

Town of Royalton School District  
Annual School Meeting Minutes  
South Royalton School Gymnasium  
March 6, 2017 at 6:30 p.m.

Allison Fulcher, school moderator, called the meeting to order with a Pledge of Allegiance and noted Roberts Rules of Order to be followed. Reading from the official warning: **The legal voters of the Royalton Town School District are hereby warned and notified to meet in the South Royalton School Gymnasium in South Royalton Village, on Monday March 6, 2017 at 6:30 p.m.**

**Article I: To elect by ballot the following school district officers:**

**A. A moderator for a term of one year and B. Three school directors, one for a term of three years, one for a term of two years and one to complete a two year term with one remaining. Note, voting on Article I will be by Australian ballot and the polls will be open from 8:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, March 7, 2017.**

**Article II: To hear and act upon the report of the school district officers.**

Motion moved and seconded: discussion?

Chris Mabey, school director asked table to introduce themselves. Included: Bruce Lab, superintendent; Donna Benoit, finance; Christine Hudson, school director; Jeff Barry, school director; Eunice Gavin, school director and Karmen Bascom, clerk. Chris Mabey reminded people that there would be a vote next month regarding act 46 and encouraged townspeople to attend upcoming meetings and vote on April 11. Mabey said school is an asset and both enrollment and budget requests are stable. Also they have received grant from Department of Housing and Community. Questions? None. Moderator calls for vote. **Motion carried.**

**Article III: Shall the voters of the school district approve the school board to expend \$5,811,404.00 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 \$14,775.92 per equalized pupil. This projected spending per equalized pupil is .13% higher than spending for current year. Moved and seconded.**

Mabey noted tax rate would go down, even with the .13% per pupil increase. Honigford, drawing everyone's attention to the Power Point presentation discussed a PowerPoint slide and explained that the school has to make assumptions because the Department of Education does not give us all of our figures before town meeting. Also, revenues down by roughly \$500,000 because the state now gives the money right to the union. In turn, expenditures are down. Fund balance updates included a building reserve of \$218,890 and a foodservice balance of \$24,579. Director Smith urged all to vote in favor of the unionization.

Floor: Jenny Hewitt wondered if it is a good idea to have money in reserve once we consolidate. Chris Mabey said the money is for Royalton School only, but in reality, consolidation would mean all schools would need to take care of whole union. Chris Hudson opined the decisions for future building reserve funds would have to be decided moving forward.

Floor: Dorothy Chap Rikert ask to hear more about the Director of Technologies, questioning the reasoning behind Royalton's \$26,459.00 portion, noting it appeared to be 25% of a ten school union. Mabey and Honigford explained it would be a supervisory wide role including a technologies program partially funded by grants in order to bring technology into the classrooms, continue teacher training and streamline costs. Moderator Fulcher conducts a floor poll. **Motion carried.**

**Article IV: To act upon the following question: Shall the voters of the Royalton Town School district approve the transfer of a sum not to exceed \$50,000 from any general fund balance remaining from the 2016-2017 school year to the building reserve fund? Motion moved and seconded. Discussion? None. Motion carried.**

**Article V: To transact any other business proper to come before the meeting?**

Honigford thanked Chris Mabey for serving 3 ½ years on the board. Applause. Donna Benoit, business manager thanked for her sixteen years of careful and conservative service. More applause.

Honigford and Bridgette Barry, Act 46 study committee members presented the plan approved by State Board of Education to be voted on April 11, 2017. They explained a successful state merger by July 1, 2017, would benefit us through decreases in tax rates and other state sponsored incentives. But, if we don't act, the state may eventually define our structure; eliminating grants and incentives. Continuing, they noted the new structure would allow Royalton, Bethel and Rochester to keep their pre-K through 5 children, turning Bethel into the middle school for all three towns, while Royalton would become the high school.

Floor: Concerns over structural limitations, loss of jobs, transportation creating unhealthy carbon footprints, lack of school choice and closing of schools were voiced. Primary concern appeared to be the possibility of one school voting the merger down, negatively affecting the unionization. Positive notes included many additional AP course offerings, extra-curricular courses, experiential learning opportunities, a specialized middle school program and better equipped special education staff members. Superintendent Labs explained the strategic plan was put together using feedback from town.

Floor: Current and past students were divided on concerns. One attributed shrinking class size to educational and learning deficiencies, while another felt they were being looked at as numbers. Cameron Kimball questioned the statistical practicality of a voting structure allowing all three towns the same number of voices given their disproportionate student enrollment.

Floor: Tim Murphy strongly opposed the merger while Dorothy Chap Rikert asked where the projected budget figures were. Donna Britch wondered about money for uniforms, while Gaylynn Huyghebaert cautioned that this was a big decision for all of us.

Motion to adjourn was seconded and accepted by majority.

Voters in attendance: 115  
Voters on checklist: 2,166

Respectfully submitted,

Karmen Bascom, clerk

Karmen Bascom

Allison Fulcher, school moderator

AF

Joshua "Bushrod" Powers, justice of the peace

Joshua Powers

ROYALTON TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE  
This 20<sup>th</sup> day of March 2017  
at 12 o'clock and 00 minutes PM  
Received for record the instrument of which the foregoing is a true  
copy.  
Attest: Rita Hill Asst. Town Clerk