

TOWN OF HEBRON
SELECT BOARD MEETING MINUTES
JANUARY 19, 2022

PRESENT: Pat Moriarty, Rich James, Paul Hazelton, and Karen Sanborn, Town Administrator

OTHERS PRESENT: Tony Albert, John Rescigno (Town of Groton Select Board), Sara Smith (Town of Groton Administrative Assistant), Terry Murphy, Wes Morrill (Town of Bridgewater Selectmen), Derry Riddle (Bridgewater-Hebron Village District, Commissioner)

5:30 P.M. **OPEN MEETING:** The meeting commenced at 5:30 p.m.

PETITIONED WARRANT ARTICLE PROPOSED TO CHANGE THE FUNDING FORMULA FOR THE NEWFOUND AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT (NASD): Chair

Moriarty reported to the group on the earlier meeting with the teachers at the Bridgewater-Hebron Village School regarding the petitioned warrant article submitted to be voted on March 8, 2022 by the towns in the NASD. The petitioned warrant article proposes to change the formula for funding the NASD from average daily membership plus transportation costs for the children in each town to 50% based on equalized valuation and 50% based on average daily membership for students in each town. The towns of Bridgewater and Hebron own the Bridgewater-Hebron Village School, the land which it is situated, and all of the contents of the building and through an agreement lease it to the NASD for \$1.00 annually. Chair Moriarty commented that this warrant article does not impact education, but shifts the funding equation. Mr. Murphy informed the group that many towns are not aware of this petitioned warrant article or that the Bridgewater-Hebron School is not owned by the NASD. Mr. Murphy noted that this petitioned warrant article to change the formula would be for the “richer towns” to pay a fair share of the funding. But what people do not realize is that many of the residents in the “richer towns” may have a lower tax rate, but the residents usually pay a higher monthly mortgage. Changing the formula would bring different burdens on each of the towns in the district.

Terry Murphy stated that the existing contract between the Bridgewater-Hebron Village District and the NASD is \$1.00 annually contingent upon the existing funding formula for the district. If the formula were to change, the contract would be null and void and have to be renegotiated. Derry Riddle noted that many people in the district are not aware that the Bridgewater-Hebron Village School does not belong to the district, but is leased by the district.

Chair Moriarty stated that the impact of this petitioned warrant article would result in punishing the towns that want to improve themselves by building up their commercial and industrial areas as well as towns that wish to improve the housing availability. Chair Moriarty felt the passing of this article would be a trick and a trap to communities for now and the future.

Wesley Morrill informed the group that he spoke to a New Hampton Select Board Member, Bruce Harvey who was not aware of the petitioned article, but was interested in obtaining information on this matter for the New Hampton Board to discuss. Mr. Morrill and Mr. Murphy agreed to send the necessary paperwork to the Town of New Hampton to get on their agenda to discuss this matter and the potential impact to the towns in the district.

NOTE: Any changes in the minutes will be reflected in the next Select Board Meeting minutes.

Terry discussed the original charter of the NASD which mentions a review to changes in the funding formula 5 years after the original charter was formed – this review of the funding formula did not happen.

The group discussed the best way to get this information out to the voters and educate the public on this matter. Chair Moriarty suggested an article in the town newsletter. Vice-Chair James suggested an editorial in the local paper. Everyone agreed that getting the facts to the voters and explaining the impact of the petitioned article was a priority. The petitioned warrant article needs only a majority vote to pass so providing the public as much information as possible is essential.

Terry noted that the Bridgewater-Hebron Village District Commissioners had been invited to speak at the February 2, 2022 public meeting on the petitioned warrant article. The Newfound Area School District First Deliberative Session has been scheduled for Saturday, February 5, 2022 at the Newfound Regional High School.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Sanborn
Town Administrator