

SANDGATE TOWN SCHOOL MEETING MINUTES MARCH 6, 2018

Legal voters of the Town of Sandgate School District of Sandgate, County of Bennington, State of Vermont were warned and notified to meet at 10 AM at the Sandgate Town Hall on Tuesday, March 6, 2018 to transact the following business:

Chris Barlow brought the meeting to order at 10 AM

Approximately 20 people were present as well as William Bazyk, Superintendent for BVSU and Randall Morton, business manager for BVSU.

ARTICLE 1. To hear and act on the report of the School District Officers.

Sheila Kearns made a motion to allow the School Directors to speak.

Margaret Phelps seconded the motion.

The Motion passed by verbal vote.

Mr. Bazyk stated that Allan Tschorn had done a good job in the report summarizing the current status of the Sandgate School District. Superintendent Bazyk noted that the Equalized pupil rate in Line 15 on page 49 had risen. There were also more students in the district. However, since the Equalized pupil rate was higher, it helped lower the school tax rate. As the Equalized pupil rate goes up (FY2019 at 63.24), the town gets more money from the State of Vermont to offset taxes. He stated spending had gone up, but this helped keep the tax rate lower.

The budget for Sandgate on page 48 shows the tuition paid by Sandgate for various educational institutions. He noted that the BVSU assessment was close to what was paid last year. There are more students this year.

Act 46 and Act 49 – Efforts to consolidate were not successful because it would have cost more to enter a relationship with Winhall and Stratton because they reimbursed tuition at a higher rate. Members would all have to reimburse at the same rate and Sandgate would have to do the same thing.

Rick Dahm noted that Burr and Burton used to be the highest tuition, but this year Mount Anthony was higher. Superintendent Bazyk stated that public school tuition must be paid at the actual cost, where independent schools can be paid at the state average for independent schools, regardless of actual cost to educating students. Parents either make up the cost difference or receive financial aid.

Jeanne Zoppel made a motion to accept the report of the School District Officers.

Margaret Phelps seconded the motion.

Article 1 was passed by verbal vote.

ARTICLE 2. To authorize the School Board to borrow money by issue of notes not to excess of anticipated revenue for the school year.

Margaret Phelps made a motion to authorize the School Board to borrow money by issue of notes not in excess of anticipated revenue for the school year.

Sheila Kearns seconded the motion.

Article 2 was passed by verbal vote.

ARTICLE 3. To see if the Town of Sandgate will vote a sum of \$6,000 to put into the School Bus/Transportation Fund for the replacement of a school bus.

Rick Dahm noted that if Sandgate joined another district, do we need a bus? Allan Tschorn noted that Sandgate voters had always been supportive in providing transportation for students. A new bus could run \$50,000 to \$60,000 dollars. Allan Tschorn noted that just because the money was in the bus sinking fund, it did not mean that the money could not be voted in the future for other uses if the bus was not needed.

Rick Dahm wondered if \$6000 dollars was enough. Allan Tschorn stated that there should be several more years of bus use before it had to be replaced. He felt the monies would be enough with several more years of setting aside money to the bus sinking fund. Superintendent Bazyk noted there might be grants for trading in a diesel bus for a more environmentally friendly bus, but he could not be sure about availability of grants in the future.

Margaret Phelps wondered about the scenario of joining the SVSU when Pownal lost its buses, would the money for the sinking fund also be taken. Superintendent Bazyk stated the sinking fund would remain under Sandgate control.

Rick Dahm moved to have the Town of Sandgate vote a sum of \$6,000 to put into the School Bus/Transportation Fund for the replacement of a school bus.

Pauline Frost seconded the motion.

Article 3 passed by verbal vote.

ARTICLE 4. To elect one School Board Director for a three year term by Australian ballot March 6, 2018.

Australian Ballot currently being conducted.

ARTICLE 5. Shall the voters of Sandgate School District approve the school board to expend \$975,521, which is the amount the school board has determined to be necessary for the fiscal year July 1, 2018-June 30, 2019? It is estimated that the proposed budget, if approved, will result in education spending of \$15,413. Per equalized pupil. This projected spending per equalized pupil is 5.95% lower than the spending for the current year.

Rick Dahm wanted an explanation of what the Equalized Pupil meant. Superintendent Bazyk stated that it was a tax formula that weighted students. As an example, a Pre School student would have a value or .5, Elementary students would be value as 1, High school students would be 1.25 value and additional amounts would be added for a poverty designation, English 2nd language learners. It is a 2 year average of these values. Per pupil spending and the CLA value of homes in Sandgate determine the tax rate.

Rick Dahm noted that the costs had gone up 30%-40% over the last 10 years and because most of the costs were mandated, there was little the voters could do to reduce the school budget.

Special Education on page 46 had a surplus for FY 2017 of roughly \$105,000. Mr. Morton says an audit will determine how much was left, voters will determine how the BVSU surplus in Special Ed will be returned after audit determines the actual amount. Sandgate would get a percentage as a BVSU member.

Margaret Phelps made a motion to approve \$975,521 for fiscal year July 1, 2018-June 30, 2019 School expenses as determined to be necessary by the school board.

Allan Tschorn seconded the motion.

Article 5 passed by verbal vote.

ARTICLE 6. To transact any other business proper to be brought before said Town School District Meeting.

Rick Dahm stated School used to pay for the holiday party, did it do so currently.

Allan Tschorn asked if anyone had questions about ACT 46 and ACT 49 and the intent of the legislation. He stated that there were 4 or 5 underpinnings. They wanted School Districts to look at efficiency, educational equity and opportunity, and cost containment. Gaining students in Winhall had substantially raised taxes. Because of being a tuition district and not a public school district, the addition was not welcome.

Superintendent Bayzk wanted voters to look at page 49 line 25-Excess spending threshold. If you spend over that amount of \$17,816 your town will be charged a penalty. That is what happened in Winhall because they are paying the full tuition rate which is well over the allowed

excess spending rate per student. Sandgate is in good shape because they pay the Vermont State average.

Rick Dahm stated that any union with Winhall and Stratton would result in a proportional vote for decision making. Allan Tschorn said it would be 2 from Sandgate, 3 From Winhall , and 1 from Stratton.

John Lemay wondered if the proposal of the 3 towns was off the table, but it is still a possibility in the future. State will be meeting with BVSU. Arlington is still Sandgate's partner.

Margaret Phelps stated big is not necessarily better for School Districts.

Allan Tschorn made a motion to pass Article 6.

Kathy Wagner seconded the motion.

Article 6 was passed by verbal vote.

Margaret Phelps made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Phil Frost seconded the motion.

Chris Barlow ended the meeting at 10:55

Respectfully submitted,

Marjorie Peff, Sandgate Town Clerk