

**Dover Select Board
Special Board Meeting Minutes
Dover Town Hall
February 28, 2017**

THESE MINUTES ARE NOT OFFICIAL UNTIL THEY HAVE BEEN APPROVED BY THE DOVER SELECT BOARD

Select Board Members Present: Randall Terk, Victoria Capitani, Linda Holland, Joe Mahon

Select Board Members Absent: Tom Baltrus

School Board Members Present: Rich Werner, Johnny Cleanthes, Jolene Mahon, Chip Vicary

School Board Members Absent: Laura Sibilia

Also Present: Recording Secretary, Jeannette Eckert

Public: Ray Holland, Adam Levine, Sandy MacDougall, Cliff Turpin, Chris Mays, Andy McLean, Josh Cohen, Ken Black, Marco & Stefan Tallini, Matt Martyn, Linda Sherman, Lori O'Hern, Randy Capitani, Judy & Charles LaFiura, Sarah Shippee, Kerry MacDonald-Cady & Jack Cady, Lauren Harkawik, Louise McDevitt, Bob Holland, Marc Schaubert, Trip Morse, Jan Terk, Mike Garber, Barbara Walsh

Regular Meeting Called to Order at 7:00 PM by School Board Chair Rich Werner

After conferring with those present, all agreed to turn the meeting over to Select Board Chair Randall Terk to address the Town portion first.

TOWN MEETING

ARTICLE 12: Shall the voters accept the annual report of the auditors and other town officers?
No comments

ARTICLE 13: Shall the voters compensate town officers as follows: Town Clerk \$52,532.28 annual salary, Town Treasurer \$5,000 annual stipend, Select Board Chairman \$2,500 annual stipend, Select Board members \$2,000 annual stipend, and Town Auditors \$16.92/hr., all others – chairmen Vermont minimum wage plus \$1.50/hr., members Vermont minimum wage, and mileage based on the Federal reimbursement rate for the month in which the mileage occurred? ***No comments***

ARTICLE 14: Shall the voters authorize general fund expenditure for operational expenses of \$2,204,674.73 for the coming year? ***Up approximately \$33,000; a 3rd of a penny on the tax rate***

ARTICLE 15: Shall the voters authorize highway fund expenditure for operational expenses of \$1,383,843.52 for the coming year? ***No comments***

ARTICLE 16: Shall the voters raise and appropriate \$650,000.00 for the Capital Paving Fund?
Represents same number as previous year

Adam Levine: Is it enough? Does the Road Commissioner feel it is enough? The roads take a beating up here

Randy Terk: Should we be rethinking the way we pave our roads? Are there options to make the money we spend more effective? Even after paving and crack sealing, Dover Hill Rd by Sugarhouse Rd is very bumpy still. Certainly, we can do more with more money but would like to do it more effectively

Adam: Does the Board support a larger amount of money for capital paving projects

Randy: Need to ask the voters

Joe Mahon: We have begun trying new things; would entertain other options if they work but don't want to spend the money on something that doesn't work

Randy: Should we be building up the Capital funds without an intended use? Don't believe so. However, we do have an unallocated reserve fund of \$1million. If another Tropical Storm Irene comes our way, we will be ready with materials

Louise McDevitt: What is an appropriate build up on our roads? Who is evaluating the work that has been done?

Bob Holland: I evaluate the work being done. There is 3 inches on Valley View Rd which is new; there is more traffic and the roads are not built to handle the traffic

Charles LaFiura: Encountered frost heaves in Wilmington on Mann Rd; there must be some expertise to deal with these issues

Joe: Rte. 100 heading over to Wardsboro has been built up with drainage on either side. Dover does some preventative maintenance

Bob: That cost a million dollars a mile; a lot of frost heaves this year

Vicki Capitani: We also grind and reclaim where a lot of towns just pave over

Marco Tallini commended the road crew on the amazing job they do given what they are dealt with

ARTICLE 17: Shall the voters raise and appropriate \$250,000.00 for the Capital Equipment Fund?
Same as last year.

ARTICLE 18: Shall the voters raise and appropriate \$80,000.00 for the Capital Building Improvement Fund? **Up \$30,000 from last year; building up funds for new handicapped accessible ramp at Town Hall**

No article this year for legal defense funds--\$50,000 allocated in the past

ARTICLE 19: Shall the voters raise and appropriate \$3,372.00 for the purpose of supporting Southeastern Vermont Economic Development Strategies (SeVEDS) activities?
There will be representatives from SeVEDs at Town Meeting to speak to this

ARTICLE 20: Shall the voters raise and appropriate \$5,161.25 for the purpose of supporting MHCA Dover Cinema (Memorial Hall Center for the Arts, Inc.)?

There will be a rep from MHCA at Town Meeting to speak to this

- **How did this number arise? This represents their tax bill amount; number changes every year; asking the voters to make the decision; non-profits are exempt from property taxes**
- **This town needs a competitive structure in the likes of Weston Playhouse; I view this number as much too low**
- **Investing in MHCA; this was brought up during the ITV Fest**
- **Economic development funds should be used for infrastructure**
- **Working with Fairpoint to provide fiber to the home—project that will hopefully be funded by economic development**
- **In agreement that a venue for live performances is something that should be developed**

- ***A motion can be made to amend the amount of the article at Town Meeting***
- ***This has been a sore subject for many residents; Agree that we need some kind of venue but coming before the town to offset your taxes is not the way to go***
- ***Building is not eligible to be tax exempt—there are other options***
- ***Would encourage MHCA to pursue other avenues rather than have the taxes paid by the town every year***
- ***It has been suggested to Dan that he ask each resident to contribute say \$100 and he'd be all set to enhance the venue, but he doesn't do it***
- ***Should be mentioned at Town Meeting when Dan Facilla is present***

ARTICLE 21: Shall the voters authorize the Selectmen to apply any surplus from the current fiscal year to reduce taxes in the next fiscal year? **No comments**

ARTICLE 22: Shall the voters authorize the Selectmen to sell properties, which the Town has acquired by gift or through tax sales? **No comments**

ARTICLE 23: Shall the voters authorize the Selectmen to set the tax rate sufficient to cover the approved expenses of the Town of Dover and the Town of Dover Highway for taxes due on August 15, 2017 and February 15, 2018? **No comments**

ARTICLE 24: Shall the voters authorize the Selectmen to borrow money in anticipation of taxes? **No comments**

ARTICLE 25: To transact any other business that may legally come before this meeting. **No comments**

SCHOOL DISTRICT

***Discussion on Article 1 moved to last item on agenda....please see below**

ARTICLE 2: To choose all Dover town officers and Dover school district officers and Unified School District officers for the following positions required by law to be elected at the annual meeting:

Auditor	3-year term
First Constable	1-year term
Grand Juror	1-year term
Library Trustee	5-year term
Library Trustee	5-year term (3 years remaining)
Moderator - School	1-year term
Moderator - Town	1-year term
School Director	3-year term Rich Werner
School Director	2-year term write in Kerry MacDonald-Cady
Select Board Member	3-year term
Select Board Member	2-year term
Town Agent	1-year term
Trustee of Public Funds	1-year term
Unified School District Director	4-year term Rich Werner
Unified School District Director	3-year term Kerry MacDonald-Cady
Unified School District Director	2-year term Laura Sibilis

- ARTICLE 3:** Shall the Town School District expend \$25,000 to install a playground for the pre-school program? ***Preschool is required to have a separate space from the older kids; looking to improve the playground and make it safe; will be fenced in separately in the woods between the present playground and the bus parking lot***
- ARTICLE 4:** Shall the Town School District set the annual tuition rate to approved independent schools as \$16,700 for the 2017/2018 school year? ***Roughly 39 private/independent school students; won't know the exact funding number until the school year ends; has to be voted on every year***
- ARTICLE 5:** Shall the Town School District compensate the Officers as follows- Chairperson- \$2,500 per year; Members- \$2,000 per year, and mileage reimbursement at the Federal reimbursement rate for the month in which the mileage occurred? ***No comments***
- ARTICLE 6:** Shall the Town School District authorize any surplus from the 2016/2017 budget to be placed in the Capital Reserve Fund? ***This a pretty standard article that moves any surplus into a reserve fund***
- ARTICLE 7:** Shall the Town School District authorize funding the Capital Vehicle Fund in the amount of \$10,550, with such funds coming from the Capital Reserve Fund? ***Separate fund of \$80,000; saving money with transport to Leland & Gray***
- ARTICLE 8:** Shall the Town School District authorize funding of the Capital Building fund in the amount of \$12,000, with such funds coming from the Capital Reserve Fund? ***Set aside for equipment and building; new roof was \$100,000; currently \$80,000 in reserve; not spent without voter approval***
- ARTICLE 9:** Shall the voters of the Dover Town School District approve the school board to expend \$3,105,067 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 \$16,461.84 per equalized pupil. This projected spending per equalized pupil is 1.08 % more than spending for the current year.
- ***See pages 98-100 of town report for the school budget***
 - ***“Charlotte Bond and Katherine Kaufman over/under”- \$500***
 - ***Adding another teacher this year***
 - ***Number of pupils are up***
 - ***Other than that, not much has changed***
 - ***Pages 96-97 show projected income***
 - ***Tuition in Pre-K is up—we have a robust program***
- ARTICLE 10:** Shall the Town School District authorize the School Directors to withdraw money from the Capital Reserve Fund to offset the Homestead tax rate, but not more than \$330,000
- ***Money taken out to off-set the tax rate***
 - ***Moving about \$100,000 over from reserve fund***
- ARTICLE 11:** To discuss any other items that the voters would like to discuss, and to conduct any other business that may legally come before the voters. ***No comments***

***ARTICLE 1:** Shall the Town of Dover School District, which the State Board of Education has found necessary to include in a proposed new unified school district, join with the school district of Wardsboro, which the State Board of Education has found necessary to include in the proposed new unified school district, and the school district of Marlboro which the State Board of Education has found to be advisable to include in the new proposed unified school district for the purpose of forming the River Valleys Unified School District as provided in Title 16, Vermont Statutes annotated, upon the following conditions and agreements.

The Unified District shall be formed and the terms hereby voted shall become effective on the date this article is approved by a majority vote of the electorate of at least two "necessary" districts of the Forming Districts and said votes become final per 16 V.S.A. 706g, provided that votes approving this article shall not become effective unless and until the voters of other Windham Central Supervisory Union (WCSU) town school districts (Brookline, Jamaica, Newfane, Townshend, and Windham) vote to approve formation of a unified district and said vote becomes final thereby forming a Supervisory Union with two Unified Districts (a "Side by Side").

No elementary school shall be closed without a unanimous vote of the River Valleys Unified School District Board, and an affirmative vote of the town in which it is located.

This is a protection specifically written into the Article

- (a) **Grades.** The River Valleys Unified School District will offer pre-kindergarten through grade six (6) education to all students in the unified school district and will pay tuition for students in grades seven (7) through twelve (12) pursuant to Vermont statutes. If the Marlboro Town School District votes to approve the Unified School District and the District is established, then the Marlboro Elementary School will cease operating school for grades seven (7) and eight (8) on June 30, 2019.
- (b) **Board of School Directors.** A town school district's representation on the unified district board will be closely proportional to the fraction that its population bears to the aggregate population of the Unified District. Initial Board composition will be based upon the year 2010 Federal Census and shall be recalculated promptly following the release of each subsequent decennial census. The Board is authorized to reapportion the Board, including increasing or decreasing the number of school directors. However, at no time will a town school district have less than one board member on the Board. Subject to the previous sentence, each proportionality calculation shall be rounded to the nearest whole number.
- (c) **Assumption of debts and ownership of school property.** The unified union school district shall assume the indebtedness of forming districts; assume all operating deficits and/or surpluses or reserve funds of the forming districts; acquire, maintain, and pay for the school properties of member districts; all as specifically identified and provided for in the Final Report.
- (d) The complete provisions of Articles 7, 8 and 15 of the Final Report regarding special funds, indebtedness, real and personal property and school continuity of school buildings are set forth in the Final Report and are incorporated in their entirety by reference herein. ***None of the schools have any heavy debt; Wardsboro has a reserve fund not as robust as Dover; Marlboro has a small reserve fund***
- (e) **Final Report:** The provisions of the final report approved by the State Board of Education on the 20th day of December, 2016, which is on file in the town clerk's office, shall govern the River Valleys Unified School District.

Presentation by Randy Capitani on the Act 46 Study Committee Findings

- **See page 115 in Town Report for summary of activities**
- **Article 1 to be voted by Australian ballot at Town Meeting**
- **Looked at whether Dover, Wardsboro & Marlboro could merge and what that would look like**
- **Researched what makes the different schools unique; how to keep the unique identity of each school; all three are high performing schools**
- **Identified opportunities and threats—what aligned and didn't align with the Act 46 requirements; new board will ultimately write the policies; single teacher agreements between the three schools; children can move about the three school choices; secondary choice will be maintained; Marlboro would have to give up 7&8 grades to be part of our district; share substitute teacher pool- standardized under one structure; shared special education costs**
- **Cons that don't meet the goals of Act 46—larger budget may be harder for voters to understand; hope to keep the Bond/Kaufman under/over; new ways to engage citizens in school budget discussions—would not be in town meeting format/floor vote; could be voted in subsequent meetings for future years; district meetings would take place in a different town each year; does spread people out**
- **Present boards would continue thru June 2019; grant money from the state to pay for organizational costs, up to \$150,000**

- **Taxpayer implications: first year of a new Unified District should you vote to adopt that, will see a tax reduction of 8 cents; second year-6 cents; third year-4 cents**
- **Small school grants would continue-- Wardsboro: \$83,500; Marlboro: \$116,000; Dover: \$61,000 but those would go away if Unified District is voted in; may be extended for alternative structures**
- **Financial assistance would continue for the Hold Harmless clause**
- **Standardized accounting methods for the three schools**

- **Cost consequences: transportation would be a big one, additional costs for buses for elementary, after school programs; Marlboro has big potential loss in giving up grades 7-8**
- **School choice options for 7-12 grade students—tuition rates**

- **Regardless of how the vote comes out, there will still be work to do on the school boards**
- **Wardsboro and Dover must vote in unison; Marlboro is considered advisable**
- **New board would be made up of three members from each town**
- **Whether you vote for or against district merger; please vote for school board directors; has to happen the same day**

- **Districts will continue to operate until July 1, 2019**
- **Two different sets of school board sections on the ballot**
- **Process going forward if any towns vote no: Dover and Wardsboro can move forward as a unified district even if Marlboro votes no but is also contingent on Leland & Gray voting yes**
- **Marlboro can submit a plan for an alternative structure if the town votes no; or petition for a revote**
- **If Dover votes no, the merger fails; can petition for re-votes**

- **Alternative structures—State still has the final say; can force you into a district**
- **Only 3 or 4 K thru 6 districts in the state; two happen to be Wardsboro & Dover; Will still be dancing with Wardsboro for a while on this**
- **State still wants to keep the goals of Act 46 in tact**
- **State cannot force us to change structure--can only force us to join like structures (what grades you operate); Limits what the state can do**
- **Sec of Education reviews all the districting—by July 2018; only the voters can change structure**
- **What are the new opportunities for our children-combine grades; sharing in the good things that are happening; foreign language in every school; at meetings voters have a say; petitions can come before the meeting; open informational meetings—may not always be in Dover**
- **First year has to be Australian ballot; no discussion**
- **Windham Central Supervisory Union—held meetings May 2015-Dec 2015 regarding developing study committees**
- **WCSU reorganization meeting the Monday after Town Meeting**
- **Alternative structure versus placement by the State**

- **Vote one way or the other—leaving it blank also lets us know which direction to go in**
- **Does School board recommend a yes or no vote?**
- **Do not want to make a recommendation from the School board—individual members may share their own views with the public**
- **If yes vote, Dover does stand to lose the IB program—unsure**
- **No more Dover Elementary School—will be called River Valleys Unified School District (RVUSD) with schools in Dover, Wardsboro, Marlboro**
- **Articles of Agreement are intended to keep unique characteristics of each school**
- **Cost saving comes in not having to operate every building**
- **School District owns the building and land that the school is on**
- **Will have three Dover members who will have a say in decisions**
- **The same people will represent the Town on these boards and will be looking out for our best interests**

- **Shared resources which has already been happening**
- **Website of all the meetings: www.wcsu-committee.blogspot.com**
- **Committee members are available to speak with the voters; Bill Anton & Matt Martyn were both instrumental in drafting the articles**
- **Board/committee is willing to do whatever they can do to help voters make an informed decision—still not sure how each is going to vote; however, a yes vote is a more stable vote**

Meeting adjourned at 8:49pm

Respectfully submitted by Jeannette Eckert
 Select Board Recording Secretary

Public notices of these minutes have been posted at the following locations:
 Dover Town Clerk's Bulletin Board, Dover Town Meeting Bulletin Board, Dover School
 Dover Free Library, East Dover Post Office, Town of Dover Website: www.doververmont.com