

1 SHAKER REGIONAL SCHOOL BOARD
2 Annual Meeting Minutes
3 March 6, 2009
4
5

6 IN ATTENDANCE:

7 **School Board:** Bill Hart, Preston Tuthill, Diane O’Hara, Tom Goulette, Sumner Dole,
8 Roy Roberts, Carolyn French-Witham, Student Representative: Kaitlyn Van Horne
9 **Administration:** Superintendent Michael Cozort; Business Administrator Debbie Gay;
10 School District Attorney: Patrick Wood; Moderator: Tom Garfield
11

12 At 5:50 p.m., School District Moderator Tom Garfield swore in assistant moderator Brian
13 Loanes and the following Ballot Clerks:
14

15 Belmont Ballot Clerks

16 Brenda Paquette
17 Geraldine Mtichell
18 Norma Patten
19 Cynthia DeRoy
20 Kari Dami
21 Diane Marden
22 Donna Shepherd
23 Nikki Wheeler
24
25

Canterbury Ballot Clerks

Mary Kerwin
Brenda Murray
Mary Ann Winograd

26 At 6:00 p.m., Moderator Tom Garfield declared the polls open for voting on Article I.
27 John Cochran verified that the ballot machine was empty and set to zero.
28

29 At 7:00 p.m., Moderator Tom Garfield called the meeting to order and reviewed safety
30 and emergency procedures, introduced members of the Board, and thanked everyone who
31 was involved with setup for the meeting.
32

33 The meeting began with the Pledge of Allegiance lead by the Board’s Student
34 Representative Kaitlyn Van Horne. Moderator Garfield briefly reviewing the rules for
35 the procedure of the meeting, based on the Town and School Meeting Guide developed
36 by the Local Government Center, and identified non-residents present in the audience.
37

38 At 7:09 p.m., Moderator Tom Garfield declared the polls closed for voting on Article I.
39

40 Article I

41 “To choose, by ballot, two school board members, one from the pre-existing District of
42 Belmont to serve for a term of three years, and one from the pre-existing District of
43 Canterbury to serve for a term of three years. Candidates must be residents of Belmont
44 and Canterbury respectively, but will be elected at large.”
45
46

1 **Record of Election – Shaker Regional School District Board Members**

2 **School Board - Belmont 3 years**

3	Thomas Goulette	170
4	Write Ins	3
5	Blanks	23

6 **School Board – Canterbury 3 years**

7	James Poitras	26
8	Michael Pessolano	42
9	Heidi Hutchinson	106
10	Blanks	20
11	Write Ins	2

12

13 Ken Knowlton of Belmont, a member of the Budget Committee for the Town of
14 Belmont, addressed the Board. With his experience, he is familiar with the process for
15 creating a budget, and stated that both the town and the school district were working hard
16 to keep taxes low. He stated that Governor John Lynch has proposed a plan that will
17 reduce the rooms and meals taxes, resulting in lower funding being provided to towns.
18 The plan states that towns will be able to recoup the loss of these funds through the
19 school districts, in conjunction with the federal stimulus package. Mr. Knowlton asked
20 the Board if the funds from the federal stimulus package come through as promised, will
21 these funds be used to offset the tax base or use these funds to increase the bottom line
22 for more spending. Tom Garfield stated that this point in the meeting might not be
23 appropriate for this discussion.

24

25 Article II

26 “Shall the school district accept the provisions of RSA 198:20-b providing that any
27 school district at an annual meeting may adopt an article authorizing indefinitely, until
28 specific rescission of such authority, the school board to apply for, accept and expend,
29 without further action by the school district, unanticipated money from a state, federal or
30 other governmental unit or a private source which becomes available during the fiscal
31 year?”

32

33 *A motion was made by Ron Mitchell of Belmont, and seconded by Bob*
34 *Lockwood of Canterbury, to move Article II.*

35

36 Discussion: Donna Cilley requested that Ken Knowlton’s questions regarding the
37 application of stimulus funds be answered, explaining that the Board’s response would
38 impact voter decisions. The audience agreed with this request, and Moderator Garfield’s
39 previous decision was over ruled.

40

41 Bill Hart requested a brief recess to allow the Board to discuss the question. A brief
42 recess was granted at 7:15 p.m.

43

44 At 7:18 p.m., the meeting resumed.

45

1 Roy Roberts addressed the question regarding the spending of stimulus funds, stating that
2 it bothers him when the tone of a meeting is set through the allegations that the Board is
3 being underhanded in their actions. He explained that it is the Board’s intent to remain in
4 budget, but should stimulus funds for specific projects come available, the Board will
5 take advantage of these opportunities. Mr. Roberts stated that the Board will continue to
6 investigate and complete projects that are in the best interest of the District.

7
8 Ken Knowlton apologized to the Board for sounding negative, explaining that the town
9 budget is not the same as the school district budget. Should funds be returned to the town
10 through the school district, Mr. Knowlton questioned how this would help the town
11 budget offset the loss from the reduced revenue from the rooms and meals tax funding
12 source. The Board and residents discussed what was thought to be the most recent plan
13 as set forth by Governor Lynch. Priscilla Lockwood stated that the State of NH is
14 expecting to receive more money from the stimulus package than originally predicted,
15 which will help with this offset.

16
17 Woody Fogg stated his concerns with accepting federal funds, stating that there are
18 always strings attached. He expressed his desire for the Board to exercise caution when
19 accepting these funding sources, and to make sure that programs are not developed that
20 will need to be supported by district funds once the federal funds are extinguished.

21
22 John Pike requested that the word “expend” be removed from Article II. District
23 Attorney Patrick Wood stated that this article is based on statute, and wording cannot be
24 changed. Mr. Pike stated that due to the presence of this word, his vote would have to be
25 against the article.

26
27 Mike Cozort explained the need for this article, stating that the stimulus package includes
28 funds for numerous areas such as special education, Title 1 (remedial education) and
29 technology. Failure to pass this article would leave the district in a position where they
30 would not be able to accept any funds for programs that already exist and are required.
31 Ron Mitchell explained further that these articles exist at the town levels, and it would be
32 foolish to vote these down. Mr. Cozort confirmed that by not passing this article the
33 district would also be unable to accept grant funding. John Miller and Olivia Henry both
34 stated that they were in favor of the article, and that this is only a house keeping item and
35 without it the tax base would need to be increased further. Tom Goulette spoke on behalf
36 of the Board stating that any expenditures would be made for the long term benefit of the
37 District.

38
39 *Article II carried on a voice vote.*

40
41 Article III

42 “To see if the Shaker Regional School District will vote to adopt the optional School
43 Board Budget Committee (RSA 195:12-a). The budget committee shall have the same
44 number of members as the cooperative district school board plus one additional member
45 from the school board. The terms of office and manner of election of members shall be
46 determined in the same manner as for the cooperative school board. Whenever it is voted

1 to establish a budget committee, the moderator in the first circumstance shall appoint the
2 members of the budget committee, except for the additional member appointed by the
3 School Board, within 15 days of the vote establishing the committee. The members
4 appointed by the moderator shall serve until the next annual meeting when the meeting
5 shall elect their successors.”

6
7 *A motion was made by Ron Mitchell of Belmont, and seconded by Doug Ellis of*
8 *Belmont, to move Article III.*
9

10 Discussion: Donna Cilley stated that she had initiated the petition for creation of a
11 budget committee, and expressed her disappointment at the Board’s lack of support for
12 this committee. She stated that with a nineteen million dollar budget, it is beneficial to
13 give it a second look and that this process is the wave of the future. She explained that
14 the purpose of this committee is to provide greater oversight not simply to cut programs.
15 In the past year, the Board has brought forward failed bond issues to address building
16 issues and that a budget committee would be able to find the funding necessary for these
17 projects within the capitol improvements budget. Ms. Cilley spoke in favor of the article,
18 stating that it was not intended to create more work or cause harm, but to support the
19 current administration and help to stabilize/balance the budget.
20

21 Ken Knowlton spoke in favor of the article, expressing the similarities between the town
22 and school district budget processes and that communication between the two is crucial.
23 He volunteered to be the town representative to communicate with this committee.
24

25 Tom Goulette spoke against the article. He stated that the school board, which is elected
26 by the residents of both communities serves as the Budget Committee and noted that the
27 relationship with the School Board and the residents had been built on trust and
28 communication. Should the article pass, the Board would of course work with the
29 Budget Committee to continue the foundation of this relationship, but Mr. Goulette
30 thought that this would be poor timing for the creation of such a committee. Mr. Goulette
31 stated that it is hard to gain attendance at normal school board meetings. He wondered if
32 budget committee members could, in a short time, come to have an understanding of all
33 aspects of the budget, as it often takes Board members more than a year to do this. He
34 stated that the Board welcomes and appreciates all feedback from the community, and
35 uses this information in the decision making process for all aspects of the District. Mr.
36 Goulette also noted that a budget committee is not needed to stop wild spending as
37 Shaker’s cost per pupil is lower than the state average and surrounding towns.
38

39 [Click here to read Mr. Goulette’s complete comments which are available on the](#)
40 [SRSD website.](#)
41

42 Pat Piscetta stated that she does not know of any big spenders among the Board members.
43 She said that she keeps hearing “the town” in discussions tonight, and reminded everyone
44 that there are two towns located within this District, and wanted to know if Canterbury
45 felt the same as Belmont. She commended the Board for a job well done, and spoke
46 against the article.

1
2 Donna Cilley stated that she was appalled that the audience had been insulted by Tom
3 Goulette and his comments that a Budget Committee would not be as committed as the
4 School Board, and wanted to know what makes the residents different from the elected
5 officials. She thanked Mr. Goulette for his dedication and service, but questioned why
6 other members of the community could not serve the District within various capacities.

7
8 Robert Steenson spoke out against the article, stating that he has seen the Board in action
9 over the past 19 years, and it has proven to be efficient in spending and operations. He
10 commended the Board for only raising the budget by 2.3% for the upcoming year, and
11 wished that the Town Budget would follow suit.

12
13 Pat Butaker spoke against the article. She stated that although she is college educated,
14 some of the information can be confusing. Ms. Butaker expressed her opinion that a
15 Budget Committee would lower efficiency due to the number of people who would need
16 to be involved in the process.

17
18 Michael Murch spoke against the article, stating that the Board always includes
19 everything in detail, and that the Board should be commended for their diligence.

20
21 David Morse stated that he has an accounting background, and even with this, the budget
22 is still overwhelming to review. With little time to prepare before hearings and the public
23 meeting, it is difficult to formulate meaningful questions. He spoke in favor of the
24 article, stating that he is unaware of any other district in the area that does not utilize this
25 format.

26
27 The polls opened at 8:09 p.m. for voting on Article III.

28
29 **Results for Article III**

30

Article III	Votes
Total Ballots Cast	234
Yes	84
No	150

36

37 *Article III failed on a ballot vote.*

38
39 Awards and Recognitions

40 Roy Roberts recognized retiree Janet Hillis for her service and dedication to the District
41 through instruction of the third grade. Mr. Roberts spoke in regards to Ms. Hillis's
42 kindness and understanding nature, her love for poetry, and the ethics of hard work that
43 she has instilled in her students.

44
45 Diane O'Hara recognized student representative Kaitlyn Van Horne, stating that she had
46 enjoyed Kaitlyn's questioning nature and watching her gain confidence within herself.

1
2 Bill Hart recognized board member Carolyn French-Witham for her service to the Board,
3 stating that Ms. French-Witham always looked to find solutions in best interest of the
4 students of the District.

5
6 Superintendent Mike Cozort presented the Champion for Children Award to Graham P.
7 Chynoweth. Linda Chynoweth Peters accepted the award on his behalf. Mr. Cozort
8 spoke about the passion that Graham P. Chynoweth held for this position, giving his heart
9 and soul to help every child. Mr. Cozort reminisced with stories of Mr. Chynoweth,
10 speaking about his rants against state and federal mandates. Ms. Chynoweth Peters spoke
11 of how she and her husband had become involved with the school district, stating that out
12 of all of the awards and recognitions that he had received, the Champion for Children
13 Award by far made him the happiest.

14
15 Article IV

16 “To see if the School District will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of eighteen
17 million, eight hundred seventeen thousand, five hundred seventy two dollars
18 (\$18,817,572) for the support of schools, the salaries of school district officials and
19 agents, and for the payment of statutory obligations of said district, and to authorize the
20 application against said appropriations of such sums as are estimated to be raised from
21 the State’s equalized and building aids together with other income. The School Board
22 shall certify to the selectmen of each of the towns of Belmont and Canterbury the amount
23 to be raised by taxation of each of said towns. This article does not include
24 appropriations voted in other warrant articles.

25
26 *A motion was made by Melvin Burrowes of Canterbury, and seconded by Doug*
27 *Ellis of Belmont, to move Article IV.*

28
29 Discussion: Diane O’Hara addressed Article IV, outlining the six areas responsible for
30 budget increases. She stated that the Board made a concerted effort to keep the budget
31 low, understanding the current economy.

32
33 James Miller inquired to the increase for line number 2720 for transportation for special
34 education, when the line for 1210 was dropping. Diane O’Hara responded that this could
35 be that despite special education tuition costs being reduced, transportation costs might
36 still be great as some students are transported a great distance to special programs.

37
38 Glenda Hill requested clarification for line items 2110 and 2112, asking if the truant
39 services were provided through the police department. It was explained that these are
40 separate services.

41
42 *A motion was made by Preston Tuthill of Belmont, and seconded by Ron*
43 *Mitchell of Belmont, to amend Article IV downward by \$121,200 as a result of*
44 *savings in fuel oil based on a locked-in cost of \$1.895 per gallon.*

1 Discussion: David Morse asked if the reduction to Article IV due to the lower fuel rate
2 would impact the requested amount to start an energy fund, as outlined by Article VII.
3 The Board replied that this fund would still be requested to be set up because of the
4 volatility of fuel and/ or electricity costs.

5
6 *The motion to amend Article IV passed on a voice vote.*

7
8 ***A motion was made by Christopher Booth of Canterbury, and seconded by***
9 ***James Miller of Canterbury, to amend Article IV, line item 2620 Operation and***
10 ***Maintenance to add \$210,000 for 50 kilowatts of solar panels at Belmont High***
11 ***School to take advantage of a \$90,000 Federal 30% grant. The solar panels***
12 ***would be connected to the internet so they could be monitored online.***

13
14 Discussion: Ron Mitchell stated that he understands the movement to go green, but with
15 the current economy, he did not feel it would be a wise investment. He suggested waiting
16 for the technology of solar panels to improve, along with the economy.

17
18 Christopher Booth stated that the conditions in New England were prime for this
19 placement, due to large amounts of sunlight and high energy costs. Mr. Booth explained
20 his rationale for this request, stating that the District would be eligible for 30% tax credits
21 from the Federal Government in the form of a grant.

22
23 *The motion to amend Article IV failed on a voice vote.*

24
25 *Article IV passed on a voice vote as amended, with a total amount of \$18,696,372.*

26
27 Article V

28 “To see if the School District will vote, by ballot, to approve the cost item included in the
29 collective bargaining agreement reached between the Shaker Regional School Board and
30 the Shaker Regional Education Association which calls for the following increases in
31 salaries and benefits at the current staffing levels:

32

Year	Estimated Increase
2009-2010	\$370,434
2010-2011	\$283,763

36

37 And further to raise and appropriate the sum of two hundred thirty two thousand for
38 hundred fifty eight dollars (\$232,458) for the upcoming fiscal year, such sum
39 representing the additional costs attributable to the increase in salaries and benefits over
40 those of the appropriation at the current staffing levels paid in the prior fiscal year.”

41
42 ***A motion was made by Albert Akerstrom of Belmont, and seconded, by Charles***
43 ***Storez of Belmont, to move Article V.***

44
45 Discussion: Sumner Dole explained the process of how the collective bargaining
46 agreement had been decided. There were no questions regarding this article.

1
2 At 9:27 p.m., Moderator Tom Garfield declared the polls open for voting on Article V.

3 **Results for Article V**

4

5 Article V	6 Votes
7 Total Ballots Cast	8 169
9 Yes	10 138
11 No	12 31

13 *Article V passed on a ballot vote.*

14 Article VI

15 “Shall the Shaker Regional School District, if Article V is defeated, authorize the
16 governing body to call one special meeting, at its option, to address Article V cost items
17 only?”

18 *A motion was made by Doug Ellis of Belmont, and seconded by Ron Mitchell of
19 Belmont, to table Article VI.*

20 Discussion: There was no further discussion on this article.

21
22 *The motion to table Article VI carried on a voice vote.*

23
24 Article VII

25 “To see if the School District will vote to create an expendable trust fund under the
26 provisions of RSA 198:20-c, to be known as the Energy Fund, for the purpose of paying
27 for unanticipated price increases in fuel oil, gasoline, diesel, and/or electricity.
28 Furthermore to raise and appropriate the sum of up to fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000),
29 with such amount to be funded from the June 30, 2009 unreserved fund balance that is in
30 excess of \$360,000 available for transfer on July 1, toward this purpose and to name the
31 school board as agents to expend from this fund.”

32
33 *A motion was made by Colleen Akerman of Belmont, and seconded by Priscilla
34 Lockwood of Canterbury, to move Article VII.*

35
36 Discussion: David Morse thought it was wonderful that the District was able to lock in at
37 a lower rate for fuel oil for the upcoming year. As a result of this, he suggested lowering
38 the amount to be placed into the Energy Fund to \$25,000. He questioned if the higher
39 amount was excessive. Pret Tuthill stated that pricing over the past few years had been
40 sporadic, and that this article was a precautionary step.

41
42 *A motion was made by David Morse of Belmont, and seconded by John Pike, of
43 Belmont, to reduce the amount of Article VII from \$50,000 to \$25,000.*

44
45 The polls closed at 9:10 p.m. for voting on Article III.

1 *The Amendment to Article VII failed on a hand vote of 63 yes to 89 no.*

2
3 ***A motion was made by Preston Tuthill of Belmont, and seconded by Melvin***
4 ***Burrowes of Canterbury, to amend Article VII to include “and funds shall be***
5 ***held by the Shaker Regional School District Trustee of the Trust Funds, voted***
6 ***to be the Belmont Trustee of the Trust Funds at the March 21, 1997 Annual***
7 ***District Meeting.***

8
9 Discussion: There was no discussion on this amendment.

10
11 *The amendment to Article VII carried on a voice vote.*

12
13 *Article VII as amended carried on a voice vote.*

14
15 ***A motion was made by Ben Kenny of Belmont, and seconded by Ron Mitchell of***
16 ***Belmont, to reconsider the vote on Article VII as amended.***

17
18 Discussion: Ben Kenny explained that he did not understand that the previous vote was
19 on the Article, and not on the amendment.

20
21 *The motion failed on a voice vote.*

22
23 The polls opened at 9:29 p.m. for voting on Article V.

24
25 Article VIII

26 “To see if the School District will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of up to fifty
27 thousand dollars (\$50,000), to be placed in the School Facilities and Grounds
28 Maintenance Expendable Trust Fund, which was established at the March 21, 1997
29 Annual District Meeting, with such amount to be funded from the June 30, 2009
30 unreserved fund balance that is in excess of \$360,000 available for transfer on July 1 of
31 this year.”

32
33 ***A motion was made by Ron Mitchell of Belmont, and seconded by Charles***
34 ***Storez of Belmont, to move Article VIII.***

35
36 Discussion: Pret Tuthill explained the history of this fund and reviewed some of the
37 projects that had been funded. He stated that the current balance was \$175,983, with an
38 additional \$25,000 to be deposited at the end of the fiscal year, for a proposed total
39 around \$200,000. Mr. Tuthill explained that this fund might be used in the future for roof
40 projects or, perhaps, if a boiler needed to be replaced.

41
42 Ron Mitchell questioned the capacity of the boiler system at the SAU office and Middle
43 School. He asked if the Middle School boiler had enough BTU’s to run a line connecting
44 both buildings to the same system. Pret stated that this suggestion would be evaluated
45 when the SAU boiler is up for replacement and utilize the best method available.

1 *Article VIII passed on a voice vote.*

2
3 Article XI

4 “To transact any other business that may legally come before this meeting.”

5
6 *A motion was made by Bob Lockwood of Canterbury, and seconded by Bill*
7 *Hart, for the school board to study the feasibility of alternative energy sources,*
8 *including solar panels, and report its recommendations at the 2010 Shaker*
9 *Regional School District meeting, or sooner if appropriate.*

10
11 Discussion: Bob Lockwood explained that the motion is necessary to have on record in
12 order for the Board to attain possible grant funding for alternative energy sources in
13 future years.

14
15 Steven Lundahl expressed his willingness to help with this project and serve on an energy
16 efficiency committee. He spoke in favor of the motion, stating that if properly executed,
17 this could save the District money.

18
19 Frank Tupper suggested that aspects of the study be undertaken by students in earth
20 science courses. This would help to gain buy-in to the idea and educate students.

21
22 Tom Goulette stated that he is employed at the Lakes Region Technical Community
23 College, and Senator Shaheen has evaluated the program at their facility. He offered his
24 experience and support for this type of program.

25
26 *The motion passed on a voice vote.*

27
28 At 10:29, Moderator Tom Garfield declared the polls closed for voting on Article V.

29
30 *A motion was made by Fred Fecteau of Belmont , and seconded by Ron*
31 *Mitchell of Belmont, to restrict reconsideration on all actions taken for Articles*
32 *II, III, IV, VII, and VIII.*

33
34 Discussion: There was no discussion of this motion.

35
36 *The motion carried on a voice vote.*

37
38 *At 10:30 p.m., a motion was made by Ron Mitchell of Belmont,, and seconded, to adjourn*
39 *the meeting. The motion passed on a voiced vote.*

40
41
42 Respectfully Submitted,

43
44
45 Robin M. Schofield
46 School District Clerk

