

TOWN OF HEBRON
PUBLIC INFORMATIONAL MEETING
DECEMBER 8, 2022

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

OTHERS PRESENT: Bill and Donna Luti, James and Gillian Van Schaick, John and Patricia Dunklee, Deborah James, Mark Coulson, Maynard Young, David and Phyllis Evans, Stephen and Leslie Aprea, Mike and Martha Riess, Alan and Janis Baker, Carol and Roger Lafontaine, John and Cindy Hilson, Alison York, Camille Bharucha, Robert and Janet Wisniewski, Lynne Comeau, Jack Sheehan, Richard Wurtz, Donna Eibye, Don Franklin, Robbie and Gerry Flynn, Reed Alexander, Doris Jurisson, Barbara and Thomas Franz, Jennifer Larochelle, Dave and Anne Hardy, Ivan Quinchia, Linda Fischer, Bill Robertie, Colleen Tewksbury, David Brittelli, Ronald Delisle, George Bolln, Debra Hart, David Darlington, and others

6:00 P.M. **COMMENCED MEETING:** Chair James commenced the Public Informational Meeting at 6:00 P.M.

6:00 P.M. **PUBLIC INFORMATIONAL MEETING – NEWFOUND AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT**

ARTICLE 5 COMMITTEE OUTCOME: Chair James thanked the audience for taking the time to attend this important meeting as this is a serious issue. Last year there was a proposal to change the funding formula of the Newfound Area School District resulting in forming a study committee to review funding options that has implications affecting all seven towns in the district. Chair James stated that the Newfound Area School District Deliberative Session Meeting on February 4, 2023 at the Newfound Regional High School is more important to attend as this is where the voters have a say in the proposed change to the funding formula. Chair James turned the meeting over to Bill Luti (Hebron's representative on the Article 5 Study Committee).

Bill Luti explained to the audience the purpose of the committee was to study various proposals on changing the funding formula for the Newfound Area School District. Mr. Luti reviewed several of the proposals with the audience and relayed some of the comments made by representatives during the committee meetings from the other towns regarding their position - to have the richer towns start paying their fair share. Jen Larochelle (Hebron's representative on the Newfound Area School District Budget Committee) informed the audience that voting on the school ballot in March is just as important. Ivan Quinchia inquired about absentee votes allowed at the deliberative session. Selectman Moriarty replied no, all voters must be present at the meeting.

Mr. Luti reviewed the handouts prepared for the meeting this evening with the audience. Mr. Luti noted that the Article 5 Committee was presented with the same handouts. Mr. Luti reviewed the spreadsheet titled "Per Student Cost by Town Based on Total Direct Tax Contribution" and pointed out that the taxpayers in Hebron pay the most per student out of the district. The amount increases when the portion paid to the Bridgewater Hebron Village District is included. Mr. Luti reviewed with the audience the components of the tax rate - State and Local education portions, how equalized valuation of property values is part of the formula, and that some of the proposed formula changes shifts funding in the towns with a savings for a few years, but the costs will change in the future based on demographic changes.

Selectman Moriarty informed the audience that in all of this discussion on changing the funding formula, the committee did not address quality of education improvements or improving the student's atmosphere for an education. Mr. Luti reviewed with the audience the percentile which each of the schools in the Newfound Area School District were ranked with proficiency in math and literacy - the Bridgewater Hebron Village District ranked the highest. The proficiency ratings drop significantly at the Newfound Memorial Middle School.

Mr. Luti continued to review with the audience how funding education works in the State of NH and the current impacts to some of the towns in New Hampshire cooperative school districts that are forced to

pay egregious monthly payments to the districts as there is no legislation to assist with leaving the district. Mr. Luti related to towns leaving the school districts similar to the song “Hotel California” - “You can check out anytime you like, but you can never leave.”.

John Hilson thanked Mr. Luti and the Select Board for taking the time to present this to the taxpayers and especially thanked Mr. Luti for the time compiling the valuable information in the packet. Mr. Hilson (career as an attorney) expressed to Mr. Luti that mediation seems to be the logical solution amongst the towns, but after hearing the comments made to facts, this is beyond mediation. Mr. Hilson inquired about this issue coming up again if a petitioned article is not submitted in January. Mr. Luti stated this could be reviewed every 5 (five) years.

Mr. Luti reviewed the options that the town has moving forward, and one would be to leave the district as difficult as it may be. Mr. Luti explained RSA 195 that allows towns to leave cooperative districts, explained the timeframe for the withdrawal process, and the current votes by the Newfound Area School District Board, and the votes by each of the seven towns. Mr. Luti referred to the spreadsheet outlining voter turnout in the seven towns at the March 2022 Newfound Area School District ballot voting. And since Hebron has a low number of registered voters, the impact is minimal compared to the other towns. Mr. Luti encouraged the attendees to discuss this matter and share the handouts with their friends in the district. Selectman Moriarty informed the group that Bridgewater and Hebron tried to leave the district in 2015, but the ~~odds were~~committee voted against Hebron and Bridgewater ~~at the committee meetings.~~

Mr. Luti reviewed different scenarios of leaving the district and where the students would be educated. The Bridgewater-Hebron Village School could operate as a K-8 and high school students could tuition into the Plymouth High School or the Newfound Regional High School. Scenarios were reviewed regarding a K-8 in the Bridgewater-Hebron Village School, renting the Bridgewater-Hebron School to the Newfound Area School District, tuition in K-8 students from other towns, or leasing the Bridgewater-Hebron Village School to the Newfound Area School District.

Chair James informed the audience that another meeting will be scheduled after January 10, 2023 to discuss Hebron’s options and moving forward to the Deliberative Session in February.

The Board thanked all the attendees and Mr. Luti for the presentation this evening.

7:15 P.M. MEETING ADJOURNED: Vice-Chair Hazelton moved to adjourn the public informational meeting at 7:15 p.m., seconded by Selectman Moriarty. The vote was unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Sanborn
Town Administrator