

## Rochester Stockbridge Unified District Annual Meeting

Tuesday, May 22, 2018

7:00 pm

### APPROVED MINUTES

The legal voters of the Rochester-Stockbridge Unified District ("District"), comprised of the Towns of Rochester and Stockbridge are hereby notified and warned to meet in the Rochester High School Auditorium in Rochester Vermont on May 22, 2018 at 7:00 pm to conduct the following business:

Moderator Dan McKinley called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm and led the Pledge of Allegiance. Each School Board director introduced themselves-Carl Groppe, Jenny Austin, Janie Feinberg-Stockbridge; Amy Wildt, Ethan Bowen, Megan Payne-Rochester. Dan reviewed the Roberts Rules of Order and asked all to speak up when talking. We will vote by voice vote first, or show of hands if voice vote is not clear.

**Article 1:** To hear the reports of the School District, including the reports of the Board of School Directors, the District Treasurer, the Auditor and the Superintendent, and to take action with reference thereof. Robert moved the article, seconded. Amy Wildt expressed the Board's great appreciation to Frank Russell for all the work he has done on their behalf. Carl Groppe gave an excellent presentation that reviewed how the towns moved forward with the process of getting to where we are tonight from last August when the merger was first discussed. Topics touched on were educational opportunities, budget goals, administrative models, staffing, buildings, curriculum, and other opportunities. The budget adds money for special programs and inter campus transportation. He noted that there is some savings by planning joint experiences which reduces the transportation costs, and should reduce the local PTO fundraising by formalizing expenditures. The budget (which Carl reiterated is a transitional budget since we have no history to use yet) supports community engagement through larger all district events such as joint concerts, bigger band group. He noted that they want to become the school district that attracts families both neighbors and new. He also reviewed how "choice" works, since it is new for Rochester. The tuition dollars only pay tuition, no housing, food or other expenses. Families would have to cover those costs. At this time, there is again no historical basis for Rochester tuition numbers. Carl also noted that both Tuition and Supervisory Union assessments are a given. They cannot be changed, only other parts of the budget can be changed and continued with the review. There is a fund balance carryforward of \$181,639 that the board "gave back" in revenue. Local sources of tuition is about \$511,000 in revenue, but the TOPF line was left blank due to the specific wording of the trusts-we will need good legal advice on that. We still qualify for the small schools grant of \$237600.00 since we merged. Review continued with expenditures. Repairs and Maintenance for Rochester would include the heating system and plumbing, as well as roof repairs. The final review was of the tax page, and Carl explained that the total budget is \$4,251,494 of which \$3,249,849 will be raised by taxes which will put our taxes up approximately 3%.

Question asked if the fund balance overage could be put toward the building maintenance in the Rochester high school, but Carl explained that the board thought it would be better to keep it for overall use and they are hoping to have restricted funds (building reserve fund for both campuses) to plan for

repairs as the knowledge grows about the buildings and grounds. Question asked about Rochester's debt which is two bonds, one is \$40,000 paid down in 2022, the other is \$25,000 paid down in 2022 as well. Other questions asked regarding heat repairs, the expense line for "Story Lady" (this is mostly paid for through an SU budget grant), and the 5 year evaluation. Tim McDonald noted that on page 8 in the revenue, there is a mistake in the Subtitle Grant #1, \$73,000 is not included in the total. David Larcombe agreed, that this is a mistake and that the tax rate will be reduced due to this mistake. The board agreed that the evaluation will be tracked in several different ways. Discussion continued. Bruce Labs, Superintendent, explained that our SU has merged 8 districts into 4-Rochester-Stockbridge, Bethel-Royalton, Chelsea-Tunbridge, Hancock-Granville. There is a lot of structural building to be done. There will be a new SU board as of July 1, and they can start this work once they are all elected. There has been a lot of hard work over the past years, first with consolidating the two supervisory unions and then moving directly into merger work to comply with Act 46 and will continue for the next couple years. SPED, bussing and after school programs are all administered through the SU. The schools that have merged will enable us to continue receiving the small schools grant, and Bruce again noted that the SU works with in the Strategic Plan that was created.

Mason Wade asked if we should be voting a budget for two towns by a voice vote with only about 100 people in attendance. Frank noted that he put 14 different signs up throughout town emphasizing that the vote will happen tonight, and several people noted that it specifically said that in the warning posted in town and in the annual report. Voted in the affirmative, article 1 passes.

Article 2: Shall the voters of the School District approve the School board to expend \$4,251,494.00, which is the amount the School Board has determined to be necessary for the ensuing fiscal year? It is estimated that this proposed budget, if approved will result in education spending of \$17,644.01 per equalized pupil. This projected spending per equalized pupil is 7.7% higher than spending for the current year in Rochester and 7.6% higher than the current year in Stockbridge. Kathy Burns moved the article, Bill Edgerton seconded. Discussion: Mason asked if we need a certain percentage of voters to pass the vote. No, we do not. Motion to close discussion and call the question made by Julie Groppe, seconded by Martha. Voted in the affirmative, article 2 passes.

Article 3: Shall the School District establish a reserve fund to be funded from time to time from its accumulated fund balance, if any, and to be used to fund, in whole or in part, future capital improvements to and maintenance of the District's facilities in Stockbridge in such amounts as the District Board of School Directors determines appropriate? Robert Meagher moved the article, seconded by Judy Jensen. No discussion, voted in the affirmative, article 3 passes.

Article 4: Shall the School District establish a reserve fund to be funded from time to time from its accumulated fund balance, if any, and to be used to fund, in whole or in part, future capital improvements to and maintenance of the District's facilities in Rochester in such amounts as the District Board of School Directors determines appropriate? Robert moved the article, Judy seconded. Discussion: Barb DeHart if future fund balances would be applied in a manner other than back to revenue? Amy responded that the board would decide where to apply any balance. No further discussion. Voted in the affirmative, article 4 passes.

Article 5: Shall the School District establish a reserve fund to be funded from time to time from its accumulated fund balance, if any, and to be used to fund, in whole or in part, student secondary tuition expenses in such amounts as the District Board of School Directors determines appropriate? Robert moved the article, Rebecca seconded. Andy West asked if a student moved into town that we were not expecting and tuition would need to be paid if the funds would come from this fund, which it would. Carl noted that he believes the buildings should come first. Voted in the affirmative, article 5 passes.

Article 6: Shall the voters authorize the School Board to borrow by issuance of bonds or notes, or establishing a line of credit, not in excess of anticipated revenue for the upcoming school year? Robert moved the article, Martha seconded. No discussion. Voted in the affirmative, article 6 passes.

Article 7: To transact any other business proper to come before the meeting: Article moved and seconded. Judy noted that this was the most informative school meeting in years! She is so hopeful with this board in place and wanted to express that. Robert asked that in the future possibly bussing from one campus to the other for meetings.

Martha made motion to adjourn, seconded by Dick White at 8:45 pm. So voted.

Respectfully submitted,

Joanne McDonnell