

ABSTRACT/MINUTES OF THE 2020 ANNUAL FAIRFAX SCHOOL DISTRICT MEETING

The 2020 Annual Town District Meeting was called to order at the Elementary Auditorium at Bellows Free Academy, Fairfax, Vermont by Moderator Roberta (Robby) Rodimer at 12:35 p.m. on Saturday, February 29, 2020. Robby welcomed everyone and said that the meeting would be run using Robert's Rules except where State Law takes precedence. Speaker would be limited to three minutes during the time for questions and comments and they only speak twice to an issue. She got approval to have School Officials and FWSU staff to speak. She thanked the set-up crew for the wonderful job they did setting up for Town Meeting.

ARTICLES 1 through ARTICLE 4 were voted upon using the official Australian ballot on Tuesday, March 3, 2020 at the Middle School Gymnasium of Bellows Free Academy, Fairfax, Vermont. The polls opened at 7:00 a.m. and closed at 7:00 p.m.

Scott Mitchell, School Board Chair, introduced the School Board that was present, Elaine Carpenter; Kathi Muehl; Michael Brusco; Sandy Alexander; along with Amanda Duling, Administrative Assistant. Randy Morton from our FWSU was introduced. Sympathy went out on the absence of our FWSU Superintendent Ned Kirsch. He will be remembered for all he did for Fairfax. A slide show was presented by Scott. He spoke about the Fairfax School Budget FY21 Proposal consisting of: *Our Mission ensuring all students become informed, literate, critical thinkers who demonstrate responsible social and civic behaviors. Per pupil spending is decreasing by 1.51%, with the budget increase of 2.56% causing the school portion of property taxes to decrease. BFA has gained 90 students over the last 4 years. Decrease is due to offsetting revenues, surplus, retired debt, and additional equalized pupils. A few highlights from FY20 consisted of the Middle School Geo Bee State Champions; four Presidential Scholar this school year, 9 in the last 5 years; implementation of Sophomore Exhibitions, to share progress towards proficiently goals; flexible learning opportunities that developed new opportunities for students throughout the school and travel to nationwide and global destinations (France, Florida, Alaska, Quebec, San Francisco, NYC) through HS co-curriculars and academic courses. Varsity Lacrosse makes its debut this spring as the newest of our VPA sanctioned athletic offering, putting our total of varsity sports programs at 14; the number of students accessing Performance Art opportunities, such as band, chorus and drama continues to grow; and students being accepted to colleges and universities with proficiency based transcripts. FY20 building improvements consisted of renovation and addition of new bathrooms in the High and Middle School along with new divider in the Richard Brown Gymnasium. Elaine is getting off the Board. She shared with us the BFA story consist of 7th graders designing their own AR experiences; BFA Elementary implements art integration opportunities; Hiram Bellows Community Service Day; introducing new sensory path in the BFA Elementary so you are able to exercise on the tile floor when waiting in the hallway; 5th grade student complete 6 week robotics unit with LEGO Mindstorms; the ultimate victory for Fairfax/Lamoille football; the annual musical has the largest number of student participants to date; innovation playing field-eSports at BFA High School; advisory and flex time provide access to intervention and enrichment at BFA High School; along with High School students addressing parking situations with creative results. The Board thanks Elaine for all her years in service and presented her with a token of appreciation. An apple to the Teacher to remind Elaine of BFA and the School Board. Elaine told the story of Peggy Stewart's influence on her. Peg was the one that encouraged Elaine to service on the School Board as Peg has done for so many years. Elaine spoke about Peg's true leadership that she brought to the School and Town. She will be greatly missed and loved by all that knew her. Robby opened the floor for discussion. There was none.*

Robby read Article 1 and Article 2.

ARTICLE 1: Shall the legal voters of said school district elect the following officers?
BY AUSTRALIAN BALLOT

School Moderator	One Year Term	Roberta Rodimer	1299 votes
School Director	Three Year Term	Matthew Hogan	1246 votes
School Director	Two Year Term	Sandra-Lee Alexander	1242 votes
School Trustee	Five Year Term	John Mitchell	1328 votes

ARTICLE 2: Shall the voters of said school district approve the school board to expend **\$13,760,921** which is the amount the school board has determined to be necessary for the ensuing fiscal year? It is estimated that this proposed budget, if approved, will result in education spending of **\$14,032.09 per equalized pupil**. This projected spending per equalized pupil is **7.25% higher** than spending for the current year.
BY AUSTRALIAN BALLOT

Scott talked about the school budget increase of 6.67%; per pupil spending that is increasing by 7.25%; BFA continues to gain students; BFA and the Supervisory Union were chosen for an electric bus pilot; insurance cost continue to rise with a significant increase in health insurance premiums at a cost of \$124,351. This is a 12.9% increase; there was not any surplus this year from last year Act 166; a graph was shown illustrating our kids' enrollment of grades K-12 plus tech center counts. The summary of some of the budget impact are Pre-K: Act 166 tuition increase of an estimate of 55 students; Technical Education: budgeted tuition increases the over 10% an estimated \$56,000 over FY20; transportation: the purchase of two electric school buses at \$90,000 each totaling \$180,000; per pupil spending comparison was shown; along with the estimated school tax bill.

The floor was open to discussion. A chart of per pupil spending comparison was missing in the Town Report that they would like to be included in the future.

In Favor: 822

Opposed: 674

ARTICLE 3: Shall the voters of said school district approve the school board to expend up to **\$200,000** for scheduled roof replacements? It is estimated that this expenditure, if approved, will result in education spending of **\$231.66** per equalized pupil. This spending per equalized pupil is not higher than spending for the current fiscal year. It is also estimated that if this proposed expenditure and the proposed budget (Article 2) are both approved, education spending per equalized pupil will increase by **\$1,179.88, or 9.02%** over such spending for the current fiscal year.
BY AUSTRALIAN BALLOT

This is three sections of roof which includes the three gymnasiums. The floor was open to discussion. Some questions consisted of if we cannot move forward with the bond vote, can we expect to have more articles like this in the future. Yes, that is the case. Are there sprinklers included in this Article? No, they are separate.

In Favor: 1104

Opposed: 393

ARTICLE 4: Shall the voters of said school district authorize the School Directors to borrow money for school expenses in anticipation of revenue for the ensuing year?
BY AUSTRALIAN BALLOT

The floor was open to discussion. There was none

In Favor: 874

Opposed: 614

ARTICLE 5: Shall the reports of the School Directors concerning the previous year be accepted?

A motion was made by Cathy Carlson and seconded by Sheri Rainville. The floor was open for discussion. There was none. The motion was passed by a show of cards.

ARTICLE 6: Shall any other legal business come before said meeting?

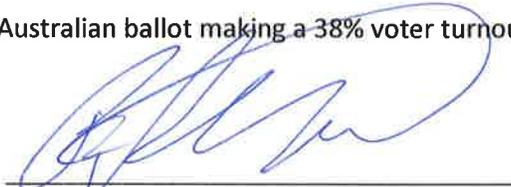
A motion was made by Tom Traber and seconded by Charles Hazen. The floor was opened to discussion. Some questions consisted of plans for an upcoming bond vote. The plan is to come back in the Fall. Do we receive Act 166 State funding? We receive around half of the amount per student. What is our transportation cost? The cost is purchasing one bus per year. This year we are purchasing two buses. Tom Traber asked what the school plan is with the Coronavirus outbreak. The State just sent information that still needs to be reviewed. The motion was passed by a show of cards.

ARTICLE 7: Shall the meeting be adjourned?

A motion was made. The floor was open for discussion. There was none. The motion was passed by a show of cards at 1:30 p.m. to recess the School meeting until March 3, 2020 at 7 a.m.

There are 4007 registered voters with 1529 voting by Australian ballot making a 38% voter turnout.

Peter Fitzgerald, Justice of the Peace



Sheri Rainville, Select Board



Attest:



Deborah Woodward, Town Clerk/Treasurer
March 11, 2020