

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING
OF THE LINCOLN TOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT
FEBRUARY 29, 2016**

School Meeting Moderator, Will Sipse, called the meeting to order at: 7:32 p.m.

The legal voters of the Town School District of Lincoln, Vermont are hereby warned and notified to meet at Burnham Hall on Monday, February 29, 2016 at 6:00 PM to discuss and transact the following business. Article 2. requires a vote by Australian Ballot to take place on Tuesday, March 1, 2016 at Burnham Hall between 7:00 AM and 7:00 PM.

ARTICLE 1. To establish salaries for the Town School District Officers for the ensuing year.

Motion: David Wood, **Second:** Nancy Stevens, **Discussion:** none. **ARTICLE 1 PASSED BY VOICE VOTE.**

ARTICLE 2. To elect all Town School District Officers for the ensuing year by Australian Ballot.

No action necessary, none taken.

ARTICLE 3. Shall the voters of the Lincoln Town School District approve the school board to expend \$2,198,722, 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 \$15,216.81 per equalized pupil. This projected spending per equalized pupil is 2.09% higher than spending for the current year.

Motion: David Harrison, **Second:** Dick Nessen, **Discussion:** School Board Chair, Rebecca Otey, introduced the other board members present: Mary Beth Stilwell, Christie Sumner, Ari Kirshenbaum, and Scott Bernoudy. Rebecca reviewed highlights of board concerns this past year: including the difficulty with our superintendent which came up at town meeting last year; as a result of this, committees at the supervisory union level are reviewing our policy governance; additionally there was a weekend retreat with teachers, administrators, board members and staff, to work on resolution by objective (RBO) to improve communication and effectiveness; it was a successful endeavor which resulted in the formation of RBO committees to improve working together; Act 46 placed limitations on the per pupil spending for this annual budget with penalties for overage; and the second part of Act 46 has resulted in a committee being formed to work on consolidation of school districts as required by Act 46. After the state legislature convened this year, they passed an allowance to increase the Act 46 cap on school budgets by 0.9%, but this change happened after the budget presented to you had been published. **Rebecca Otey made a motion to amend Article 3 to add \$17,400 to the current amount for a total of \$2,216,122, seconded by Greg Vitcirk. Discussion:** Concern about unknown spending requirements such as special education, which would potentially send us over the top of our spending cap [and make us subject to penalties]. Rebecca Otey assured us that special education comes out of the Supervisory Union budget and a cushion built into the budget will insulate us from spending above the cap. How will this extra money be spent? Rebecca responded that it would restore some cuts the board had previously made to physical plant operations, the principal's budget, and some faculty time. How many students are enrolled at Lincoln Community School (LCS)? Tory Riley, Principal, answered 112. Barb Rainville commented that enrollment hasn't changed much through the years, but the cost has gone up. There are more teachers than in the past, and she thought it wouldn't cost \$15,000 per pupil to home school a child. Mary Harrison works in the school and sees how great the kids are doing; she thanked the school board. We began to vote on the amendment and a point of order was called [by many different voices] that the amendment should also change the per pupil spending amount. Back to discussion on the amendment. **Su White made a motion to amend Rebecca's amendment by striking the last two sentences of Article 3 and adding a sentence stating: "It is estimated that this proposed budget if approved, will result in education spending within the spending thresholds of Act 46, and spending per equalized pupil will be forthcoming."** Barb Rainville called for a point of order that she didn't think we could amend an amendment. The Moderator overruled saying that it was okay to do so once. **Jim Dumont then seconded Su's amendment. Discussion:** We could strike the entire last two sentences of the article, because they don't need to be there for us to amend the budget. By unanimous consent of the body, Howard Mansfield, a non-

Lincoln voter, and Chief Financial Officer from the Addison Northeast Supervisory Union business office, spoke and estimated that the equalized per pupil spending would be \$15,359, or a 3% increase from last year, with Rebecca's amendment. Elwin Isham thought the amendment to the amendment would not be germane to the original article. Su White offered to change her amendment to reflect Howard's figures. The Moderator indicated that a friendly amendment is not allowed in this case. Dan Ober asked for a point of order, if we vote "no" to Su's amendment, can we try again to amend Rebecca's amendment? Moderator: yes. THE VOTE ON SU WHITE'S AMENDMENT FAILED BY VOICE VOTE. Back to discussion on Rebecca Otey's amendment: **Dan Ober made a motion to amend Rebecca's amendment by striking the last two sentences of Article 3.** Su White **seconded** Dan's motion. No discussion. THE VOTE ON DAN OBER'S AMENDMENT TO REBECCA OTEY'S AMENDMENT PASSED BY VOICE VOTE. Back to Rebecca's amendment as amended. Discussion: could we vote on this by Australian ballot next year? What's the difference in our tax rate [no answer given]. THE VOTE ON REBECCA OTEY'S AMENDMENT, AS AMENDED BY DAN OBER, PASSED BY VOICE VOTE. Back to main motion as amended. Discussion: Question about Act 66 universal pre-K funding. Rebecca Otey answered that all qualified pre-K students get 10 hours/week of preschool tuition, provided by the state of Vermont, to the school of their choice. This is to raise the level of readiness for Kindergarten. We fund this in the Supervisory Union budget, not within our school's specific budget. A question was asked about the increase in transportation costs. Rebecca answered that there were two prongs to the increase: (1) The need for special education transportation increased dramatically and (2) Transportation was supposed to be consolidated, but the money is still coming from each school's individual budget. The contract is at the Supervisory Union, so we pay the Supervisory Union. THE VOTE ON ARTICLE 3 AS AMENDED WHICH NOW READS: **Shall the voters of the Lincoln Town School District approve the school board to expend \$2,216,122, which is the amount the school board has determined to be necessary for the ensuing fiscal year?** ARTICLE 3 AS AMENDED PASSED BY VOICE VOTE.

ARTICLE 4. To see if the voters of the Lincoln Town School District will authorize the Lincoln Town School District Board of Directors to borrow money by issuance of bonds or notes not in excess of anticipated revenue for the school year, as provided in 16 V.S.A. ' 562 (9).

Motion: Mark Mulqueen **Second:** David Harrison, **Discussion:** None. ARTICLE 4 PASSED BY VOICE VOTE.

ARTICLE 5. To transact any other legal and proper business coming before said meeting.

Dan Ober asked for the board to discuss Act 46. Rebecca Otey indicated that she is Chair of the Act 46 Committee for the ANESU (Addison Northeast Supervisory Union) district. Maybe by November or next Town Meeting, there will be a proposal to vote on. Our district was not ready for the accelerated plan. At this time there are three different scenarios being explored: (1) A unified district of all six of the five-town area schools, including Monkton, Bristol, New Haven, Starksboro, Lincoln, and Mt. Abraham. This would be one budget, one district, teachers and students could move easily among the different schools. (2) A unified elementary school district and a separate high school district. (3) An undefined other district. Questions were about the effects on quality of education, debts and assets transfers. There will be community forums and the committee will be meeting with selectboards of the five towns. There are no right answers, except that "doing nothing" is not an option. An invitation was extended to the public to attend the Act 46 meetings. Todd Goodyear asked how we could move to Australian ballot budget votes, Rebecca Otey replied that by creating a unified school district, we would probably have to vote by Australian ballot. Comments: this would take away the ability to change the budget like we did tonight. People should just come out and vote if they want to have a say in how budgets are decided. Do we get to vote on consolidation? Rebecca Otey: yes, we have to vote to unify. Is there any talk of an Addison-wide merger? Rebecca: other towns were so ready for the accelerated plan that a county-wide merger was not solidly discussed.

Time adjourned: 8:24 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by: Sally Ober, Town Clerk _____

Approved by: Will Sipsey, School Meeting Moderator _____

Approved by: Rebecca Otey, School Board Chair _____