

# Calais Elementary School

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## CALAIS TOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT WARNING Minutes - Unapproved

3/6/2018, 8am Calais Elementary School

1. Call to Order - Judy Fitch Roberts called the meeting to order at 8:10 a.m. Board In attendance: Susanna Culver (Board Chair), Drew Lamb (Board), Katie Reed (Board), Dorothy Naylor (Board), Keith MacMartin (Board), Cat Fair (Principal), and Bill Kimball (Superintendent).

The legal voters of the Calais Town School District are hereby warned to meet at the Calais Elementary School in the Town of Calais on Tuesday, March 6, 2018 at 8:10 a.m.

**Article 1:** To elect a Moderator. Judy Fitch Roberts asked for nominations. A motion was made and seconded to elect Gus Seelig as Moderator. The motion carried unanimously. Gus Seelig reviewed rules for the meeting.

**Article 2:** To authorize the board of school directors to hold any audied fund balance as of June 30, 2018 in a reserve fund to be expended under the control and direction of the Board of School directors for the purpose of operating the school. - Moved and seconded. Gus Seelig asked for discussion. Matt Gardner Morse asked for clarification about the progress of Act 46 and the fund balance. Dot Naylor shared that on Thursday, March 8th, there would be a 30 minute meeting with the AOE to ask questions about the alternative governance structure (AGS) plan submitted. She said they had many AGS plans to review before they decided and a decision wouldn't be made until the summer. Dot said the board would post on Front Porch Forum when had an answer. Matt asked about carrying a big fund balance. Dot said there would be time to consider this before a merger happened. Katie Reed shared that the board was carefully planning, knowing that the Calais Elementary septic system was fragile and may need replacement. Gus called the question. Article 2 passed unanimously.

**Article 3:** To authorize the board of school Directors to borrow money in anticipation of the receipt of revenues for the school year. - Scott Thompson moved the question and Denise Wheeler seconded it. Gus asked for discussion. Gus called the question. Article 3 was approved.

**Article 4:** To transact any other business that may legally come before the meeting. Katie Reed, Vice Chair of the Calais Board presented how the budget was created, and Cat Fair, Principal presented highlights of what had been happening at Calais Elementary School,

meeting the Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) for WCSU which focuses the work of the teachers.

Katie Reed explained how the proposed budget was created. Three drafts were presented to the board in November, December and January. The proposed budget of \$1,904,291 was a reduction from the current year's budget in two ways: 1) in budget spending and also in equalized pupil spending.

Katie Reed explained that two-thirds of the budget was for staffing. She showed the breakdown of the budget comparing FY 17-18 and the proposed FY 18-19. The largest portion of the budget was in direct instruction. She explained that WCSU assessments have increased due to special education spending. WCSU changed their delivery service model to provide direct instruction through special educators and to reduce paraeducators. The budget has two full-time special educators contracted through central office.

The next slide showed major changes to the budget. Katie explained that there was a salary increase which was a result of negotiated contracts, a health care increase and a major reduction in staffing of \$191,000, from two reduced 2 paraeducator positions, and a reduction of classrooms from seven to six due to lower enrollment. FY 18-19 will have a combined K-1 classroom but Katie shared it was so hard to lose one full time teacher. The budget also reflected a .4 reduction in allied arts which includes music, library, PE and art.

There was an increase in non-salary items which included contracting two full time Special Educator teachers. There was also an increase in Pre-Kindergarten voucher payments and a small increase in transportation. There was a total reduction of \$75,000 and also a reduction in revenues of \$46,000 mostly in Special Education because our costs were lower. In the end, there were savings of \$29,000.

Enrollment was important in building the budget. Last year, Calais had 122 students. This year there are 126 students and it is projected that next year there will be 108, but numbers change between now and when school begins in the fall. Katie shared that WCSU had contracted with a company to study enrollment and had worked to project enrollment for the next 10 years by looking at birth rate, housing sales etc. Projected enrollment will continue to decrease, so there is a critical need for more young families to move to Calais.

Enrollment effects costs of equalized pupil. The Calais equalized pupil rate is lower because the board brought the budget down. Katie shared a slide comparing the equalized pupil rate between towns and the 6 schools. The budget was reduced by 3.82% yet there was a tax increase of 6.8 cents. Why? Katie explained there was a complicated tax formula. There were four factors which affect the tax rate including the CLA, state tax, property yield and the budgets of Calais and U-32. Katie explained that the impact on Calais will be a 6.8 cent increase or \$68 for \$100,000 of property value. Katie stressed that in Calais, 66% receive some kind of income sensitivity based on a sliding scale. Katie concluded by saying that the board worked hard to

create the proposed budget to maintain quality in the school and balance taxes. The board believed it was fair and balanced and hoped the town would support it.

Barry Bernstein thanked Katie for the great presentation. He knew how hard the board worked on the budget and on the merger and he thanked them all.

Cat Fair presented a slide showing highlights which demonstrated much of work the school does to achieve SLOs for students. Cat shared a list of SLOs which are the core essential academics and transferable skills. She highlighted the group of volunteers at Calais Elementary including parents and community members who teach Four Winds curriculum which was aligned with the Next Generation science standards. She shared photos of the third and fourth grade students engaged in content area work and fun. Cat hoped people had a chance to walk in the halls to see the art work and creativity of the students. She shared about the winter art show and music concert.

Next, Cat showed slides of how students from K-6 have learned about different aspects of coding with Jill Abair, Librarian/Tech Integrationist. She highlighted the fall wellness hike, and fall and spring play. Gifts for Giving, a 17 year tradition started by retired art teacher Heidimarie Holmes Heiss, continued this year, and was an event where local artists and community members come to school to help students create gifts to give to their family. The tradition continued this year with the new art teacher. The next slides showed pictures of the Kindergarten engaged in learning about engineering.

Cat highlighted school celebrations and the five year PBis initiative in the SU which was a positive behavior intervention system. Students learned to be safe, be kind and to work hard. Calais has made adjustments this year to provide effective strategies and the kids had input. Next, she shared photos of PE and health instruction and shared that many young families are drawn to Calais because the board has prioritized having PE four days a week and health instruction one day a week. Cat shared pictures of Pre-Kindergarten kids engaging in their own version of Hands on Nature, led by Deb Cheringto, who comes in twice a month and takes the kids on a little adventures in the building. The final slide showed the demonstration of hard work and artistic expression by new music teacher. Brad Olson, who began a new tradition of a winter concert. Cat concluded by stating that the purpose of Calais Elementary is to educate the children and have a safe and connected community.

Cindy Gardner Morse asked about math and literacy scores. Cat shared that in grades 4-6, ELA scores are doing well in comparison to the SU and state, but there was more work to do in math. By comparison, Calais was slightly above average but the school wanted to set a higher bar. Barry Bernstein asked about the costs of wood chips. Cat said the budget showed only and an estimated figure based on trends.

Gus Seelig asked for other questions. Barry Bernstein asked for an update on the CO2 in classrooms. Katie Reed said it was a priority for the coming year to recheck the HVAC systems

and airflow, gather data and if needed, make changes to the system. Gayle Rand commended the Calais School Board and Scott Thompson for all the hard work this past school year. Scott Thompson shared that now that Act 46 has moved on, the next big thing at U-32 will be to look at school start times. On March 26, at 6 pm at U-32 he invited everyone come to the meeting to talk about this. In 2012, there were beginning steps in this direction, but it was met with resistance. Dot Naylor shared that she had posters about the meeting.

Gus Seelig shared that Articles 5 and 6 are on the ballot.

Drew Lamb spoke to recognize Chauntelle Eckhaus for her years of service on board. She was an extremely dedicated board member who served on committees and as Board Chair for several years through Act 46. In the tradition of Calais Elementary, the board presented Chauntelle with a bell and asked for a round of applause. Gus asked for a movement to adjourn. It was moved and seconded. All voted in favor. The meeting adjourned by consensus at 8:46 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Michele Tofel Murray  
Board Recording Secretary