpayers were not aware of why their taxes did not go up as much, but were upset the following year when there was a more significant increase. Dr. Blake stated that these monies may be used to off-set taxes in total or after the costs are covered. The Board may "bank" these funds for emergency purposes as approved by the NH Department of Education. Ms. Hallisey and Ms. Ross asked how long these funds may be retained. Ms. Coppola stated that these funds may be retained indefinitely as suggested by the warrant article; likely the district would return funds. Ms. Miller is concerned that taxpayers may view this as a way for the district to keep money that should be returned. She suggested this article be explained in detail at the Deliberative Session.

Dr. Blake referred the Board to Articles 5 through 8 as submitted by petition of 25 or more registered voters. Article 5, "Recorded Votes and Numerical Tally". This information is provided already on the warrant article. Article 6, "Estimated Tax Impact", if passed, requires the district to state the tax impact. Unfortunately, the district cannot

provide accurate information, but only estimates. This could be misleading. Ms. Miller stated that Newton town warrants list the cost of each article.

Should Article 7, "Rescind Senate Bill 2 (SB 2)", pass, the March voting would be replaced by Town Meeting voting. Town meeting allows voters to hear discussion on the budget and each article. Absentee ballots would be allowed. Board members shared opinions on benefits of both means of this voting process.

Article 8, "Tax Cap", imposes a tax cap increase on the submitted budget. The article requires a 3/5 majority vote. Dr. Blake stated that should this article pass, the result would be budgets well below default. Ms. Bennett stated that staffing and programs are the only two areas that could be cut. Dr. Blake stated that if this article passes, it would be detrimental as it has been in other NH communities.

Ms. Miller asked where the breaking point is with the steady climb in taxes. Ms. Bennett stated that taxes are the revenue source. Revenue from the state is less and less. Ms. Bennett is concerned that the 2.5% total increase could be interpreted inaccurately.

The Sanborn Regional School Board recessed at 7:00pm to attend the Budget Committee Hearing.

At 8:45pm, the Board returned to the Special Meeting. The Board members signed the warrant articles. The Board summarized the Public Hearing. Dr. Blake stated there were 10 members of the public, 5 Board members, and 10 district administrators. Ms. Ross informed the Board of the Budget Committee's vote for the final budget number. The vote taken this evening was 6-2 (Clark, Brisson).

The Board discussed strategies to inform the public before the Deliberative Session., Ms. Bennett and other Board members agreed that voting on Article 8, "Tax Cap" requires an informed vote. The language of the article could be misleading. Ms. Ross asked if there were only a 2.5% increase, what could be the consequence. Dr. Blake gave Dover, NH as an example. The school district is significantly impacted with programs and staffing cuts. Information about Article 8 and potential consequence could be provided at the Deliberative Session. Board members expressed concern that if this warrant article passes, it will be a detriment to the district. Mr. LeBlanc asked when this tax cap provision was approved. Ms. Coppola stated that the NH Legislature voted to approve in 2011.

#### **BUDGET**

Ms. Bennett stated the vote on the budget will take place at the next Board meeting on Wednesday, January 22. This will allow the full Board to vote.

#### **OTHER**

Agenda items – Warrant Article Votes

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

Ms. Ross made a motion to adjourn at 9:07pm. Ms. Hallisey seconded. Vote was 6-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Pomykato  
Recorder

*Minutes of the School Board meetings are unofficial until approved at a subsequent meeting of the School Board.*