

APPROVED

**TOWN OF STRATTON VERMONT
STRATTON SCHOOL BOARD
TUESDAY, February 26, 2019
STRATTON TOWN HALL**

The Stratton School Board is holding a special meeting and vote regarding the policy change to F16, section 3C at the Stratton Town Hall on Tuesday, February 26, 2019. The meeting was called to order at 7:03.

ATTENDING:

Chairman- Thomas Montemagni
Director- Siobhan Eddy Young
Secretary- Lorraine M. Weeks Newell

Treasurer- Alyson Marcucci
Superintendent- Bill Anton

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| Jessica Baron | Susan Belgard-Marquis |
| Bennet Webber | Candie Bernard |
| Paul Bernard | Corey Bills |
| Alexa Boatright | Shane Boatright |
| Taylor Buchalter | Linda Center |
| Stacie Chiodi | Clement Coburn |
| Craig Collins | Janine Conti |
| Joe Conti | Deborah Cross |
| Devon Crowther | Kellie Della-Laskin |
| Albert Dupell | Helen Fuller Eddy |
| Siobhan Eddy Young | Nancy Ferrucci |
| Steven Fletcher | Andrea Fournier |
| Laura Hawksley | Raymond Hawksley |
| Dennis Holton | Lisa Hughes |
| Kristine Koepp | Betsey Lahue |
| Robert Lahue | Douglas Lawrence |
| Christopher Liller | Chris Mann |
| Greg Marcucci | Rayleen Marcucci |
| Scott Marquis | Susan Metz |
| Constance Montemagni | John Nault |
| Sherry Nowicki | Grayson Peterson |
| Marisa Powers | Judith Read |

George Rigoulot
Kevin Robinson
Amy Skolnick
Marianne Stevenish
Brian Sullivan
Elke Tuttle
Heidi Underwood
Betsey Wadsworth
Sally Wadsworth
Melissa Walker
Allison Young
Abbe Haber
Nick Squire
Rebecca Mann
Peter Ahlfeld
Holly Wendell

Elizabeth Roberts
Diane Schwippert
Thomas Snopek
Diana Stugger
Margaret Telscher
Kenneth Tuttle
Mathew Underwood
John Wadsworth
Boomer Walker
Alexandria Young
Kent Young
Brent Newell
Mike Culver
Christine McCauley
Chris Kaltsas
Gwynne Fitzgerald

NEW SCHOOL BUSINESS:

Note: Due to the open nature of this meeting, the minutes reflect specific questions that were asked and offer the general summary of the ensuing discussion.

Tom opened the discussion by introducing the board and explaining the way the meeting should progress. He went into the discussion regarding what a school board policy change is and how it works. He further advised that this is just an advisory vote and that anyone may speak.

Robert Lahue: Requested an explanation regarding the tuition payment policy and how it applies to the currently enrolled students.

- Further clarification offered by the board and a discussion regarding surveys commenced.

Allison Young: Requested an explanation regarding how this policy affects taxes?

- Discussed the Homestead Tax Rate sheet

Chris McCauley: If kids attend out-of-state schools, will there be funding? Requested an explanation of student enrollment issues.

- The board explained how they used their best educated guesses to determine student enrollment

Gwynne Fitzgerald:

- Survey discussion: Have they been sent out? Which schools received them?

Abbe Haber: Requested clarification on the survey timeline.

- General response was that the budget is in place for March- once the town has an answer on the budget and survey process can commence.
- Alyson explained the budget regarding transferring students.

Robert Lahue: Discussed the differences in the student enrollment Which schools do you believe will qualify?

- Discussed Act 46 and why the change in the language from less than one year ago.
- Tom discussed the tax rate and the two discussed what was said at the State Board of Ed vs what's being said now.

Laura Hawksley: Stated her appreciation for the work the board has done thus far.

Abbe Haber: Suggested a creative way to handle the budget as has been done with surrounding communities.

- Kent explained the different methods the board has used throughout the years (i.e. the Rec Center, doubling the rent, the sale of the Town Common, grants, PILT revenue).

Gwynne Fitzgerald: Can we offer the state average to BBA and Winhall? Is it being assumed that some parents will simply pay full tuition for their students and those students are simply no longer being accounted for within the budget?

- Survey discussion
 - o Bill Anton explained how this process will work.

Marissa Powers: Advised that at this time, we know public schools will comply. Suggested the parents of private school students be polled to determine how many students continue accepting vouchers.

Carol Huber: How did F16 come about and who voted? Are there any new alternatives to provide school choice?

- o Siobhan addressed this
- o Kent explained that he'd spoken with Kelly Pajala regarding this and that the only option at this time is merging. Kelly is working on changing the EPC for Stratton.

Rob Wadsworth: Asked Kent how much the town collects in gross taxes yearly.

- Highlighted that we have 1.3 million education budget and that the state takes the rest.

Rob Lahue:

- Discussed the best interest of the children and asked about grandfathering in existing students.
- General discussion commenced.

Heidi Underwood: Discussed how the state is driving this. Expressed her opinion about not blaming the local board and suggested that the town bring this issue to the state.

Stacie Chiodi: Touched on school choice and explained how she's a supporter of it. Discussed how 75 families carry this burden (referencing those who pay the Homestead Tax).

- Kent and Alyson discussed Homestead and Budget 2.

Andrea Fornier: Requested clarification on the policy regarding paying for schools that aren't on the town's list.

- Discussed transportation and the policies of other towns

Shane Boatright: Discussed how this is a state problem and that Stratton is being grossly overtaxed. Discussed residency issues.

- Discussion ensued between Kent Young, Allison Young, Heidi Underwood and Andrea Fornier.

Gwynne Fitzgerald: Suggested taxing year-round renters to take some burden off of the Homestead Tax payers. Group discussion ensued.

Scott Marquis: Stated his opinion that public money should pay for public schools and private money should pay for private schools.

Chris McCauley: Furthered the discussion regarding residency.

Rebecca Mann: Pointed out that there's simply no money left.

Betsy Wadsworth: Stated that the town cannot go forward with the budget that increases the Homestead by 44%.

General discussion commenced regarding residency and solutions.

Laura Hawksley: Pointed out that even with full choice, there isn't always room for the school to accept all children.

Stacy Chiodi: Stated that she still wants people to come here and suggested that not all renters are at the heart of the residency issue.

Robert Lahue: Requested information about Act 46 and why we opted not to merge.

- Explanation provided by Lorraine and Kent

Shane Boatright: Introduced Chris Kaltsas

Chris Kaltsas: Suggested that this be discussed at the state level.

Andrea Fournier: Requested further clarification on the schools that won't receive funding.

Carol Huber: Expressed the need to know when the surveys will go out due to requirements for enrollment from the schools.

- Tom advised that the surveys can be created and sent out within the next two weeks.

Chris McCauley: Asked if there's a way to spread the education burden to all homeowners, not just Homestead Tax payers.

Brian Sullivan: Discussed that there is still an eminent tax increase as we still need to pay for the existing students.

Boomer Walker: Requested the voting take place.

Tom Snopek: Discussed his opinion of public funds for public schools

Nick Squire: Requested clarifications on who can vote.

ADVISORY VOTE SUMMARY:

The attendees voted their opinions to either maintain or rescind the amended Tuition Payment Policy F16.

VOTING RESULTS:

Rescind the policy: 9 votes

Maintain the policy: 62 votes

BOARD VOTE:

Based on the conversations tonight and the final vote, Tom Montemagni, Siobhan Young and Lorraine Weeks-Newell agreed to keep the policy as it exists.

