

CONTOOCOOK VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT
Annual Meeting
ConVal High School
District Meeting – Part I (Deliberative Session)
Tuesday, February 6, 2024
6:00 p.m.

Minutes

Call to Order:

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

Moderator Edwards introduced himself, reminded everyone to check in at the town of residence table and he welcomed everyone to tonight's meeting. ,

Dick Dunning, School Board Chairman, recognized individuals that have dedicated time to the ConVal School District.

He recognized Bob Edwards for his six years of dedicated service as Moderator of the ConVal School District.

In addition, he asked that Liz Swan and Katherine Heck stand and be recognized for their time and commitment to the ConVal School District and advocates for citizens of this district.

Moderator Edwards shared housekeeping details and pointed out exits in the event of a fire or other emergency. Assistant Moderators, John Cronin, Bennington, and Norm Makechnie, Peterborough as well as Attorney, Dean Eggert, ConVal Counsel were introduced.

The purpose of Deliberative Session is for all present to discuss, potentially amend, and better understand the budget and warrant articles and decide the final form of warrant to vote on March 12, 2024.

Each article will be read by the Moderator. One school board member or administrator will speak on the article. Amending an article will require a motion and a second. Amendments must be in written form. Any amendment that serves to eliminate the subject of the article, or renders it ineffective, will not be allowed. When there are no more amendments on the floor, the Moderator will declare the article closed to further debate.

Motions would be required to bring it back for consideration.

Registered voters must have a voter card, which would have been received when checking in.

Administration, teachers, and other may be called upon to speak. If they are a non-voter in this district, it will be allowed if there is no objection.

The Moderator will first recognize a speaker for any purpose. They should state their name and town of residence, and state the purpose they wish to speak.

A speaker will be recognized in the order of appearing at the microphone.

A "Point of Order" can be declared to bring a rule to the Moderators attention.

If there is a motion to amend an article and it is seconded, those will be asked to raise their card in favor or opposition. A visual assessment of the vote will be taken. If necessary, a secret ballot vote may be requested with appropriate signatures of registered voters.

A secret ballot vote may also be requested after the Moderator declares an article closed. It must be in writing and include seven registered voter signatures.

The Moderator Edwards asked for the cooperation of everyone present to place cellphones on vibrate in order not to distract to conducting tonight's business.

Adequate discussion must be provided.

Moderator asked for a motion to accept the rules of conduct.

Moved and seconded. Unanimous.

Moderator Edwards asked that everyone devote full time to the matter under discussion and steer away from side conversations.

Law enforcement is present this evening and was recognized.

Moderator Edwards 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 **sixth day of February, 2024, at 6 o'clock in the evening** for the first session of the Annual School District Meeting (snow date: seventh 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	Bennington Town Hall (updated)	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 Meeting House	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 **twelfth day of March** next for the second session of the Meeting (polls will be open for voting by official ballot at the second session)

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 \$58,370,749? Should this article be defeated, the default budget shall be \$57,822,135 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, Sharon, Chairman of the Budget & Property Committee, shared a summary of the budget and what it means. He shared that there is a wealth of information on the ConVal School District website.

The first order of business is to change the warrant article. There was an error in the default budget listed of \$57,822,135. It requires a change. The new number should be \$57,712,541 for the default budget calculation.

The voters determine the gross budget. If not more than half of the voters approve the budget we would go to a default budget.

The operating budget is what can be controlled including everything that we do with staffing, programs, etc.

The budget increase proposed is 4.04% over the current year's budget. It is driven by significant factors.

Last year, an operating proposed budget was brought forward that was extremely tight with a 1.35% increase. We could not hold to that percentage. We moved forward with a flat service budget when preparing the proposed budget. A 4.04% increase resulted. We wish it could be lower.

Salaries and benefits are 75% of the budget; it is people. Salaries went down year to year while benefits went up significantly. Next year will be the third year of a collective bargaining agreement. Unfilled positions, retirement, and reductions in force result in the decrease proposed.

Health benefits increase is the highest it has been. We are using trust funds to offset the costs which serves to reduce the proposed budget for next year. There is no fat to trim in this budget. The default budget calculation is \$57,712,541. It would require cuts in people, program, and facilities. There is a process in place for a default budget. Should a default result, the items that impact students the least will be considered first.

Moderator Edwards asked those present to address the assembly:

State Representative, Jim Creighton, recognized that what the board does is exceptionally hard. He asked if this budget includes the elimination of the four schools.

Jim Fredrickson said that that is not included in this budget; it is completely separate.

Marsha Dixon, Frankestown, asked if the board has shopped their medical and health insurance with other municipal carriers.

Kimberly Saunders said that we did shop and had a presentation with staff regarding that. It is part of the Collective Bargaining Agreement and would have to be agreed upon.

The shop resulted in a significant downgrade in benefits and the CVEA could not agree and resulted in an approximate \$200K decrease. We will continue to shop for these services. Time will be spent over the summer looking at healthcare.

Moderator Edwards asked if there were any further questions.

Steve Chamberlin, Frankestown, asked about the operating budget for all of the schools and referenced the figure for Frankestown Elementary School. It is tiny and about half of other schools.

Kimberly Saunders said that is correct and has everything to do with the turnover of staff. We have less experienced staff there and we have not been able to fill positions and on occasion use part-time staff.

Seeing and hearing no further questions or comments, the Moderator closed Article 1 to 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
2024-2025	\$1,229,388

And further to raise and appropriate the sum of \$1,229,388 for the current 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.)

Janine Lesser said that the \$1.2M amendment to the current agreement is an important request and deserves background information. An agreement was voted in 2022 and the gains were almost significantly reduced by post COVID inflation. On July 1st, there were 44 open positions unfilled. The inability to attract qualified staff was well known by the Board. We have long known that our salaries do not compare favorably to those around our district. The district has had to pay much to contract out services for some of these open positions that we are required to provide by law.

We believe that this amendment will attract staff to meet our obligations.

After hearing no further discussion or comment, Moderator Edwards closed Article 2 to further discussion.

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

Shall the Contoocook Valley School District, if Warrant Article 2 is defeated, authorize the governing body to call one special meeting, at its option, to address Warrant Article 2 cost items only? (Majority vote required)

Janine Lesser said that if Article 2 should be defeated, this will provide the opportunity to meet to negotiate with the CVEA.

After hearing no further discussion or comment, Moderator Edwards closed the Article to further discussion.

Article 04: Appropriate to the Health Maintenance Trust Fund from Fund Balance

Shall the Contoocook Valley School District vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$350,000 to be added to the Health Maintenance Trust Fund, previously established? This sum to come from the June 30, 2024 fund balance available for transfer on July 1, 2024, 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 this appropriates money to the Health Trust Fund for events such as significant increases in health insurance costs. We will be asking for permission to place \$350,000 back in to this fund. We will be using \$500,000 to offset health insurance costs. We are looking to replenish the fund by \$350,000. This Article is listed in the order it would be funded should funds be remaining at the end of the current year.

Moderator Edwards asked the body if there were any questions. Hearing none, he closed Article 4 to further discussion.

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 \$500,000 to be added to the Building Capital Reserve Fund as previously established? This sum to come from the June 30, 2024 fund balance available for transfer on July 1, 2024, 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.)

Richard Dunning said that when we have unexpended funds at the end of the year, funds can be used to replenish if voted. We have these requests listed in the order of priority. Capital Reserves allow us not to have a major impact on taxpayers for unknown things, such as a new boiler. We put funds aside to deal with unanticipated emergencies and to offset costs of renovations.

Moderator Edwards asked if there was any discussion.

Jim Fredrickson said that this trust is the fund used most often. We use funds to do work, such as the parking lot, and other work needed.

Hearing no further discussion, Moderator Edwards closed Article 5 to further discussion.

Article 06: Appropriate to the Technology 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 Technology Trust Fund as previously established? This sum to come from the June 30, 2024 fund balance available for transfer on July 1, 2024, 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.)

Greg Kriebel said that the Technology Trust Fund is used to offset the cost of technology K-12, computers and other hardware replacements. He respectfully asked for support of this Article.

Hearing no further discussion, Moderator Edwards closed this Article to further discussion.

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 the June 30, 2024 fund balance available for transfer on July 1, 2024, 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.)

Dan Harper said that the Equipment Trust Fund would be appropriated in the order listed if funds are available. There is no additional taxation for this article.

Hearing no further discussion, Moderator Edwards closed this Article to further discussion.

Article 08: Appropriate to the Energy 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 Contoocook Valley School District Energy Trust Fund, previously established? This sum to come from the June 30, 2024 fund balance available for transfer on July 1, 2024, 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.)

Tom Burgess said that the Energy Trust Fund is designed to reduce energy costs and save energy and to help with conservation of natural resources. This money would only be available if left over at the end of the school year.

Moderator Edwards asked if there were any questions.

Jim Fredrickson said that this was set up several years ago designed to purchase the solar energy system on the roof of ConVal High School.

Hearing no further discussion, Moderator Edwards closed this Article to further discussion.

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 the June 30, 2024 fund balance available for transfer on July 1, 2024, 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.)

Richard Dunning said that if funds are remaining after other warrant articles are addressed, this fund would be funded. He asked support of this article.

Hearing no further discussion, Moderator Edwards closed this Article to further discussion.

Article 10: To amend Article 5 of the Articles of Agreement:

Shall the Contoocook Valley School District vote to amend Article 5 of the Articles of Agreement among the School District towns of Antrim, Bennington, Dublin, Frankestown, Greenfield, Hancock, Peterborough, Sharon, and Temple as follows:

From the present language of:

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 shall 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.

To the language 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 shall be maintained in Antrim, Greenfield, Hancock, and Peterborough. 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. (2/3 Vote Required) (The ConVal School Board RECOMMENDS adoption of this article.) (8-2)

Alan Edelkind said that the warrant article requests a modification to section five of the ConVal Articles of Agreement. An outside organization was engaged in this process which led to the determination to amend the Articles of Agreement. We ask for the ability to maintain four elementary schools and the ability to determine if other schools should close based on certain criteria. If this passes in March, no action will be taken until the school year 2025/2026 at the earliest. This does not require that a school would close but provides the authority to do so. Maximizing resources, expanding educational opportunities, and to ensure safety are among the reasons for this request.

Moderator Edwards said that he would like to discuss Article 10 and if there are amendments, they should be in writing and submitted to the Moderator. Amendments may not change the subject matter of the Article. He asked for respect of the different opinions that might be shared on this Article.

Alan Pickman, Temple, said that this is not a good idea and especially harms the children of Temple. Students spend almost two hours on the bus from Temple each day and it would be particularly harmful for the younger students.

Alan Pickman offered an amendment to remove Temple from the list of towns to have their elementary school eliminated and moved that request.

Moderator Edwards asked for clarification.

Mr. Pickman asked that Temple would be eliminated from the list of schools to close by adding “, and Temple” to the list of schools that would be maintained.

Moderator Edwards clarified that the amendment would read that “Elementary Schools shall be maintained in Antrim, Greenfield, Hancock, Peterborough, and Temple”.
Confirmed.

The motion was seconded.

Moderator Edwards asked if there was discussion.

George Ravalico, Frankestown said that he feels his is a good point and would like to add “and Frankestown” to this motion.

Moderator Edwards said that there is currently an amendment on the floor and will be addressed separately.

Elementary Schools shall be maintained in Antrim, Greenfield, Hancock, Peterborough, and Temple”.
Any further questions?

Jeanne Dietsch, Peterborough, asked if each town that is proposed to lose their school comes one at a time is it changing the meaning of the motion.

Moderator Edwards said that the subject matter is not proposed for change.

Jeanne Dietsch asked if every town that is not on comes up to be added changes the intent.

Dean Eggert, Attorney, said that the amendments to date are within the scope. He foresees that a null article would be created if every town is added back, there is no longer a purpose to the warrant.

The amendment to date is appropriate within the scope.

Moderator Edwards called for a vote of the amendment.

Point of Order, there are still people still in line to speak on the amendment.

Erik Rothhaus brought a petition to make this a secret ballot vote.

Verification of registered voters was confirmed.

Ms. Shute, Peterborough, said that four towns shall be part of the new language but there may be others. By voting for this language, it does not say that other schools will be closed. It says that schools shall be maintained in specific towns. The elementary schools may still be in all towns. She asked if she understands this correctly.

Dean Eggert said that the question is in the meaning of the word “shall”. Shall is mandatory, may is permissive. Shall identifies the minimum of elementary schools. You are the legislative body, the

question from Peterborough is in the affirmative, these are the schools that must be maintained at a minimum that will be in place.

Susan Peters, Dublin, if every town comes forward with an amendment, will there be a race that might cause a problem with this article that the fourth town that comes forward eliminates the intent? Dean Eggert said that yes, unless there are additional amendments. Your "yes" vote and "no" vote should be of no consequence. The only way to avoid bringing back the original language is to make an additional amendment that is within the scope and subject matter of the Article.

Any further discussion?

William Bryk, Antrim, proposed an amendment to the last sentence of the amended language.

Moderator Edwards said that there is an amendment on the floor that he would like to entertain first.

Tom Merrill, Frankestown, asked if it is in order to amend the amendment and asked counsel for clarification.

Dean Eggert said that the Moderator is the ultimate parliamentarian but offered an advisory opinion. It is up to the Moderator to entertain an amendment one at a time or an amendment on an amendment subject to this body to overrule the moderator.

Moderator said that in fairness he does not want to get it so confusing that we no longer know what we are voting on. He would prefer to take one amendment at a time.

Mr. Dunning said that this body came together with the understanding of the boards position. The position allows us to better control the cost of the ConVal School District. We believe this is the best for students and taxpayers. He would not like to change position and would not vote in favor of this amendment.

Jesse Marcum, Dublin, said that this changes the list of haves and have nots. He hears rumor with the intent to put all towns on the same footing. He does not favor this amendment.

**Richard Haskins, Hancock, moved the question.
In favor of moving the question: Carried.**

Back to the amendment to include maintaining elementary schools in Antrim, Greenfield, Hancock, Peterborough, and Temple.

A secret ballot vote was taken using Ballot A.

Moderator asked everyone to take their seats at 7:23 p.m.

Moderator asked the assembly to go on to Article 11 while counting took place.
Any objections: None.

While waiting for the vote count, it requires a simple majority vote for the amendment but $\frac{2}{3}$'s at the polls to pass.

After addressing Articles 11 and 12, the meeting returned to the secret ballot count.

The secret ballot vote count resulted in 300 no votes; 21 yes votes. The amendment is defeated.

Any challenge? None.

Moderator Edwards said that we are now back to the main original warrant article. He asked if there was further discussion on the article.

Steve Chamberlin, Frankestown, said that equity across the region is critical. He submitted a motion to amend Article 10 as follows:

Rather than listing four towns as “shall” he would like to amend the Article to read that Elementary Schools “may” be maintained in Antrim, Bennington, Dublin, Frankestown, Greenfield, Hancock, Peterborough, and Temple.

Rather than list four towns as “shall”, a “may” for all towns is proposed for insertion.

The moderator said that this would be a secret ballot vote.

The second paragraph would read:

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.

Seconded.

Secret ballot was voted at 7:44 p.m.

Mr. Dunning shared his appreciation. He said that his concern is the towns that are not represented by this amendment. It allows the board to do more than it does now. He said that it was not fair to bring this forward and he did not support it.

Jesse Marcum, Dublin, said that this amendment has promise. He does not want the schools to close or the Articles of Agreement to change if this amendment passes and makes it to ballot. This amendment is fair and put all towns in it. He would vote “no” for it but shared his offense for removing four towns from the original proposal. It puts all towns on equal footing. He favored this amendment.

May Clark, Dublin, said that she would vote “no” on this amendment. The word “shall” in the original Articles of Agreement is the important word to keep. We should not amend Article 10 but instead vote this down on March 12th.

George Ravalico, asked what Deliberative Session is if modification towards other towns who are not present is not possible. This is the only mechanism we have to make amendments.

A question was asked since the School Board recommends adoption of this article, he asked the opinion of the two that opposed this Article.

Jeanne Dietsch called Point of Order; we are supposed to be speaking on the amendment. The 8-2 vote was on the main proposal. The discussion should be focused on the amendment and not the 8-2 vote of the Board for the article placed on the warrant.

Moderator Edwards confirmed that the discussion should be on the amendment.

David, Peterborough, said that he plans to vote “no” in March. It may be counter intuitive to change the language to allow more schools to close. The intent of this amendment is to motivate those that feel less impacted to oppose. The idea of passing this wording change means that the hope is that more will vote in opposition.

Laura, Frankestown asked about a secret ballot and if additional votes for secret ballot were needed. Moderator confirmed that another vote is not needed.

Kathryn Harper, Hancock, said that as a member of the Hancock community, a potential change to the Hancock Elementary School status would be unfair to take a vote since it has not been discussed.

Moderator Edwards said that when you go to a Deliberative Session it is always subject to an Article being amended unless prohibited by law. This is entirely acceptable even though everyone is not here tonight.

The Moderator reread the proposed amendment as follows:

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

Secret Ballot B should be used to vote.

Bob Edwards said that he has made a mistake. Voting will not be at Pierce School in Bennington but rather the town hall. Bennington now has elevator access for voting at the town hall.

The secret ballot vote result was:

92 yes votes; 131 no votes.

The motion to amend failed.

Any question of the Moderator?

Hearing none, is there any other business that should come?

Chris L, Dublin asked the opposed positions of the 8-2 vote of the board's recommendation of this Article.

Moderator confirmed the question. He asked if those board members who opposed the recommendation would like to speak on the question.

William Bryk said that he voted "no" because he will not add to the many sins that he committed in this life. The sin of closing down a school in a small town; it is the center of the community. He is reminded of the great deal of time required to transport students to more distant schools. He considered a reduced tax base and reduced population and a failure of the towns to truly endure. He is against this proposal.

Tom Kirlin, Frankestown, said that one of the reasons he moved here was for the schools. His daughter is now in high school. He has feelings that he should vote in the manner his constituents want him to. This is why he voted "no".

Steve Savage, Peterborough, proposed an amendment to include "at least four elementary schools shall be maintained in the Contoocook Valley School District".

Moderator Edwards said that the additional language is to replace elementary school language with "At least four elementary schools shall be maintained in the Contoocook Valley School District.

Moderator called for a second. Hearing none, the proposed amendment failed.

Michelle Boise, Temple, proposed an amendment to change grades 5-8 *shall* be educated at the middle schools and the rest of the elementary schools shall be maintained in the towns of Antrim, Bennington, Dublin, Frankestown, Greenfield, Hancock, Peterborough, and Temple.

Dean Eggert said that the challenge is that a public hearing would be required for this change beyond the elementary schools. There has not been a hearing on that subject. It is in the Moderator's purview to rule this out of order.

The Moderator ruled the amendment out of order.

Michelle Boise said that she does not understand. This approach is to amend what has been written to have change. To add the elementary schools back in there was one word changed to include all of the elementary schools and change the word "shall" to "may" for the middle schools to reflect a change and an acceptable amendment.

Dean Eggert said that typically, if it were a standard warrant article, a public hearing would be required. A requirement in the Articles of Agreement requires a public hearing on the proposed amendment.

Since there has not been a hearing outside of the elementary school change proposed, the Moderator could rule this out of order. A public hearing provides an additional requirement that it be in the scope proposed. There has been no public hearing outside the scope of the elementary schools. It is outside the scope.

The Moderator stood with his ruling that it is out of order.

Thomas Merrill, Frankestown, thanked the board for the work they have done to conduct this study. It is a complex problem. You are in the hot seat and put a lot of work into this. Having said that, his experience was that due consideration was not completely done in this study. Premature conclusions have been made. The impact on the communities have not been fully studied. It does not make sense. With due respect for the work done, this is premature.

He moved to strike Article 10 from the Warrant.

Seconded.

Attorney Dean Eggert said that this is going to be a great Civics lesson in the difference between an annual meeting and an SB2 district. At an annual meeting this would be entirely appropriate. A motion to strike would completely eliminate the subject matter and would not be appropriate in an SB2 district.

Moderator Edwards ruled this out of order.

Serena Berube, Dublin, said that this article has been well publicized. It is up to the communities to vote and make the decision.

Michelle Boise asked if it would be acceptable to replace "Elementary Schools shall be maintained..." to "Elementary Schools will be maintained....."

Jeanne Dietsch asked if this is a significant difference from having no choice at all.

Dean Eggert said that changing the word *shall* to *will* may likely not change any action that changes the circumstances, it is a permissible amendment within the scope of what was noticed. It will produce no result if there is a yes or no vote. It is probably within scope.

Seconded.

Moderator Edwards read the following:

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 **will** 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.

Moderator called a secret ballot vote using Secret Ballot "C".

May Clark, Dublin, asked Dean Eggert if it is true if this amendment passes that the vote on this article in March will make no difference.

Dean Eggert, said that the answer is that it will make no difference but it will amend the Articles of Agreement. The subject matter is in line. A "yes" vote would amend the article but from the perspective of the law it is an amendment. It is an inconsequential amendment.

Andrew Heck, Greenfield, said that his problem is that it removes all choices from the vote. You would be stuck with this no matter how you vote.

This amendment would allow everyone to think about this and plan for a year. It would remove a swift decision and allow time to refine the study and decision.

Serena Berube, Peterborough, said that this change would handcuff the amendment and not produce any change. We should use the amendment to allow the people to vote on how to proceed. We don't want to take away the reason for this proposed article.

The Moderator said that unless the amendment is withdrawn, we move forward with the vote.

A Secret Ballot vote was taken.

The result of the secret ballot vote was:

91 yes votes; 114 no votes

The amendment failed.

Any questions for the Chair?

Hearing none, any further discussion on this Article is closed.

Joe MacGregor reminded everyone about the Community Forum on Thursday and thanked the board.

Article 11: Accept Reports of Agents and Auditors

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

William Bryk said that this is a housekeeping article. We are required to accept the reports and encouraged the body to accept them.

Hearing no discussion, Moderator Edwards closed this Article for further discussion.

Article 12: 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, \$1,500; each member, \$1,000; Treasurer, \$1,500; Assistant Treasurer; \$500; Moderator, \$300? (The ConVal School Board RECOMMENDS adoption of this article.)

Mike Hoyt said that this sets the annual compensation for school board members and all associated officers and agents.

Serena Berube, Peterborough asked the question if anyone compared these numbers to other districts and she wants to be sure that everyone is well compensated. She thanked everyone for their hard work, countless hours, and personal time.

Kimberly Saunders said that they are somewhat in line, but slightly behind.

Hearing no further discussion, the Article was closed to further discussion by the Moderator.

Article 13: 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 Antrim for a term of one (1) year; 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. One (1) Moderator for a term of three (3) years.

Moderator Edwards reported that this article is statutory and will be on the ballot on March 12th.

Moderator Edwards closed this article to further discussion.

Moderator Edwards call the meeting to adjourn after hearing a motion and a second at 8:41 p.m. Unanimous.

Moderator Edwards declared this meeting dissolved at 8:41 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda Marschok