

**TOWN OF STRATTON
MINUTES OF
THE ANNUAL SCHOOL DISTRICT MEETING OF
MARCH 6, 2018**

The legal voters of the Town of Stratton, Vermont met as warned at the Town Hall in said town on Tuesday, March 6, 2018 at 11:00 A.M. Moderator, Diana Stugger, called the meeting to order at 11:00AM. The Town Clerk took the roll and 50 voters were present. A majority of 26 will be required. Michael Culver, a Stratton resident, who is not a registered voter, was also present.

ARTICLE 1: To elect a Moderator for the ensuing year, as required by law.

Kent Young nominated Diana Stugger. Boomer Walker seconded. Larry Bills moved to close nominations and have the Clerk cast one ballot. Kevin Robinson seconded. All concurred. Diana Stugger was elected Moderator for the ensuing year.

ARTICLE 2: To elect all Stratton School District Officers, as required by law:

School District Director One three-year term

Siobhan Eddy Young nominated Tom Montemagni. Al Dupell seconded. Larry Bills moved to close nominations and have the Clerk cast one ballot. Kent Young seconded. All concurred. Tom Montemagni was elected School District Director for the term of three years.

ARTICLE 3: To see if the Town will authorize the School Directors to sell the 4-acre parcel, known as the Old Town Common to the Town of Stratton for the sum of \$200,000.00.

Kent Young so moved. Larry Bills seconded. Discussion: The Moderator asked Kent Young to explain the article as he had done at the Town Meeting. Kent Young explained that the Old Town Common, is currently owned by the School District, but should be owned by the Town, as it is the site of the foundation of the old Meetinghouse and it is also the site of the Old Town Cemetery. It is a separate parcel of the Recreation Area. The sale will provide much needed revenue to the School District to compensate for the large increase in the school budget due to the large increase in the student population this past year. The \$200,000.00 sale price will raise the municipal rate by a little more than two cents; however, by applying that amount to the school budget, it will reduce the Residential School rate by more than 45 cents. With no further discussion, the Moderator asked for a voice vote and Article 3 was unanimously approved.

ARTICLE 4: To set the Annual 2018-2019 tuition rate to The Mountain School at Winhall up to the announced Vermont Union Elementary School tuition rate for students in grades K-6 and up to the announced Vermont Union High School tuition rate for students in grades 7-8, who are residents of the school district pursuant to VSA 16 sections 823 & 828.

Boomer Walker so moved. Larry Bills seconded. No discussion. The Moderator asked for a voice vote and Article 4 was unanimously approved.

ARTICLE 5: To set the Annual 2018-2019 K-6 tuition rate to all other private or approved independent schools up to the announced Vermont Union Elementary School tuition rate for students in grades K-6, excluding those students covered in Article 4, who are residents of the school district.

Al Dupell so moved. Boomer Walker seconded. No discussion. The Moderator asked for a voice vote and Article 5 was unanimously approved.

At 11:10, the Moderator asked for a motion to recess the meeting to allow the Town's Representative to the State Legislature, Kelly Pajala, to speak. Al Dupell so moved. Larry Bills seconded. The Moderator stated that the School District Meeting will reconvene immediately following the Representative's Question and Answer session. At this time the meeting recessed. [Kelly Pajala introduced herself as Oliver Olsen's replacement as our District's Representative, as appointed by the Governor following Mr.

Olsen's resignation last year. Kelly Pajala addressed highlights of the current legislative session, including current tax changes being considered and legislation addressing gun violence.]

Following the session, Ms. Pajala left the meeting.

The Moderator reconvened the School District Meeting at 11:40AM.

ARTICLE 6: Shall the Voters of the Stratton School District designate the following three high schools for grades 9 – 12: 1) Burr and Burton Academy in Manchester, Vermont, 2) Leland and Gray High School in Townshend, Vermont, and 3) Twin Valley Middle High School in Whitingham, Vermont, or some other combination of high schools, not to exceed three in number, that accept all of Stratton's students, in accordance with 16 VSA 827.

Al Dupell so moved. Lorraine Weeks-Newell seconded. Discussion: Tom Montemagni explained the meaning of this Article – that it would limit choice to three schools in accordance with the statute quoted. Following the inclusion of this Article in the Warning, Burr and Burton Academy's (BBA's) Board of Directors decided that, although they are willing to accept all of Stratton's students, this is not the same as accepting the "Designated School" status, as defined in the statute. The BBA board supports school choice and, therefore, will not accept any town's request for BBA to be a designated school. Tom Montemagni explained that, as a result of this decision, Article 6 cannot be passed as presented, but it could be amended to include another school or to reduce the designated schools to the other two named schools, both of which are Public Schools. To clarify this, if BBA is not to be included in the amended article, and the amended article passes, then it means that no tuition will be paid to BBA by the School District – in other words, parents of BBA students will be responsible for paying the entire tuition amount for those students. The discussion continued with various comments in support of limiting choice in order to maintain an acceptable tax rate, as well as comments for keeping full choice for students regardless of the expense. The discussion also addressed ongoing and potential changes brought about by Act 46, which include merging with other towns. In conclusion the general consensus was to vote the article down so to preserve choice, especially since the majority of our students attend Burr and Burton Academy. The Moderator asked for a voice vote. All voters present voted No. Article 6 did not pass.

ARTICLE 7: To set the Annual 2018-2019 tuition rate to Burr & Burton Academy up to the amount of \$17,065.00 per pupil for students in grades 9-12, who are residents of the school district.

Al Dupell so moved. Boomer Walker seconded. No discussion. The Moderator asked for a voice vote and Article 7 was unanimously approved.

ARTICLE 8: To set the Annual 2018-2019 tuition rate to all other private or approved independent schools up to the announced Vermont Union High School tuition rate for students in grades 7-12, excluding those students covered in Article 4 and Article 5, who are residents of the school district.

Al Dupell so moved. Siobhan Eddy Young seconded. Discussion: Tom Montemagni explained that this is typically applied to schools that do not accept all of our students, with the exception of parochial schools which are not allowed public funds. Burr and Burton Academy is treated differently because that school accepts all of our students. Alyson Marcucci also explained, in response to a parent's question, that the average state tuition rate is calculated by the state annually – the town does not determine that amount. With no further discussion, the Moderator asked for a voice vote and Article 8 passed.

ARTICLE 9: Shall the voters of the School District approve the School Board to expend \$1,029,913.00, 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 \$16,188.00 per equalized pupil. This projected spending per equalized pupil is 2.0% higher than spending for the current year.

Kent Young so moved. Boomer Walker seconded. No discussion. The Moderator asked for a voice vote and Article 9 passed.

ARTICLE 10: To see if the Town will authorize the School Directors to borrow money for the school district in anticipation of taxes and state money allocated to the district.

Al Dupell so moved. Siobhan Eddy Young seconded. No discussion. The Moderator asked for a voice vote and Article 10 passed.

ARTICLE 11: To see if the Town will rescind the decision voted at the annual School District Meeting of 2017, which authorized the Stratton School Board to apply to the Vermont State Board of Education for approval to adjust the district's supervisory union from the Windham Central Supervisory Union (WCSU) to the Bennington Rutland Supervisory Union (BRSU) pursuant to 16 VSA 261 (b). A vote in the affirmative will keep the Stratton School District in the Windham Central Supervisory Union (WCSU).

Al Dupell so moved. Larry Bills seconded. Discussion: Tom Montemagni and the School Board explained that the School Board has been in negotiations to merge with other districts this last year and referred voters to the Act 46 Report published in the Town Report for details. Last year, the Town had thought that a move to the Bennington-Rutland Supervisory Union would benefit the Town by ensuring that Burr and Burton Academy and the Mountain School, located within the boundaries of that Supervisory Union would remain available choices for Stratton; however, following the discussions for merger, the board came to the conclusion that merging with Winhall and Sandgate which were within that Supervisory Union, would not be good for Stratton parents. Stratton would lose its voice in the proposed merger and discussions concerning busing seemed to imply a very negative impact for the Town as well. By maintaining membership in the Windham Central Supervisory Union, Stratton will be in a better position to maintain itself as an Independent District. Upon conclusion, of the discussion, the Moderator asked for a voice vote and Article 11 passed unanimously.

ARTICLE 12: To transact any other business that may legally come before this meeting.

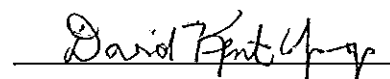
Tom Montemagni stated that the School Board will be reviewing options to present to the Town to alleviate adverse effects on the Residential Education Property Tax Rate. The School Board will warn a Special Meeting for this forum sometime in the coming months.

Other residents expressed their thoughts supporting the importance of School Choice.

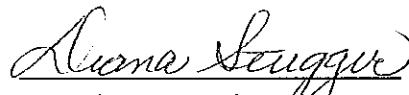
ADJOURNMENT: Upon conclusion of the discussion, the Moderator asked for a motion to adjourn.

Al Dupell moved to adjourn. Betsy Wadsworth seconded. All concurred and the School District Meeting adjourned at 12:20PM.

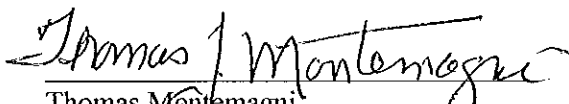
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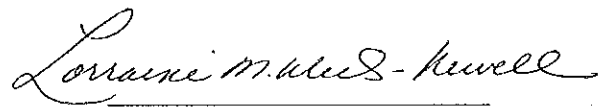

Town Clerk – David Kent Young

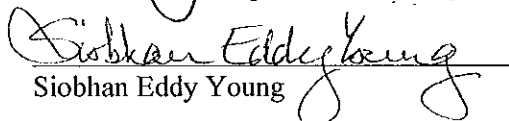
Approved:


Moderator – Diana Stigger

Approved by the Stratton School Directors


Thomas Montemagni


Lorraine Weeks-Newell


Siobhan Eddy Young