

**MINUTES
ANNUAL SCHOOL DISTRICT MEETING
TOWN OF BARNET
MARCH 7, 2017**

The meeting was called to order at 1:22 p.m. at the Barnet Elementary School gymnasium by Moderator Dennis McLam.

ARTICLE 1 To elect a Moderator.

- Moderator stated that one-year term of Dennis McLam is expiring.
- Dennis McLam nominated by Marvin Bailey.
- William Biddle moved that nominations cease. Seconded by Mona Marceau.
- Moderator instructed Town Clerk to cast one ballot for Dennis McLam.

ARTICLE 2 To elect a School Director for a term of 2 years.

- Moderator stated that the two-year term of James Schenck is expiring. Moderator stated that James Schenck has indicated that he does not seek re-election.
- Eric Kierstead nominated by James Schenck.
- Hearing no further nominations, Moderator announced that nominations would cease.
- James Schenck read a prepared statement written by Eric Kierstead, as Mr. Kierstead was unable to attend this meeting. The statement is summarized as follows: “Myself and my family have been residents of Barnet for five years. I currently work as a registered nurse at Dartmouth Hitchcock... I have two children in the Barnet School, and I am always impressed with the high level of education that this community extends to our children. I believe that as a school board member I can positively influence the vision that our community has for the Barnet school system, while working to maintain fiscal responsibility to alleviate any undue financial burden on our community members. The climate of education in Vermont is changing through legislation, such as Act 46, and I believe that I can work diligently and justly...to ensure the best possible outcomes...I believe that local participation in government is the best way to give back to my community...”
- Barbara Warden asked if the School Board can give a seal of approval for Eric Kierstead.
 - o Louis Bushey responded: Mr. Kierstead contacted me about the position, but I do not know him personally.
 - o Susan Persson spoke: I know Mr. Kierstead well. He is a good father and community member, and I heartily endorse him.
- Moderator instructed Town Clerk to cast one ballot for Eric Kierstead.

To elect a School Director for a term of 3 years.

- Moderator stated that three-year term of Robert Farlice-Rubio is expiring.
- Robert Farlice-Rubio nominated by William Biddle.
- Mona Marceau moved that nominations cease. Seconded.
- Hearing no further nominations, Moderator announced that nominations would cease.
- Moderator instructed Town Clerk to cast one ballot for Robert Farlice-Rubio.

ARTICLE 3 Shall the voters of the Barnet School District authorize the Barnet School Board Directors to approve the school board to expend \$4,745,753.00, which is the amount the school board has determined to be necessary for the ensuing fiscal year? It is estimated that this proposed budget, if approved, will result in education spending of \$16,347 per equalized pupil. This projected spending per equalized pupil is 7.7% higher than spending for the current year.

Note: Due to increased equalized pupils and a higher CLA (Common Level of Appraisal), the estimated homestead tax rate increase on this budget is \$.01 per \$100, or \$20.00 on a \$200,000 property value.

The Moderator announced that prior to discussion of this article, the School Board would present a slideshow presentation regarding the school budget and various other matters relating to School Board business. The lights were dimmed, and the School Board presented from the gymnasium floor, as summarized below.

- Louis Bushey presented slides regarding:
 - “Budget and Tax Comparison,” which compared the fiscal year 2018 budget and tax rates to the previous fiscal year.
 - Article 3’s discussion of increased per-pupil spending.
 - Major budget increases.
 - Robert Farlice-Rubio presented slides regarding:
 - Budget adjustments in the fiscal year 2018 budget.
 - Significant revenue changes in the fiscal year 2018 budget.
 - 2016 legislative action affecting the school budget and tax rate.
 - David Warden presented slides regarding:
 - The question of why the budget will result in education spending which is 7.7% higher than the current year, including a list of education spending increases.
 - Susan Roberts presented slides regarding:
 - The school tax rate from 2015 through the projected 2018 rate, including tax bill calculations for 2017 and 2018.
 - High school tuition rates.
 - Student population from fiscal year 2013 through fiscal year 2018.
 - Student and staff comparison from fiscal year 2008 through fiscal year 2018.
 - Fiscal years 2017 and 2018 classroom configurations.
 - School staff census from fiscal year 2014 through fiscal year 2018.
 - Student-to-staff and staff-to-student ratios from fiscal year 2008 through fiscal year 2017.
 - Louis Bushey presented slides regarding:
 - The membership of the Caledonia Central Supervisory Union (SU);
 - The services provided by the SU.
 - This concluded the slideshow. The lights were turned back on, and the School Board returned to the stage.
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- William Biddle moved to approve the budget as warned. Seconded by Susan Persson.
- Mona Marceau spoke: As usual, the numbers provided in the School Board’s presentation were not included in the Town Report. I would much prefer to have this information available prior to Town Meeting.
 - Louis Bushey responded: Some of the numbers that are in the School Board’s presentation were added to the presentation as late as the morning of the meeting; not all of the numbers are available at the printing of the Town Report.
- Linda Warnaar spoke: Why has special education money been taken out of the budget?
 - Robert Farlice-Rubio responded: The difference is that now revenues for special education do not flow through the Barnet School: they are administered through the SU. Barnet now just pays its portion of net special education spending.
 - Mona Marceau spoke: This arrangement sounds like a loss of local control.
 - Louis Bushey responded: The School still makes decisions about special education services locally.
- David Willis spoke: It appears that the Barnet School’s cost per equalized pupil is still higher than the state’s standard, resulting in a Homestead property tax rate higher than the Non-Residential property tax rate. Is there a chance that this will be corrected in the future?

- Louis Bushey responded: Yes, the Homestead rate will be the higher of the two rates this year. The School Board perennially struggles with this issue.
- Joyce Evans spoke: How much of the budget results from State mandates?
 - Louis Bushey responded: Ultimately the entirety of the budget is state-mandated because the state requires that we educate our children. There have been increases in specific requirements mandated by law in recent years, however.
- The motion was passed by voice vote.

ARTICLE 4 Shall the School District authorize the Barnet School Directors to borrow money to pay its lawful debts and expenses for the fiscal year which ends June 30, 2018, in an amount not to exceed 90% of the anticipated collection of taxes and receipts of other funds to be used for those purposes?

- Roseann Leute moved the article as warned. Seconded by Caroline DeMaio.
- Motion was passed by voice vote.

ARTICLE 5 Shall the voters of the Barnet School District authorize the Barnet School Directors to transact any other non-binding business that may legally come before the meeting?

- Louis Bushey provided an update about the progress of the School Board in complying with the Act 46 legislation.
 - A discussion regarding the requirements of Act 46 and plans for its implementation in Barnet ensued, involving the School Board, State Representative Scott Beck (a non-voter who spoke with the consent of the voters), and the voters assembled.
- Hezzie Somers moved to adjourn. Meeting adjourned at 2:45 p.m.

Dennis McLam, Moderator

Louis Bushey, School Director

Attest: Benjamin Heisholt, Town Clerk