

CONTOOCOOK VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT
Annual Meeting
ConVal High School
School District Meeting Part I
Tuesday, February 6, 2018
6:00 p.m.

MINUTES

Call to Order:

Moderator Tim Clark called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Rules:

Moderator Clark pointed out fire exits and read the rules as follows: only registered voters may speak unless others have spoken and registered voters permit non-registered voters to contribute. Those wishing to speak should raise their hand, state full name, and approach microphone to speak. Only the person recognized by the Moderator may speak. All speakers should address the Moderator. Conversations will not be directed to others on the floor. Address only the issue at hand. In SB2, Articles may be amended, but may not be set aside or tabled. Every Article will move on to the Ballot on March 13th. Seven voters are required to question the Moderator's ruling. If the vote remains in question, we will go to a secret ballot. Motions to amend an article must be in writing. Motions to reduce spending articles should include a specific dollar amount and not a percentage. Consideration of only one amendment at a time will be permitted. Amendments that negate the intent of the motion will not be allowed. They confuse the voters. Rather, one should vote down an amendment and propose another.

Attorney, Norman Makechnie was recognized for his long and dedicated service to the children of the ConVal School District.

School Board Chairman, Myron Steere said that this past year has not been an easy one for the Board or the SAU. Mr. Steere thanked Gib West and his staff at the high school for their contributions in operating the school and maintaining high standards over the last two years. The budget is up .62%, but the amount to be raised by taxes is up 5.5%. Declining enrollment means less aid from the State and this year is our last year to receive a building aid check with none expected in the future. With eleven school buildings to maintain, portions of the high school are nearly 50 years old, and our newest buildings are about 20 years old meaning our maintenance costs will start to climb. The Strategic Plan will develop a consolidation plan for voters to vote on in future years. Mr. Steere said that it was really disappointing that an agreement was unable to be reached with the teacher's association, we respect the dedicated efforts of all our teachers. He thanked everyone for their support.

WARRANT

The State of New Hampshire

To the Inhabitants of the Contoocook Valley School District consisting of the Towns of Antrim, Bennington, Dublin, Frankestown, Greenfield, Hancock, Peterborough, Sharon, and Temple qualified to vote in District affairs:

You are hereby notified to meet at **ConVal High School** at 184 Hancock Rd., (Route 202 North) in Peterborough on the **sixth day of February** next at **6 o'clock in the evening** for the first session of the Annual School District Meeting, and you are further notified to meet at the following places in the Town of your residence:

Antrim	Antrim Town Hall	8 a.m. – 7 p.m.
Bennington	Pierce Elementary School	8 a.m. – 7 p.m.
Dublin	Dublin Town Hall	8 a.m. – 7 p.m.
Fracestown	Fracestown Town Hall	10 a.m. – 7 p.m.
Greenfield	Greenfield Town Hall	10 a.m. – 7 p.m.
Hancock	Hancock Town Office	8 a.m. – 7 p.m.
Peterborough	Peterborough Community Center	8 a.m. – 7 p.m.
Sharon	Sharon Meeting House	11 a.m. – 7 p.m.
Temple	Temple Town Hall	7 a.m. – 7 p.m.

on the **thirteenth day of March** next for the second session of the Meeting (polls will be open for voting at the second session) to act upon the following subjects:

Article 01: High School Renovations

Shall the Contoocook Valley School District raise and appropriate the sum of \$1,000,000 (Gross Budget) for the building, renovating, and equipping of Science Labs at ConVal High School, and to authorize the issuance of not more than \$1,000,000 of bonds, notes, or loans in accordance with the provisions of the Municipal Finance Act (RSA Chapter 33) and to authorize the Contoocook Valley School Board to issue, negotiate, sell, and deliver such bonds, notes, or loans, and to determine the rate of interest thereon and the maturity and other terms thereof, and to authorize the Contoocook Valley School Board to take any other action or to pass any other vote relative thereto and to authorize the Contoocook Valley School Board to apply for, obtain, and accept federal, state or other aid, if any, which may be available for the Project and to comply with all laws applicable to said Project and further to raise and appropriate the sum of \$11,722, for the purpose of the first year’s interest payment on the bond. (The ConVal School Board designates this article as a SPECIAL warrant article and RECOMMENDS adoption of this article.) (3/5 vote required)

Jim Fredrickson moved this article. Stephan Morrissey second.

Jim Fredrickson said that this is a two phased project to bring the science labs up to code and meet safety standards; the first will renovate two labs through the use of trust fund money this summer. Phase II will entail two other science rooms and equipment. There is not enough money in the trust fund for the entire project, approval is asked for a bond.

Moderator Clark said that this will move to the ballot on March 13th.

Article 02: Operating Budget-School District-SB2

Shall the Contoocook Valley 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 \$45,589,763? Should this article be defeated, the default budget shall be \$44,934,209, which is the same as last year, with certain adjustments required by previous action of the Contoocook Valley 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. (The ConVal School Board RECOMMENDS adoption of this article.)

Richard Dunning moved this article. Second.

Dick Dunning spoke about the need for quality education. The board and administration worked very hard to be sensitive to the taxpayers to bring a budget forward under 1%. He encouraged those present to vote favorably on the proposed budget.

No further discussion took place when asked by the Moderator.

Moderator Clark said that this will move to the ballot on March 13th.

Article 03: Accept the Factfinder's Report

Shall the Contoocook Valley School District vote to accept the findings and recommendations of the Factfinder with respect to the collective bargaining agreement between the Contoocook Valley School Board and the Contoocook Valley Education Association for the period July 1, 2018 through June 30, 2019 and further to raise and appropriate the sum of \$1,685,912, such sum representing the additional costs attributable to the increases in salaries, wages and benefits required by the Factfinder's recommendations over those that would be paid at the current staffing levels. (The ConVal School Board does NOT RECOMMEND by a vote (tally 11-0-0)).

Bernd Foecking moved this article. Second.

Bernd Foecking reported that the CVEA and Board worked toward negotiations beginning in 2017. The two bodies were unable to reach an agreement. Mediation was not successful. The result was to engage in a Factfinder. The School Board does not recommend the adoption of this article. Aside from cost, there are considerations in the Strategic Plan that are necessary moving forward.

Brian Field, Peterborough, reported leaving the district because they did not pay enough. There are some great teachers in the district. Our kids need great teachers.

No further discussion came forward.

The Moderator reported that this article will move forward to the ballot on March 13th.

Article 04: Special Meeting for Defeated/Amended Collective Bargaining Unit

Shall the Contoocook Valley School District, if Article 3 is defeated, authorize the governing body to call one special meeting, at its option, to address Article 3 cost items only? (Majority vote)

Niki McGettigan moved this article. Second.

Niki McGettigan reported that the intention of this article is in the case that Article 3 does not pass. This will allow one special meeting for negotiations so that we would not have to wait until next year.

After no further discussion, the Moderator reported that this article will move to the ballot on March 13th.

Article 05: Appropriate to Capital Reserve Fund from Fund Balance

Shall the Contoocook Valley School District vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$250,000 to be added to the Contoocook Valley School District Building Capital Reserve Fund, previously established? This sum to come from June 30, 2018 fund balance available for transfer on July 1, 2018, with no amount to be raised from taxation. (The ConVal School Board designates this article as a SPECIAL warrant article and RECOMMENDS adoption of this article.)

Stephan Morrissey moved this article. Second.

Stephan Morrissey reported this allows the district to cover the cost of half of the four labs that are severely outdated. Once the science labs are done, this fund is depleted. It is unwise not to have a capital reserve for other needs.

The Moderator reported, after no further discussion, that this article will move to the ballot on March 13th.

Article 06: Appropriate to Equipment Capital Reserve Trust Fund from Fund Balance

Shall the Contoocook Valley School District vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$100,000 to be added to the Equipment Capital Reserve Fund as previously established? This sum to come from June 30, 2018 fund balance available for transfer on July 1, 2018, with no amount to be raised from taxation. (The ConVal School Board designates this article as a SPECIAL warrant article and RECOMMENDS adoption of this article.)

Janine Lesser moved this article. Second.

Janine Lesser reported that this is the second trust fund that is being requested, should funding remain, to be funded. This is saving us half of the cost of the bond. This fund would need replenishing once depleting.

The Moderator reported after no further discussion, that this article will move to the ballot on March 13th.

Article 07: Appropriate to Athletics/Co-Curricular Trust Fund from Fund Balance

Shall the Contoocook Valley School District vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$75,000 to be added to the Athletics/Co-Curricular Fund as previously established? This sum to come from June 30, 2018 fund balance available for transfer on July 1, 2018 with no amount to be raised from taxation. (The ConVal School Board designates this article as a SPECIAL warrant article and RECOMMENDS adoption of this article.)

Pierce Rigrod moved this article. Second.

Pierce Rigrod said that this trust covers athletic expenses and co-curricular activities. If this passes, \$75,000 would be transferred into this fund. Should funds remain, it will be funded in the order that it appears on the ballot. This money is used to purchase helmets and other athletic equipment and co-curricular equipment. This money would cover expenses once diminished.

The Moderator reported, after no further discussion, that this article will move to the ballot on March 13th.

Article 08: Accept Reports of Agents and Auditors

Shall the Contoocook Valley School District accept the reports of Agents, Auditors, Committees, and Officers chosen?

Jerome Wilson moved this article. Second.

Jerome Wilson said that this article recognizes and accepts reports of the auditors. A letter is included in the annual report distributed tonight.

The Moderator reported, after no discussion, that this article will move to the ballot on March 13th.

Article 09: School Board Salaries

Shall the Contoocook Valley School District appoint the salaries of the School Board and fix the annual compensation of any other officers or agents of the District as follows: School Board Chair, \$1500; each member, \$1000; Treasurer, \$2,500; Moderator, \$300? (The ConVal School Board RECOMMENDS adoption of this article.)

Crista Salamy moved this article. Second.

Crista Salamy said that no further explanation is required on this article, however she would if needed.

The Moderator reported that this will move to the ballot on March 13th.

Article 10: Petitioned Warrant Article

Shall the Contoocook Valley Regional School District vote to amend the Articles of Agreement to authorize the School Board to close schools in any town in the district when there are fewer than 50 students who reside in that town enrolled for two (2) consecutive years? (Requires 2/3 Majority Vote to pass.)

Moved. Ed Juengst, Peterborough, second.

Mr. Juengst offered an amendment as follows:

Shall the Contoocook Valley Regional School District vote to amend the Articles of Agreement among the towns of Antrim, Bennington, Dublin, Francestown, Greenfield, Hancock, Peterborough, and Temple as follows (2/3 vote required):

Article 5 shall be amended by replacing this sentence:

Elementary Schools shall be maintained in Antrim, Bennington, Dublin, Francestown, Greenfield, Hancock, Peterborough, and Temple.

With:

Elementary Schools may be maintained in Antrim, Bennington, Dublin, Francestown Greenfield, Hancock, Peterborough, and Temple.

And adding after the last sentence of Article 5:

The School Board is authorized to close schools in any town in the district when there are fewer than 50 students who reside in that town enrolled for two (2) consecutive years.

The amended Article 5 will read as follows:

The Contoocook Valley School District (ConVal) shall be responsible for grades one through twelve (1-12) and Kindergartens. Kindergartens were previously authorized by a vote at an annual Cooperative School District meeting. Grades nine through twelve (9-12) shall be educated at the centrally located Senior High School in Peterborough. Grades five through eight (5-8) may be educated at the Middle Schools in Antrim and Peterborough. Elementary Schools may be maintained in Antrim, Bennington, Dublin, Francestown, Greenfield, Hancock, Peterborough and Temple. As school populations change, students from the Middle Schools may be reassigned to Elementary School locations. Such reassignment needs would be determined by ConVal Administration, but each location change would have to be approved by the School Board. The School Board is authorized to close schools in any town in the district when there are fewer than 50 students who reside in that town enrolled for two (2) consecutive years.

Darlene Demetron, Greenfield, spoke about community schools. She agrees with the ConVal philosophy and community spirit. She said that she does not feel that closing schools and giving that power to the administration without allowing the community to vote is wise. We want to invite

children and we want to invite families to move and remain in this district; this would hurt our school district.

Barbara Miller, Peterborough, said that her grandchildren are thriving in their environment in ConVal. They receive a quality education. She said that this subject has been analyzed for over 17 years. Consolidation was being talked about when she moved here and it has been analyzed. She said that it is time to move forward. She has been on the Selectmen's Advisory Committee and worked with the Board. The Board puts many hours into what they are doing. Administration has come forward with a well thought out consolidation plan that is being worked on. They will make a decision that is in the best interest for everyone. She encouraged support of this article.

Moderator Clark confirmed that Ms. Miller was voting in favor of this article. Ms. Miller confirmed that she was in favor of a consolidation plan.

Linda Field, Peterborough, has been a supporter of small schools. She has found that there is often one class of each grade and students stay together, and it poses difficulty. The opportunity to separate children does not exist. Full services are not available because service providers are spread among the schools. Although she believes in small schools, she said that we have arrived at the point that some schools are too small.

Pierce Rigrod said that he chairs the Strategic Plan Committee. They have asked the district to develop a concept of reconfiguration, adjusting the logistics of the school district, and a consolidation option. They are conceptual only at this point in time. Information is still being gathered and evaluated. This is a big organization with a lot of moving parts. We do not have a consolidation plan; we have a conceptual model at this point in time.

Bob Edwards, Antrim, said that he appreciates the conversation about small class sizes. Mr. Edwards spoke to the amendment. There has been a tremendous amount of analysis. It is genuinely appreciated. In terms of the school consolidation model; it identifies specific benefits to our students and fiscal impact to the district. We are here for our children. The model cited school start and end times, specific bus routes and the time that students will be on buses are among them. The taxes should not be overlooked; the estimated savings is \$3.2 million. Other considerations would be the impact of the assessed values on homes, and the cost to maintain closed buildings. Department of Revenue Assessment on properties should be considered. Mr. Edwards said that he would not rush to be in favor of this amendment. He is in favor of asking the School Board and Strategic Plan Committee to complete its analysis and arrive at a recommendation for full review. If the results confirm that a 2019 warrant article is fiscally responsible and is fair to all stakeholders, then let the district vote its destiny. He urged completion of the job that has begun rather than make a snap judgement.

Mr. Juengst reported that his amendment was to make the original petitioned warrant article clear. He agrees that the consolidation model underway does need more work and analysis. This article is not calling for approval of that model. Mr. Juengst said that he has been attending meetings. He supports the completion of the work underway. The reason he supports this article that authorizes the School Board to close schools, is because it does not demand it. Whatever consolidation plan comes forward will require the change of words from "shall" to "may". Mr. Juengst said that fear of tax pressure forces decision making that might be in the best interest of the school. An example would be the Article on the science labs; this work should have been completed long ago. This decline in enrollment has been discussed for many years. The bigger issue, aside from drops in enrollment, is that the education is not equitable at our elementary schools and burdens our staff. This places a financial strain on taxpayers. Mr. Juengst said that it is time for some type of change.

Kathy Anderson, Hancock, asked for clarification if this changes the current Articles of Agreement for middle schools.

Attorney, Dean Eggert said that the amendment does not change the language as it pertains to the middle schools. The proposed amendment states the intent through the actual text of the article that petitioners desire.

Ms. Boyd, Dublin, agreed that this is premature. Her children attend Dublin Consolidated School and receive a good education.

Kerry Mason, Hancock, moved to Hancock because they wanted a community. It would not be the community that it is if the school was not there. Absent a school, it would be a retirement community and that is not why they moved to Hancock.

A Temple resident asked if his school would be closed, how would it be opened back up. How would you get teachers to work in a school that has no stability? Who will put their child on the bus so early in the morning. Will the opening time be changed to a reasonable hour so that kids do not have to get up an unreasonable hour?

Kara Penny, Antrim, asked if the article is not amended, what occurs.

Attorney, Dean Eggert, said that Article 15 states that any proposed amendment to the Articles of Agreement requires the proposed text to be stated. The rationale behind this amendment is to outline the text. A public hearing will take place on February 20th. All amendments require approval of the governing board.

Mr. Steere said that the petitioned warrant article does not prohibit moving forward to look at studying further. This work will continue and the public will be informed.

May Clark, Dublin, asked if this body does not accept the amendment what happens to the petitioned warrant article.

Attorney, Dean Eggert reported that it creates the risk that the petitioned warrant article does not meet the requirements to amend the Articles of Agreement, leaving it to challenge.

May Clark further said the inequity in education has been cited as a problem. There may be an inequity, but parents may say that that is not important.

Gil Morris, Greenfield, said that it gives carte blanche without consideration of what the town believes. If a school is going to be closed, the money should be given back to the town.

Linda Quintanilha, Bennington School Board Representative, said that this article was not put forward by the School Board, it was put forward by community members. It is a petitioned warrant article.

A Peterborough resident said that every year she requests that her children attend Dublin Consolidated School because she values the small community school.

Mark Fernald, Sharon, said that he does not support this article. He understands that the petitioners are frustrated. This School District came together over 50 years ago with the principle that there would be these eight elementary schools. All of the power would be placed upon the School Board. If consolidation would be pursued, there must be a plan, and the communities must vote; this is not the way to do this.

Rich Cahoon, Antrim, made it clear that this petitioned warrant article was not the work of the School Board nor the Administration. They are working to develop a recommendation and that work will continue.

No further discussion.

Mr. Clark said that the amendment is an amendment to the wording that is in the warrant. This might be a good opportunity to change the words to fit what is outlined in the Articles of Agreement. We are voting on the amended version on Article 10.

It is a vote to change the wording on the warrant: A nay vote reverts to the wording on the warrant. We are voting to change the wording to:

The Contoocook Valley School District (ConVal) shall be responsible for grades one through twelve (1-12) and Kindergartens. Kindergartens were previously authorized by a vote at an annual Cooperative School District meeting. Grades nine through twelve (9-12) shall be educated at the centrally located Senior High School in Peterborough. Grades five through eight (5-8) may be educated at the Middle Schools in Antrim and Peterborough. Elementary Schools may be maintained in Antrim, Bennington, Dublin, Frankestown, Greenfield, Hancock, Peterborough and Temple. As school populations change, students from the Middle Schools may be reassigned to Elementary School locations. Such reassignment needs would be determined by ConVal Administration, but each location change would have to be approved by the School Board. The School Board is authorized to close schools in any town in the district when there are fewer than 50 students who reside in that town enrolled for two (2) consecutive years.

A vote in favor, is a vote in favor of changing the wording from the current warrant to the proposed language.

A voice vote was taken for both in favor and opposed to the amendment.

The Moderator reported that the "Nays" have it. Therefore, original language remains and this moves on to the ballot box.

Mark Spinnelli, Hancock, said that the text as it presently stands will go before the voters in March. The amended text would go to the voters in March. Moderator Clark said that it would had it successfully been amended.

The Moderator confirmed that those present voted not to accept the amended language proposed.

Uncertainty was raised about the voice vote. A show of hands was then requested.

The Moderator said that a vote in favor would result in the amended wording moves forward.

Linda Quintanilha asked if the way that the wording exists now leaves us open to litigation.

Attorney, Dean Eggert, said that the reality is that Article 15 of the Articles of Agreement explicitly requires that the wording has to spell out the actual text of the amendment. The original proposal does not do that. It would be a question of first impression.

Point of Order, J.R. Davis, Hancock, asked if there was a voice vote that was arrived at. Confirmed. Has there been a challenge to the voice vote? No. Mr. Davis said that absent a challenge, a ruling has taken place and we should move on to the next article.

Mr. Clark reported that he is willing to have a show of hands should one not be confident in the ruling of voice.

Point of Order - Brian from Peterborough said that secret ballot might take place. Some are present tonight with a voice vote who are not registered voters.

The Moderator said that if there is no objection, we will go to a show of hands to satisfy the question of accuracy of the voice vote.

Mr. Field objected because there are people present in the audience who do not have a right to vote. You won't know if they have registered or not.

Moderator Clark said that as part of the show of hands, those present should hold up their blue card.

Moderator Clark asked those in favor of amending the original version, to hold up a blue card. Opposed shall do the same.

Those in favor of the amendment were asked to raise their hand with the blue card. Town Moderators were asked to assist in the count.

Those opposed to the amendment were asked to raise their hand with the blue card. Town Moderators were asked to assist in the count.

The Moderator confirmed that the result of a show of hands is that the motion is defeated. We go back now to Article 10 as it originally appeared as follows:

Shall the Contoocook Valley Regional School District vote to amend the Articles of Agreement to authorize the School Board to close schools in any town in the district when there are fewer than 50 students who reside in that town enrolled for two (2) consecutive years?

Further discussion?

Ed Juengst asked how it will be decided if this will go on the ballot or not. Moderator Clark confirmed that this will move on to the ballot.

Article 11: Petitioned Warrant Article

Shall the Contoocook Valley Regional School District vote to require that the School Board commit to a public visioning process for the public schools in the district, beginning in May 2018, to ensure an excellent, equitable education for all students?

Ed Juengst moved. Myron Steere second.

Ed Juengst said that the intent of this is to ensure that we do have a public process about any type of consolidation or reconfiguration.

May Clark confirmed by asking if this isn't already happening. Stephan Morrissey said that all of the School Board and subcommittee meetings are posted on our district website. We want input and seek input. All are encouraged to attend meetings where all comments and input are welcome.

Kimberly Saunders, Superintendent, reported that work on a technical grant with the State Department of Education with the purpose to engage the community. It is actively being worked on right now.

Seeing no further discussion, the Moderator reported that this will move forward to the ballot on March 13th.

Article 12: School Board Members

To choose Contoocook Valley School District Officers as follows: Five (5) Members of the School Board; one (1) from the Town of Bennington for a term of three (3) years; one (1) from the Town of Greenfield for a term of three (3) years; one (1) from the Town of Peterborough for a term of three (3) years; one (1) from the Town of Peterborough for a term of one (1) year; one (1) from the Town of Temple for a term of three (3) years. One (1) Moderator for a term of three (3) years.

Moved. Myron Steere second. The Moderator reported that this will move to the vote on March 13th.

Myron Steere recognized Tim Clark for his years of dedicated service to the ConVal School District as Moderator. May the record reflect this recognition.

Myron Steere moved to adjourn at 7:31 p.m. Second. Unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda Marschok