

**CONTOOCOOK VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT**  
**Annual Meeting**  
**ConVal High School**  
**District Meeting – Part I**  
**Wednesday, February 3, 2021**  
**6:00 p.m.**

**MINUTES**

**Call to Order:**

Moderator Bob Edwards called the meeting to order at 6:04 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. Moderator called attention to the uniqueness of this year. Fire exits were pointed out. Moderator Edwards read a notice that involves COVID-19 which asked those present to consider a set of questions about their health related to exposure, etc. Those present were asked to consider their attendance here tonight for the safety of others present. Those present were asked to remain seated, and if necessary observe the flow patterns for moving about the room this evening. Assistant Moderators present were recognized. Dean Eggert, legal counsel was recognized. Moderator said that this meeting acts as the legislative body that results in the ballots for voting in March. Procedures of order were outlined. Each article will be read by the Moderator, a school board member will be recognized to speak to the article. Only one amendment will be dealt with at a time. After conversation is concluded, the article will be closed to debate and moved on to the next article. Only registered voters from the nine towns may speak. A voter card was given to each registered voter at the time of check-in. Administrators or legal counsel may speak on behalf of the District. The moderator must first recognize an individual to speak. One must speak to the article. The same speaker may not speak to the article and make a motion at the same trip to the microphone. *Point of Order* is made to call attention to the moderator that there is interference at this meeting. With regard to meeting decorum, everyone is under a lot of pressure. Please turn pagers or cell phones off at this time. The only exception will be for first responders present. The Moderator will not accept a motion to move the question if discussion has not been completed or both sides have not been heard. Moderator asked that the full attention be given to the business at hand this evening. We are conducting important district business tonight. Respect for everyone speaking is deserved.

**The Moderator read the following:**

**WARRANT**

**THE STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE**

To the Inhabitants of the Contoocook Valley School District consisting of the Towns of Antrim, Bennington, Dublin, Francestown, 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 **second day of February, 2021**, next at **6 o'clock in the evening** for the first session of the Annual School District Meeting (snow date: third day of February next at 6 o'clock in the evening), to deliberate upon the warrant articles listed below. Warrant articles may be amended subject to the following limitations: (a) warrant articles whose wording is prescribed by law shall not be amended; (b) warrant articles that are amended shall be placed on the official ballot for a final vote on the main motion, as amended; and, (c) no warrant article shall be amended to eliminate the subject matter of the article. An amendment that changes the dollar amount of an appropriation in a warrant article shall not be deemed to violate this provision.

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.
Francestown	Francestown Town Hall	10 a.m. – 7 p.m.
Greenfield	Greenfield Town Hall	10 a.m. – 7 p.m.
Hancock	Hancock Elementary School	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 **ninth day of March** next for the second session of the Meeting (polls will be open for voting by official ballot at the second session)

Moderator introduced Rich Cahoon, School Board Chair. Rich welcomed and thanked everyone for attending tonight. He recognized what an extraordinary year it has been and to acknowledge the efforts of a great many people throughout the year that have had to take on a greater and more active role than they have in the past.

#### **Article 01: 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 \$52,583,177? Should this article be defeated, the default budget shall be \$51,065,984 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.)

Jim Fredrickson shared factors that went into the development of the budget. A series of articles have been posted on the ConVal website providing information that factored into budget development and other topics. The warrant can be broken down into three categories; the first is the budget and collective bargaining unit, the next set are those that are related to trust funds, and the remaining section are administrative articles.

Jim Fredrickson said that COVID is obvious, we have had decreases in revenue from the State, and retirement related factors, all impacting our taxes.

Should the budget fail, the default will result, which means that cuts will be made in programming and other areas. Remote learning has had an impact; COVID is not just a one year impact, it is multiple years. Last year, the budget was passed and three days later COVID impacted everyone. ConVal was better prepared than most districts. The Superintendent, staff, and parents cooperated in making everything move forward and nailed it. The plan has proven to work. There were no savings last year. Money not spent in one area was spent in another.

This year, unanticipated costs totaled \$3.1M. Over \$2M was offset by state and federal governments. The impact will continue. Late last week, we found out that there is more federal government coming our way; \$1.4M is slated for ConVal. We don't know what the restrictions will involve. More will be known soon. We could not include that information in this proposed budget. We need to continue to plan for remote learning.

One of the key roles of the board is to provide guidance to the district and staff. It comes before everyone tonight and is voted and moves to the ballot.

The Superintendent was given the guidance to plan for minimal mitigation. We have to address the mental social/emotional health of our students. Facilities work had to be pushed off. There are key programs that have been added. The operating budget is what we can control. In addition, there are items that we cannot control. The proposed budget is almost \$2M more reflecting a 4% increase.

Dr. Kimberly Saunders, Superintendent of Schools, said that when looking out four to five years, the theme will be "Reopening" in the current year and next. We are still reopening. Next comes "Recovery", taking the necessary steps to recover lost learning. Finally, "Resiliency" involves looking at our schools and adapting for the future.

There are two phases of reopening that take multiple years, one building upon the other. Our reopening and recovery includes an emphasis on student social/emotional mental health. This was not just a crisis.

Some students have been very successful learning in a remote setting and want to continue. The plan is to continue on with preschool planning.

When we talk about the operating budget, it is made up mostly of salaries and benefits. The benefits and retirement, as dictated by the State and Local Government, increased \$904,000 just this year. Additional student support totals \$425K, K-8 Learning remote model totals \$780K, expanded Pre-K Program totals \$144K; totaling \$2.2M. The total increase on the budget is \$1.9M.

The Default Budget is really a Default Calculation. It takes last years approved budget, adds in contractual or legal obligations, minus out one-time expenses.

When considering the default, cuts that have the least impact on students to the most are considered.

The Moderator asked those present if they had questions on the proposed budget or comments. There were none. The Moderator closed Article 01 to any further debate.

## **Article 02: Accept the Collective Bargaining Agreement**

To see if the Contoocook Valley Regional School District will vote to approve the cost items included in the collective bargaining agreement reached between the ConVal School Board and the ConVal Education Association which calls for the following increases in salaries and benefits at the current staffing level:

Fiscal Year	Estimated Increase
2021-2022	\$847,899

And further to raise and appropriate the sum of \$847,899 for the 2021-2022 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 current staffing levels.  
(The ConVal School Board RECOMMENDS adoption of this article.)

Jerry Wilson reported that he served as Chairman of the Negotiation Committee. Both sides rethought the negotiation process. Both sides worked out a one-year extension of the agreement. Both parties could focus on implementing the reopening plan. The changes to the salary guide provide reasonable increases and allow the district to attract new staff.

Mr. Wilson asked the voters to continue to support staff.

Moderator asked those present if there were any questions or discussion from the floor. There were none. Moderator closed Article 02 for debate.

## **Article 03: Special Meeting for Defeated/Amended Collective Bargaining Unit**

Shall the District, if Article 03 is defeated, authorize the governing body to call one special meeting, at its option, to address Article 03 cost items only? (Majority vote required)

Moderator noted a Scribner error when this article was printed. The error reflects the word "Unit" which is intended to read "Agreement" to align with Article 02. Further down, there are two references that refer to Article 03 and should reference Article 02.

**Rich Cahoon moved to amend Article 03 to read:**

### **Article 03: Special Meeting for Defeated/Amended Collective Bargaining Agreement**

Shall the District, if Article 02 is defeated, authorize the governing body to call one special meeting, at its option, to address Article 02 cost items only? (Majority vote required)

**Janine Lesser second the amendment.**

**In favor of the amendment: All**

**Opposed: None**

Moderator declared that the article amendment was voted in the affirmative.

## **Article 04: Appropriate to Special Education 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 Special Education Reserve Trust Fund as previously established? This sum to come from June 30, 2021 fund balance available for transfer on July 1, 2021, with no amount to be raised from taxation. (The ConVal School Board designates this article as a SPECIAL warrant article.) (The ConVal School Board RECOMMENDS adoption of this article.)

Linda Quintanilha said that this trust fund exists so that we can cover unanticipated special education related costs. Moderator asked if there were any questions. None.

Moderator declared Article 04 closed for further debate.

## **Article 05: Appropriate to the Building Capital Reserve Fund from Fund Balance**

Shall the Contoocook Valley School District vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$300,000 to be added to the Building Capital Reserve Fund, previously established? This sum to come from June 30, 2021 fund balance available for transfer on July 1, 2021, with no amount to be raised from taxation. (The ConVal School Board designates this article as a SPECIAL warrant article.) (The ConVal School Board RECOMMENDS adoption of this article.)

Katherine Heck said that each year the district funds the trust with remaining funds at the end of the year. This article provides one of the funding mechanisms outlined in the Capital Improvement Plan. Moderator asked those present if there were questions or comments. There were none. Moderator closed Article 05 for further debate.

#### **Article 06: Appropriate to the Energy Trust Fund from Fund Balance**

Shall the Contoocook Valley School District vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$25,000 to be added to the Contoocook Valley School District Energy Trust Fund, previously established? This sum to come from June 30, 2021 fund balance available for transfer on July 1, 2021, with no amount to be raised from taxation. (The ConVal School Board designates this article as a SPECIAL warrant article.) (The ConVal School Board RECOMMENDS adoption of this article.)

Dick Dunning said that the purpose of the fund balance is to allow the purchase of the solar energy project approved last year. The goal is to be able to purchase our way and gain greater financial advantages for the ConVal School District.

The Moderator entertained questions or comments. There were none. Moderator closed Article 06 to further debate.

#### **Article 07: Appropriate to the Equipment Trust Fund from Fund Balance**

Shall the Contoocook Valley School District vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$50,000 to be added to the Equipment Trust Fund as previously established? This sum to come from June 30, 2021 fund balance available for transfer on July 1, 2021 with no amount to be raised from taxation. (The ConVal School Board designates this article as a SPECIAL warrant article.) (The ConVal School Board RECOMMENDS adoption of this article.)

Tim Theberge said that this trust is for equipment and allows for equipment needs that arise. A real world example was provided where this trust allowed for the replacement of a piece of equipment.

Moderator asked those present if there were questions or comments. There were none. Moderator closed Article 07 for further debate.

#### **Article 08: Appropriate to the Athletics Trust Fund from Fund Balance**

Shall the Contoocook Valley School District vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$25,000 to be added to the Athletics Trust Fund as previously established? This sum to come from June 30, 2021 fund balance available for transfer on July 1, 2021 with no amount to be raised from taxation. (The ConVal School Board designates this article as a SPECIAL warrant article.) (The ConVal School Board RECOMMENDS adoption of this article.)

Kevin Pobst said that this trust has been the mechanism to allow major expenditures and save for large projects and Maintenance related to athletics, such as work done on the track.

The Moderator asked if there were questions or comments. There were none. Moderator closed Article 08 to further debate.

#### **Article 09: Appropriate to the Building Capital Reserve Fund from Fund Balance**

Shall the Contoocook Valley School District vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$200,000 to be added to the Building Capital Reserve Fund as previously established? This sum to come from June 30, 2021 fund balance available for transfer on July 1, 2021 with no amount to be raised from taxation. In the event that Article 05 passes, this appropriation shall be in addition to any appropriation to the Building Capital Reserve pursuant to Article 05.

(The ConVal School Board designates this article as a SPECIAL warrant article.) (The ConVal School Board RECOMMENDS adoption of this article.)

Katherine Heck said that the reason we are seeing Article 09 in addition to Article 05 is that they are funded in the order that they appear on the warrant if there are surplus funds at the end of the year. The reason we have chosen to separate the two is that there are needs, however, we want to be sure that we fund the trusts equitably because each has a specific purpose.

Moderator asked if there were questions or comments. There were none. Moderator declared Article 09 closed for further debate.

## **Article 10: Accept Reports of Agents and Auditors**

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

Robert Short, Jr. said that this article allows the district to accept reports from auditors, subcommittees, and our officers.

Moderator asked if there were questions or comments. There were none.

Moderator declared Article 10 closed to further debate.

## **Article 11: 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.)

Rich Cahoon said that this allows the payment of stipends to School Board members and officers.

Moderator asked if there were questions or comments. There were none.

Moderator declared Article 11 closed to further debate.

## **Article 12: Fund Balance Retention**

Beginning in fiscal year 2022/2023, to see if the school district will vote to authorize, indefinitely until rescinded, to retain year-end unassigned general funds in an amount, in any fiscal year, not to exceed 5 percent of the current fiscal year's net assessment, in accordance with RSA 198:4-b, II. Such fund balance retained may only be expended after conducting a public hearing by the governing body in accordance with RSA 198:4-b. (Majority vote required)

Rich Cahoon said that the purpose of this article is to allow retaining an unassigned fund balance at the close of the end of year. The amount retained could not exceed 5%. The ConVal Board would create a policy that would not allow more than 2.5% to be retained and it would begin with the 22/23 fiscal year. There is no money to be raised for this purpose. This will allow the smoothing of fluctuations in taxes.

Moderator asked if there were questions or comments. There were none.

Moderator declared Article 12 closed to further debate.

## **Article 13: School Board Members**

To choose Contoocook Valley School District Officers as follows: Four (4) 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 Temple for a term of three (3) years.

Stephen Ullman said that this authorizes elections of open School Board positions. He noted Linda Quintanilha and Niki McGettigan as outgoing board members; both of whom have brought knowledge to the board.

Moderator said that this is informational only and will be printed on town ballots in March 9<sup>th</sup>.

Moderator thanked the administration and staff that have helped to make this evening come together under a difficult set of circumstances. He thanked law enforcement and first responders present. It takes a team to put it together.

Moderator read a declaration recognizing Linda Quintanilha, for her 9 years of dedicated service and Niki McGettigan for her four years of dedicated service as members of the ConVal School Board. Let the minutes reflect recognition of their dedicated service to the community.

Moderator Edwards recognized the ConVal Community COVID-19 Monitoring Team that was put together to follow and advise the district about the status of COVID in communities and provide valuable input into next steps. He read the names of those that serve on the team.

Having no other business to come before this deliberative session, the Moderator entertained a motion to adjourn.

**Linda Quintanilha motioned to adjourn at 7:14 p.m. Dick Dunning second. Unanimous.**

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda Marschok