

**Deliberative Minutes
Epping School Board
February 4, 2010 7:00 pm**

The Epping School Board held its annual Deliberative Session at the Epping Middle School Gymnasium. The purpose of this meeting was to discuss and amend Articles to be presented on the Official School Ballot on the March 9, 2010 annual Voting Day.

The meeting was called to Order at 7:04 P.M. by Moderator Bob Goodrich.

In attendance were School Board members Gregory Dodge, Susan Kimball, Shawn Patton, Scott Booth and David Mylott; Superintendent, Barbara Munsey; Business Administrator, Martha Williamson; Legal Counsel, Maureen Pomeroy and School District Clerk, Robin O'Day. Also in attendance were Budget Committee members Paul Spidle, Tom Dwyer, Michelle Cromarty, Sandra Osgood, Mark LeClerc, Tammy Shennett, Rose Colby and Selectman's Representatives James McGeough and Rene Archambault.

Moderator Goodrich read The Rules of Procedure to the audience.

School Board Chairperson Dodge announced that there would be an open school board meeting following Deliberative Session to discuss any changes or amendments that may occur.

Moderator Goodrich announced that Candidates Night will be held on February 24th and that Voting Day is scheduled for Tuesday, March 9th.

Moderator Goodrich congratulated our Middle School Boys' Basketball team for winning their semi-final championship game.

Moderator Goodrich proceeded to read Article 1.

Article A: To elect by ballot the following School District Officers:

School Board Member	3-Year Term
School Board Member	3-Year Term

Article 1: To see if the Epping School District will vote to approve the cost item included in the collective bargaining agreement reached between the Epping School Board and the Epping Education Association which calls for the following increases in salaries and benefits at the current staffing levels:

Year	Estimated Increase
2010.2011	\$102,155
2011.2012	\$265,328

and further to raise and appropriate the sum of \$102,155 for the upcoming fiscal year, such sum representing the additional costs attributable to the increase in salaries and benefits required by the new agreement over those that would be paid at the current staffing levels in accordance with the most recent collective bargaining agreement. The school board (4-0-1) and the budget committee (6-1-1) recommend this appropriation.

School Board Chairperson Dodge made a Motion to accept Article 1 as read. Seconded by Member Kimball. Moderator Goodrich opened the meeting to discussion of Article 1.

School Board Member Mylott spoke on behalf of this article. See attached handout from the Epping School Board that explains and details areas of cost of living raise, step increases, starting salaries, health insurance, retirement and the Evergreen Clause that was passed by the State in 2008.

Budget Committee Member Spidel asked Superintendent Munsey to explain the Evergreen Clause to the audience. Superintendent Munsey explained the 125% Clause is a penalty that is imposed on the school district for compensation about 125% of salary. When a school district employee retires with compensation above 125% of salary, NH Retirement estimates the life of the individual and then charge the school district for any additional retirement cost associated with compensation above the 125% limit.

Budget Committee member Spidel asked for the cumulative cost of the teachers' agreement. Member Mylott reported that the cumulative contract impact for the two year agreement would be \$469,438.

Jeff Harris wanted to know why the district was entering into a two-year contract instead of a three-year contract. It was explained that during these difficult economic times that both the teachers union and the school district felt that it was better to negotiate a two-year contract than a three-year with the future being so uncertain at this time.

It was explained by Member Mylott that last year Epping was 100 out of 160 districts for teacher salaries. This agreement will allow Epping to recruit and retain quality teachers with a competitive starting salary and aligning step salaries to more appropriate levels.

Budget Committee Member Tom Dwyer informed the audience that the negotiation process went into mediation due to issues that couldn't be worked out between the two sides. The School Board feels that this is a financially sound agreement and in the best interest of both the teachers and district.

Article 2: Shall the Epping School District, if article 1 is defeated, authorize the governing body to call one special meeting, at its option, to address article 1 cost items only? The school board (4-0) and the budget committee (8-0) recommend this article.

Member Dodge made a Motion to accept Article 2 as read. Seconded by Member Patton. Moderator Goodrich opened the meeting to discussion of Article 2.

Member Dodge presented this article by stating that acceptance of this article would allow the school board to call a special meeting without having to petition the Superior Court, which of course would lower legal costs to the district.

Article 3: Shall the Epping School District raise and appropriate as an operating budget, not including appropriations by special warrant articles and other appropriations voted separately, the amounts set forth on the budget posted with the warrant or as amended by vote of the first session, for the purposes set forth therein, totaling \$16,324,011? Should this article be defeated, the default budget shall be \$16,307,568, which is the same as last year with certain adjustments required by previous action for the Epping School District or by law or the governing body may hold one special meeting in accordance with RSA 40:13, X and XVI, to take up the issue of a revised operating budget only. This operating budget warrant article does not include appropriations contained in any other warrant articles. The school board (5-0) and the budget committee (7-1) recommend this appropriation.

Member Dodge made a Motion to accept Article 3 as read. Seconded by Member Patton. Moderator Goodrich opened the meeting to discussion of Article 3.

Member Booth presented this article. See attached handout (The 2010-2011 School District Budget Process) that explains the budget process and the effects that the proposed budget will have on the upcoming school year, enrollment numbers, increases in health premiums and increases in both retirement and unemployment benefits that have greatly affected the proposed budget.

The total tax impact for the proposed budget is \$1.24
The total tax impact for the default budget is \$1.22

Budget Committee Member Spidel wanted to know how the Epping School District was impacted with the current situation with the Flynn Oil Company. Member Dodge explained that the district has approximately \$83,000 in lost monies from this company, but that the district has contacted the Attorney General's office and it is hopeful that most of the monies owed to the district can be collected. Monies to cover the loss will have to be taken as needed from the general fund. Business Administrator, Martha Williamson explained that the district had been contracting their fuel agreement with Flynn's Oil Company for a couple of years prior and had no difficulties. There was no way to predict the company's financial problems this year.

Tom Gauthier suggested that when the district searches for a new oil supplier that they pull a bond from the company which will protect the district if the company has issues. Mr. Gauthier also inquired about the raise increases for administrators. It was explained that there is a 3% raise increase in the budget for administrators.

There was general discussion regarding the proposal to eliminate one principal position and transition to only one principal for both the high school and middle school as has

been done in the past. It was explained that there will still be Dean of Students in both buildings to help assist the one principal and that, due to a significant decline in student enrollment; it was not financially responsible to have two principals for such a small student population. Matt Killen expressed concern that the school board's decision to go to one principal was a hasty one and felt that this will put the district at a disadvantage. It was explained that a new Race to the Top District Coordinator position would be added to help with school improvement, staff evaluation, and professional development and other criteria areas that will be needed for the district to proceed with the "Race to The Top Grant" as anticipated.

Superintendent Munsey stated that NECAP scores have increased across the district in reading and writing areas and surpassed state average, but there still needs to be some improvement in the math areas.

Article 4: To see if the School District, pursuant to RSA 195:18 will vote to create a Cooperative School District Planning Committee consisting of three qualified voters of whom at least one shall be a member of the School Board and to see if the District will vote to authorize the School District Moderator to appoint members of the committee. The school board (4-0) and the budget committee (6-2) recommend this article.

Member Dodge made a Motion to accept Article 4 as read. Seconded by Member Patton. Moderator Goodrich opened the meeting to discussion of Article 4.

Member Kimball presented this article. This article would allow the school board to create a committee to inquire of other school districts interest in forming a cooperative school district to provide additional educational opportunities at less cost. Anyone who is interested in participating on the committee can submit a letter of interest to Moderator Goodrich. The need for committee members will also be advertised via ETV, school newsletters, the school web site and local newspapers.

Mr. Gatchell stated his opposition to the district starting or organizing a cooperative committee or a cooperative school district. He feels strongly that the Epping School District needs to remain small so that individual attention can be given to students, which he feels will be impaired if the high school becomes too big. He explained that in the 50's, 80's and 90's the town defeated attempts to become a cooperative and that he supports Epping standing alone as its own high school. He was also concerned with the costs associated with the previous attempts at a cooperative agreement with Fremont.

Mr. Spidel felt that Article 4 limits the school district to a cooperative instead of looking at tuition agreements or an area school district instead. Member Booth explained that all options will be looked at when discussing future school needs, but that the law states you need to have voters' approval to even discuss cooperative options which isn't the case with tuition agreements. Superintendent Munsey explained that any Articles of Agreement would have to be supported by the voters.

There was discussion on the costs involved in forming this committee and it was explained that there would be minimal cost involved with organizing a committee. Member Kimball felt strongly that money spent on the attempts to form a cooperative with Fremont was fully justified and the educational opportunities of Epping students were substantially diminished when those attempts failed by such small margins.

Article 5: To transact any other business which may legally come before this meeting.

Member Dodge made Motion to accept Article 5 as read. Seconded by member Patton. Moderator Goodrich opened the meeting to discussion of Article 5. Member Dodge made Motion to Adjourn. Seconded by member Patton.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:04 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Robin A. O'Day
School District Clerk