

**Minutes**  
**Annual Meeting of the Lincoln School District**  
**March 3, 2025, 6:00 P.M.**  
**Burnham Hall, 52 East River Rd., Lincoln, VT**

*Called to order at 9:16 P.M.      Approximate voter attendance: 117*  
**School Board Members Present: Jeanne Albert, Chair; Mary Gemignani;**  
**Deirdre Kelly; Peg Sutlive, Absent: Rob Backlund**

**Article 1: To elect a clerk who shall assume the office immediately and serve a one-year term or until the election and qualification of a successor.**

**Motion: Su White nominated Sally Ober, Second: Sally Taylor**

**Discussion: None**

***Passed by voice vote.***

**Article 2: To elect a Treasurer who shall assume office immediately and serve a one-year term or until the election and qualification of a successor.**

**Motion: Su White nominated Sally Ober, Second: Jackie Weyrauch**

**Discussion: none**

***Passed by voice vote.***

**Article 3: Shall the legal voters of the Lincoln School District accept the report of the School District Board of Directors?**

**Motion: Alison Parker, Second: Ari Kirshenbaum**

**Discussion: School Board Chair, Jeanne Albert, noted there was a typo on the bottom of page 50 in the Town Report, in the “Year to Year Budget Comparison” chart, in the last column on the right. There was an increase, not a decrease in education spending of 0.38%. The minus sign should be omitted.**

***Passed by voice vote.***

**Article 4: Shall the voters of the Lincoln School District approve the following annual stipends for district officers?**

- **Moderator: \$50**
- **Clerk: \$500**
- **Treasurer: \$500**
- **School District Board chair: \$750**
- **Each School District Board member (other than chair): \$500**

**Motion: Alison Parker, Second: Ken Stockman**

**Discussion: none    *Passed by voice vote.***

**Article 5: Shall the voters of the Lincoln School District authorize the District Board of Directors to borrow money by the issuance of bonds or notes not in excess of anticipated revenues for fiscal year 2026, per 16 V.S.A. §562(9)?**

**Motion: Su White, Second: Ari Kirshenbaum**

**Discussion: Jeanne Albert said it is required to get this authority from the voters. Passed by voice vote.**

**Article 6: Shall the voters of the Lincoln School District authorize the School Board to transfer up to \$380,000 of the District's audited surplus funds to the District's Education Reserve Fund? The District anticipates having a surplus of \$481,173.55 and the proposed budget amount in Article 7 is based on applying \$100,000 of the surplus to offset taxes for fiscal year 2026.**

**Motion: Su White, Second: Ken Stockman**

**Discussion: Jeanne Albert had a presentation from the School District about this and Article 7. She asked if Superintendent, Amy Cole, could have permission to speak. There was no opposition. The proposed budget reflects a 0.4% increase. The Board recognized how challenging education taxes were this past year. They tried to keep spending to no more than 3% over this current year, and they exceeded their goal. This is the Lincoln School District's third year, and some of the budget categories have changed or moved to different sections of the detailed budget report (Which starts on page 43 of the Town Report). There was an increase in secondary tuition, and a decrease in per pupil spending. We have a \$480,000 surplus this year, mostly due to receiving more revenue than anticipated. Pages 52 and 53 show tax rate estimates. Our tax rate has gone down over the past three years. The FY2025-26 tax rate estimate is \$1.057. Questions to the Board: How can reserve funds be accessed? Answer: the School Board would have to approve any spending. **Roger Rood made a motion to amend this article to put \$370,000 into the Education Reserve Fund and \$10,000 into a Building Maintenance Reserve Fund. Jonathan Johnson seconded. Discussion on the amendment: Does this fund exist? Amy Cole explained that there are two types of reserve funds, Capital and Education Reserves, each to be used for their respective purposes. The administration would want to build a plan before asking for maintenance reserve fund dollars. The Lincoln District just recently got documents from the MAUSD district about our facility maintenance, and we haven't developed that plan yet, but it is a goal. Roger withdrew his motion and Jon agreed. Paul Vichi made a motion to reverse this and put \$100,000 into the Education Reserve Fund and use \$380,000 to reduce taxes for FY2026. Roger Rood seconded. Paul was concerned about talk in Montpelier of consolidating school districts. He felt that reserve funds belong to us, but the money might be swallowed up by a larger district if we are forced to merge. Jeanne Albert indicated that any merger would take time, and we can deal with our surplus before that happens. We****

*could use the surplus to pay down future taxes if needed. The tax rate can't go below \$1.00, and we are almost at that now. Amy Cole said this reserve would give the district more flexible savings and we are fortunate to be able to do this so early in our existence. Su White expressed tremendous thanks to the board and administration for such thoughtful and intelligent work with our budget. It is mind-blowing that we are in such an excellent financial position at this time. [Applause] **Paul and Roger withdrew their amendment.***

**Article 6, as warned, passed by voice vote.**

**Article 7: (School Budget): Shall the voters of the Lincoln School District approve the School District Board to expend \$5,179,244.76, which is the amount the Board has determined to be necessary for the ensuing fiscal year (FY2026)? The Lincoln School District estimates that this proposed budget, if approved, will result in per pupil education spending of \$13,455.51, which is 8.3% lower than per pupil education spending for the current year.**

**Motion: Sally Taylor, Second: Su White**

**Discussion:** *Paul Vichi made a motion to amend Article 7 to reflect the actual cost per pupil, not the weighted per pupil spending as presented. It was pointed out that the wording of this article is what is required by State statute, and the per pupil spending is calculated by a State formula. The amendment is not needed because it is only a statement after the actual question we are voting on. Paul Vichi felt it was a misleading statement and wanted it to reflect the real cost. The moderator ruled this out of order. Jonathan Johnson challenged us to become a private school. He noted that about 2/3 of people are getting state aid toward education taxes, and he is concerned that legislators in Montpelier are still unable to address the school funding issue.*

***Passed by voice vote.***

**Article 8: Shall the Lincoln School District adopt its budget by Australian ballot, beginning with the FY2027 budget?**

**Motion: Matt Atkins, Second: Roger Rood**

**Discussion:** *Bill Finger made a motion to table this article for the same reasons as for Article 9 in our Town Meeting, there is no rush to make this decision, Seconded by Deborah Lubar. It was pointed out that there are now fewer people attending this meeting than were at the first portion of the Town Meeting. The number in this room is not enough to make such a large spending decision. This School Board put this on the agenda, because people wanted it, but they do not necessarily endorse it. Bill Finger hopes we will form a committee to come up with good numbers for the budget, then follow up on this next year. Sally Ober explained that in VT Statute, the default voting method is from the floor, unless we vote to change it. We can choose to vote by*

*Australian ballot for any of three things: officers (which we do now), budgets, or questions such as this article. If we change it, we could also vote to change it back. Question: When would this be taken off the table? Answer from Jim Dumont, local attorney: It can be indefinite or until a certain date.*

***The motion to table, passed by division of the house with a vote of 48 YES and 35 NO. Article 8 is tabled.***

**Article 9: To elect Lincoln School District Officers and Directors as follows, for the indicated term, by Australian ballot on Tuesday, March 4, 2025:**

**1 – School Meeting Moderator (1 year)**

**1 – School Director (3 years)**

**1 – School Director (2 years)**

*No action needed. None taken.*

**Article 10: To transact any other legal business coming before said meeting.**

*None.*

***Adjourned at 10:28 p.m.***

***Minutes respectfully submitted by:***

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***Sally Ober, Lincoln School District Clerk***

***Approved by:***

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***Paul Forlenza, Lincoln School District Meeting Moderator***

***Approved by:***

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***Jeanne Albert, Chair of the Lincoln School District Board***