

BRANDON TOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT ANNUAL MEETING
MAR. 2, 2015
Neshobe School - Forest Dale

Moderator Art Doty called the annual Brandon Town School District Annual Meeting to order at 8:36 P.M. Attending the meeting were school board members Chairman Lisa Kenyon, Erin Gallivan, Devon Fuller, and Debra Boyce, Clerk Sue Gage and an unknown number of registered voters as several people left following the town meeting. Absent was school board member Mike Lufkin. The following business was then transacted:

Article I. To hear the reports of the Brandon Town School District Officers.

The reports are included in the Annual Town Report. Bernie Carr made a motion to accept the reports as presented in the Town Report and Maria Ammatuna seconded the motion. Motion was approved.

Article II. To hear a presentation by the School Board of its recommended budget for FY2015/2016.

Chair Lisa Kenyon introduced the school board members and Principal Judi Pulsifer. Ms. Kenyon stated that the board with Ms. Pulsifer have worked hard to be fiscally responsible and provide children's needs. One of the biggest challenges this year was the state mandated pre-school.

Deb Boyce spoke about specific reductions the board made in the budget to offset the increases due to the state-mandated pre-school program. Taxes will increase \$0.02, which is \$20 per year on a \$100,000 home. The board offered an early retirement incentive to six professionals. One accepted, and that position will be scaled back in the upcoming school year. The budget was also reduced by the elimination of one para-educator. Other budget reductions include reduced funding for the Soar program, and reduced math and reading intervention positions.

Erin Gallivan spoke about mandatory pre-school. Neshobe has had a pre-k program for 11 years funded through Title I federal funds. The legislatures mandated pre-k beginning in July of 2016, but the board felt it would be fiscally responsible to begin adding the pre-k programs into the budget for next year. The board also altered two existing positions so that they can get funded with Title I funds which funded pre-k in the past. The board is trying to stay ahead of the mandate so that the taxpayers are not hit all at once with the mandate. Moving the pre-k program into the general fund budget added \$190,000 to the budget that we haven't had in the past.

Devon touted Neshobe School, and spoke of the programs that we have at Neshobe. We have a second language program, an art program and a music program. Neshobe has a 17 to 1 ratio of students to teachers. The enrollment and ratios stay steady at Neshobe. RNESU has consolidated in many areas, such as bussing and special education which has saved tax dollars. Neshobe and RNESU do an excellent job when it comes to the fiscal side of education.

Bill Orth questioned whether adding additional students from the other area small schools would affect the budgets at Neshobe. What is Neshobe able to handle? Principal Judi Pulsifer stated that we have not been approached by any of the small schools and do not have enough information to answer the question. Judy believes Neshobe could physically house an additional 60 - 70 students fairly easily.

Jan Ripley stated that Neshobe once had 511 kids in the school. Bernie Carr stated that in the late 80's there were 524 kids which is the maximum according to Judi Pulsifer.

Wayne Rausenberger asked for clarification on the cost of the Pre-K program. Mr. Rausenberger then spoke about a Promises to America program, four year grant, to build an early education program in the state. The grant is for four years, and then there is nothing. Mr. Rausenberger encouraged the school board to sit down with our Representatives in Montpelier to address unfunded mandates such as these.

Jennifer Philo wanted to commend the board for all the work they did getting information out to voters.

Jeremy MacLachlan asked for clarification on the teacher student ratio at Neshobe. Ms. Pulsifer believes that the ratio is 1-15, with 8.2 para-educators in support of 20 teachers. Mr. MacLachlan then asked about the increase in workmen's compensation insurance. Ms. Gallivan stated that this is based on an average. Mr. MacLachlan requested that the board monitor accidents to minimize workmen's comp claims. Mr. MacLachlan then asked about RNESU Central Office expenditures and whether the board felt we were getting a good value from the services. Lisa Kenyon stated that the Central Office budget was actually reduced for the upcoming budget year.

Article III. To fix the compensation of the Brandon Town School District Officers.

Bernie Carr moved that the compensation of officers remains the same, Charlie Jakiela seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Article IV. To authorize the Board of School Directors to borrow money in anticipation of taxes to meet the necessary expenses of the Brandon Town School District.

Bob Ripley moved to accept, seconded by Richard Baker. The motion passed.

Article V. To do any other business proper to be done when met.

The meeting was recessed at 9:01 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Arthur Doty
Moderator

Louis Faivre
BCA Chair

Susan Gage
Town Clerk