

Calais Town School District Meeting Minutes

Approved by the Calais School Board

Tuesday March 5, 2019

Meeting called to order by the Calais Town Clerk, Judy Fitch Robert at 8:05am. Board in attendance: Katie Reed, Rick Kehne, Christopher Cadorette, Dorothy Naylor.

1. *Article 1: To elect a moderator for the year ensuing.*
 - a. The Calais Town Clerk called for nominations for a moderator.
 - b. **Chris Cadorette nominated Gus Seelig for Moderator. This was seconded from the floor.** No other nominations were made. **Vote in favor of Gus Seelig was unanimous.**
 - c. Moderator opened the meeting with announcements and a brief discussion of process.
 - i. Meeting is conducted under Robert's Rules of Order and there was a brief discussion about process
2. *Article 2: To Hear and act upon the report of the Town School Directors.*
 - a. The Vice Chair of the Calais Board, Katie Reed, introduced board members.
 - i. The Vice Chair then discussed the highlights of the budget to be voted on by Australian budget. Highlights were:
 1. Total proposed school budget for 2019-2020: \$1,970,738. This is a 3.49% expense change from the current year.
 2. It was noted that the numbers on this Warning as well as on the ballot are incorrect: the projected cost per equalized pupil is \$16,720 (not \$17,475), which is 5.08% higher than the current year (not 9.82%).
 3. The total number of teachers will be reduced by one (from six classroom teachers to five). However, staff costs will increase, primarily because the school has lost Title 1 federal funding that has in the past paid one staff member's salary.
 4. Student population trends projected by a company hired to study our demographics show continuing decline. However, what we have actually experienced is that the student numbers have remained stable for many years. We do have two younger grades with low numbers that are too small to be stand-alone classes.
 5. The residents of Calais are projected to see an increase of 4.2 cents on our tax rate. This translates to \$42/100,000 of residential value. This increase is calculated with four factors: the school budgets, the state tax rate, the property yield, and Calais's Common Level of Appraisal.
 - b. Principal Cat Fair presented a video about Calais School that was well received by those in attendance. The community members present commented that it should be shown to the Vermont legislature with the hope that they might see the quality of the small schools and children that they are putting at risk with the forced consolidation currently underway. Cat said that she will also post this video on the school's website and Facebook page.
 - c. Final Comments from the floor:
 - i. Barry Bernstein thanked the Board members for taking such a strong position against the forced consolidation.
 - ii. Barry asked that discussions around the forced consolidation remain civil.
 - iii. **The moderator called for a vote from the floor to accept the Director's Report. This was moved and seconded. The Floor vote in favor of accepting the report was unanimous.**

3. *Article 3: To transact any other business that may legally come before the meeting.*
 - a. No transactions moved.
4. **Article 4: To authorize the board of school directors to hold any audited fund balance as of June 30th, 2019 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.**
 - a. **Motion moved by Barry Bernstein and seconded from the floor. Vote unanimous.**
 - i. Discussion from the floor:
 1. Barry asked what would happen to the Fund Balance should the forced merger go forward. Dorothy Naylor responded that the board would act to ensure that the fund balance would be obligated to ensure that the fund balance would solely be expended on Calais School. She stated that the board would be taking action to direct this at the next warned Calais School Board meeting.
 2. Erica Heilman asked what the announcement by Judge Mello meant.
 - a. Scott Thompson explained that this was just one step and that the lawsuit has a long way to go. The ruling is not an indication about where the final decision will go.
 3. Denise Wheeler asked what the status of the U-32 budget vote was.
 - a. Scott noted that a meeting was held to figure out what would happen since budgets were not warned. They are looking into an April 9th meeting date if it is legal. By the end of the meeting, Scott said that a public vote would be warned for April 9th
 4. Article 4 was approved by unanimous vote.
5. **Article 5: To authorize the Board of Directors to borrow money in anticipation of the receipt of revenues of the school year.**
 - a. **Moved from the floor and seconded.**
 - i. Comment from the floor:
 1. Mac Gardner-Morse asked if we could consider borrowing the whole budget for the ensuing year.
 - ii. **Article 5 was approved by unanimous vote.**
6. *Article 6: To elect the following School Directors by Australian ballot:*
 - a. One (1) School Director two-year term
 - b. One (1) School Director Three-year term
7. *Article 7: To be voted on by Australian ballot: Shall the voters of the school district approve the school board to expend \$1,970,738 which is the amount the school board has determined to be necessary for the ensuing fiscal year? It is estimated that the proposed budget, if approved, will result in education spending is \$17,475/equalized pupil. This projected spending per equalized pupil is 9.82% higher than the spending for the current year.*
8. **Motion to adjourn: Moved and seconded at 8:46am The vote was unanimous in favor of adjournment.**

Minutes submitted by Rick Kehne, Board Clerk