

## MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL SCHOOL MEETING

MARCH 5, 2007

**The legal voters of the Town of Ripton met at the Community House in Ripton on Monday, March 5, at 8:55 p.m. to act upon articles one through five of the 2007 School Warning. There were about 35 people in attendance.**

Moderator Joyce Dicianna called the meeting to order at 8:55 p.m.

**ARTICLE 1: To see if the voters of the Town School District will approve the sum of \$792,398 to defray current expenses of the Town School District for the ensuing school year and to pay outstanding orders and obligations.**

Article 1 was moved by Laurie Cox and seconded by Bryan Alexander.

Carol Ford, School Board Chair, noted that Ripton School had gone from its highest enrollment last year to a much smaller number of students this year—a lower enrollment which is expected to continue in the coming year. The Board had therefore decided to reduce paraprofessional help by one full-time position. Otherwise, the number of teaching staff is being maintained. She called for questions from the floor; there were none.

Richard Kimler called the question and Richard Ruane seconded.

Article 1 was adopted by a unanimous voice vote.

**ARTICLE 2: To see if the voters of the Town School District will authorize the Board of Directors to apply for a loan from the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund Program and borrow an amount not to exceed \$25,000 for water system improvements.**

Article 2 was moved by Richard Ruane and seconded by Laurie Cox.

David Disque explained that there is a Federal mandate dictating that the School must have back-up water purification in case its system fails to pass inspection. The Board applied for and received an extension of the compliance date, which is now December 31, 2008. The Drinking Water State Revolving Fund generally forgives loans, but due to the mandate there is a lot of demand for monies from this fund—17 projects will be approved for loan forgiveness and Ripton is number 21 on the list. It is expected that a loan will eventually be forgiven.

Carol Ford stated that the Board is asking for approval to apply for the loan, but may not want to apply until they know the loan will indeed be forgiven. Mr. Disque added that the Board had not contracted for this work yet.

Tim Hanson inquired about the type of purification system anticipated, and was informed it would be chlorination. Andrea Chesman asked what would happen if Ripton did not have a system in place by December 31 of 2008. Carol Ford replied that this was not known; she supposed officials could conceivably say the building was unsuitable for use.

Joyce Henderson, in seeking clarification, asked if—given a worst case scenario whereby a loan from the Drinking Water Fund was not forthcoming or forgiven—we were voting in Article 2 to authorize the School Board to actually take out a loan for \$25,000 and thereby approving a \$25,000 increase in the school budget. David Disque replied that we would in fact be voting for a potential increase but that the Board would not want to increase the budget by \$25,000 because of per pupil spending caps and the like. Dick Collitt asked what the interest rate on a loan would be, and Mr. Disque replied in the mid-4% range.

He noted the \$25,000 would cover both planning and implementation of a water purification system. Michael Hussey commented that the mandate seems rather silly given the pure nature of Ripton's water—why mess it up with chlorination? It was explained that chlorination would only be used in a back-up system and that the mandate requires a chemical back-up system. Mr. Hussey opined that it might be better to drill a second well. Len Tiedemann asked if there was space at the School for back-up equipment and was informed that there was.

Barry King asked for clarification about what was being requested of voters—are we being asked to authorize the loan? Mr. Disque replied that we would be authorizing the loan. Ms. King inquired whether we were authorizing a loan regardless of monies forthcoming/forgiven from the Drinking Water Fund, and Mr. Disque replied that we were. He said that the Board does not intend to apply for a loan unless they know the loan will be forgiven, but that Article 2 *does* allow the Board to apply for a loan which would require repayment.

Carol Ford noted the Drinking Water Fund is a revolving loan program intended to fund projects such as water purification—it is in the nature of the fund to forgive loans.

Kim Kimler asked about the acceptability of an ultra-violet system. He was informed that it would be considerably more expensive than a chlorination system. Carol Ford said that because the water supplies the Fire Station, they would need to use a UV system or drill their own well if they wanted a back-up system. A towns person advocated looking into a UV system because it might be cheaper. Michael Hussey said he would like to know the maintenance costs for each potential system—this is especially important with any system which isn't used regularly. Bill Ford asked whether there could be a portable system shared by a number of schools, and Carol Ford replied she understood the mandate to specify a system in place at the School.

Laurie Cox called the question and Warren King seconded.

Article 2 was adopted by unanimous voice vote.

**ARTICLE 3: To see if the voters of the Town School District will authorize the Board of Directors to use \$1,000 of the FY 06 Unreserved Fund Balance (estimate of \$6,650.76) to pay for maintenance equipment.**

Article 3 was moved by Richard Ruane and seconded by Joyce Henderson.

Carol Ford explained that the Unreserved Fund Balance represented monies left over from June 2006. Rather than increase the budget by the cost of this “one off” floor maintenance machine, the Board decided to ask for authorization to spend \$1,000 from the Fund Balance.

Tim Hanson called the question and Erik Eriksen seconded.

Article 3 was adopted by unanimous voice vote.

**ARTICLE 4: To see if the voters of the Town School District will authorize the Board of Directors to place \$5,650.76 of the FY 06 Unreserved Fund Balance (estimate of \$6,650.76) into the Capital Projects Fund.**

Article 4 was moved by Erik Eriksen and seconded by Tim Hanson.

Carol Ford noted that this article authorizes a procedure that normally happens each year—if this article were approved as warned the Unreserved Fund Balance would be added to the Capital Projects Fund which now contains approximately \$85,000. However an energy audit was performed after the Warning was made which has caused the Board to re-think allocation of the \$5,650.76. David Disque then rose to provide an explanation of the Board's new thinking, which follows.

Mr. Disque first reviewed anticipated projects to be financed from the Capital Projects Fund:

- Water purification system costing \$25,000 (to be financed by a loan which will probably be forgiven)
- Energy saving recommendations
- Asphalt shingle roof costing between \$77,000 and \$125,000 (2001 estimate)
- Painting—interior costing \$3,000 (2002 estimate) and exterior costing \$10,000 to \$15,000 (current estimate)
- Carpet and tiles costing \$7,500 (1999 figure)

Mr. Disque commented that school maintenance has been excellent, and that the Board feels Jane Phinney and Roger Larocque to be doing a first-rate job.

Mr. Disque then reviewed recommendations from the recently-performed energy audit (see appended chart):

- Replacement of fluorescent lighting
- Installation of motion sensors
- Replacement of electric water heating with propane

He noted that these recommendations were made too late for inclusion in the budget.

In the area of lighting, Mr. Disque noted that the fixtures would not need replacement. He foresaw savings of \$2,800 per year. Given a cost of \$24,000 and a rebate of \$3,000, he foresaw saving \$7,000 in the first year, with a payback of 1.4 years. Mr. Disque anticipated use of volunteer labor. As to motion sensors, they would be in six locations and assuming rebates would show a payback time of under two years. He anticipated the payback time on changing water heating from electric to propane to be 2.2 years.

Bill Ford noted that the Board may need to check with an electrician about the use of volunteer labor—volunteer labor is not always possible and there are legalities requiring a licensed electrician for some work.

Lawrence Miller pointed out problems with Mr. Disque's mathematical calculations, noting for instance that a rebate should be shown as a one-time offset and not an annual occurrence. He saw longer payback times of 5 years, say, rather than 3. Mr. Disque acknowledged these problems with his calculations but felt the savings would still be significant.

Mike Hussey reviewed the savings in hot water costs. Bill Ford questioned the figure for propane costs—he believed the School got a better price than the amount used by Mr. Disque.

Laurie Cox inquired whether the voters were being asked to amend Article 4—were we being asked to put the \$5,650.76 toward energy savings rather than the Capital Projects Fund? Mr. Disque replied in the affirmative.

Warren King then proposed an amendment whereby the School Board would be authorized to spend up to \$20,000 from the Capital Projects Fund for energy conservation. Richard Ruane asked whether Mr. Disque's calculations in fact required expenditure of \$21,800 rather than \$20,000. Mr. Disque said he was aware his numbers are vague and somewhat unsubstantiated. He said the Board might not be able to implement all the energy saving recommendations for \$20,000 but that they would prioritize.

The voters were asked if they agreed to amend Article 4. Joyce Henderson moved the question and Tim Hanson seconded. By voice vote, there was agreement to amend the article.

Warren King made a motion, seconded by Richard Ruane, to amend Article 4 as follows:

**ARTICLE 4: To see if the voters of the Town School District will authorize the Board of Directors to place \$5,650.76 of the FY 06 Unreserved Fund Balance (estimate of \$6,650.76) into the Capital Projects Fund, and to spend up to \$20,000 from the Capital Projects Fund toward energy conservation measures.**

Laurie Cox, seconded by Richard Ruane, called for a vote on Article 4 as amended.

Article 4, as amended, was adopted by unanimous voice vote.

David Disque showed one more chart, comparing energy use by the Ripton, Bridport and Weybridge schools.

**ARTICLE 5: To transact any other business proper to come before said meeting.**

Carol Ford announced that a Certificate of Excellence was to be presented to Nancy Breiden for her nine years of service on Ripton's School Board.

Wendy Leeds rose to ask for support for the Friends of Ripton School. She briefly described the organization and its activities, and drew attention to a handout which describes how FORS has spent the money it has raised. She pointed out that meetings are short, infrequent, and painless and extended an invitation for all townspeople, not just parents, to be more involved. She announced the next FORS meeting to be held on March 14<sup>th</sup>. Anyone desirous of more information should contact her or Blair Kloman.

Laurie Cox moved adjournment, and Erik Eriksen seconded.

After a unanimous voice vote, the School Meeting adjourned at 9:45 pm.

Joyce Dicianna announced that the Meeting would be reconvened on Tuesday, March 6, 2007, at the Community House to vote by Australian ballot on Articles 6 through 8 of the 2007 School District Warning.