

Town of Mason, New Hampshire  
Mason School District  
Minutes of the 2012 Deliberative Session  
February 4, 2012

The First Session, The Deliberative of the Mason School District was held in the Mason Elementary School Multi – Purpose Room at 13 Darling Hill Road Mason, New Hampshire on February 4, 2012.

At 0857h Moderator Schwenk asked School Board Members to take their place at the head table. All voters and non - voters were asked to wear appropriate credentials and to be seated after signing in with the Supervisors of the Checklist located at the back table. Non - voters were asked to be seated to the Moderator's left in front row.

There were 48 voters and 5 non - voters present.

Moderator Schwenk recognized the efforts of the many individuals to prepare for this meeting including School District Personnel, Supervisors of the Checklist, Physical Plant Staff, Police, Fire and Emergency Personnel.

Moderator Schwenk reviewed safety procedure calling attention to the Emergency Exits as one entered the Mulch-Purpose Room, the Exit Door to the Moderator left and up the stairs to the Kitchen and out that Exit Doors.

There were no requests for Interpretative Services.

**Roll Call and Introductions:**

Chairperson Robert Hemmer – Present  
Vice Chairperson Dr. Donald Hodges – Present  
School Board Member John Diefenbach – Present  
School Board Member Robert Doyle – Present  
School Board Member Stephanie Syre-Hager – Present  
School Board Secretary and District Clerk Becky Partridge – Present  
Superintendent of Schools – James McCormick – Present  
Elementary School Principal and Student Services Director Kathryn Wyman Present  
MRI Consultant Mike O'Neill- Present  
Business Services – Brenda Wiley – Present  
School District Treasurer Sue Wagoner – Present  
School District Counsel Dean Eggert – Present

**Procedure:**

When directing a question or comment please use the microphone in front of the head table. All questions will be directed to the Chairperson. Once recognized please state your name. All amendments / substantive motions are to be made in writing and signed by the maker and seconder. Paper and pen can be found at the head table.

**Call to Order:**

Catherine Schwenk called the First Session of the School District Meeting to order at 0900h.

**Moderator Schwenk:** By the powers vested in me as Moderator of the Mason School District I now call to order the First Session, The Deliberative Session of the Mason School District.

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**Opening Exercises:**

Moderator Schwenk was honored to present at School and Town meetings Mason students who excel in Academics, The Arts, or Athletics by asking them to take part in the opening exercises.

This year The Pledge of Allegiance To The Flag of The United States of America was led by Fifth Grader Zachary Partridge. Zachary's favorite subject is science where he likes to learn about life sciences and he also has a passion for reading. Outside of school he is the Team's Goalie and Alternate Captain for the Fitchburg Twin City Hawks Ice Hockey Team. Please rise.

The first business in order was the reading of the warrant. There was no objection to waiving the reading of the warrant.

*On motion of Chairperson Hemmer, seconded by John Diefenbach it was **VOTED** that the following individuals be permitted to speak as needed on School District Affairs: Superintendent of Schools James McCormick, Principal and Student Services Director Kathryn Wyman, MRI Consultant Mike O'Neill, and School District Counsel Dean Eggert.*

*On Motion of Chairperson Hemmer, seconded by John Diefenbach it was **VOTED** to place on the official ballot Article 2, to accept the reports of agents, auditors, committees, or officers chosen as printed in the Annual Mason School District Report.*

*On Motion of Chairperson Hemmer, seconded by John Diefenbach to place on the official ballot Article 3.*

Shall The Mason School District raise and appropriate as an operating budget, not including appropriations by special warrant articles and other appropriations voted separately, the amounts set forth on the budget posted with the warrant, or as amended by vote of the first session, for the purpose set forth therein, totaling \$2,981,373.00? Should this article be defeated, the default budget shall be \$3,076,296.00 which is the same as last year, with certain adjustments required by previous action of the Mason School District, or by law, or the governing body may hold one special meeting, in accordance with RSA 40:13 X and XVI, to take up the issue of a revised operating budget only. (The School Board Recommends this Warrant Article)

The Moderator noted there was a typographical error on the motion read by the Chairperson. The word "body" should follow the word "governing". *It was **VOTED** to amend by inserting "body" following "governing" in the text of the main motion read by the Chairperson. Note:* This was correct in the hand out and warrant.

**Discussion:** Chairperson Hemmer noted that Attachment 1 (Tax Rate Impact, Warrant, and Proposed 2012/ 2013 Budget) has been reviewed seven times before this meeting and if this budget fails it will go to the Default budget (attachment 2) which is higher because it does not reflect the substantial decreases in the line items that we can control. Chairperson Hemmer explained to the public that 78% of the budget we do not control, including but not limited to items such as Tuition and Insurance increases.

**John Bryan** asked if the default budget is used does the money not spent go into the General Fund

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and doesn't that potentially mean a large savings. Chairperson Hemmer said yes it does but that is taking a chance that the money is not spent, in past years we have returned money but that is a risk.

**Connie LaCasse** stated that there appears to be places in the budget that still can be reduced and an example there is \$1,200.00 towards postage. Chairperson Hemmer stated that we are always trying to reduce those costs but every time something needs to be mailed it costs money.

**John Lewicke** stated that if he remembers correctly our contract can be renegotiated with Milford after a certain amount of time. Chairperson Hemmer stated that it can after eight years. After a short discussion on the exact time of the contract the Board stated that they would confirm how long.

**Garth Fletcher** clarified to the public that if they wanted to review the budget line by line that is their right at this meeting. Chairperson Hemmer stated that that was correct, however the time for that was also at the last seven times this budget was reviewed. Chairperson Hemmer urged the public to participate more in earlier reviews.

The Moderator recognized Counsel Dean Eggert. **Mr. Eggert** clarified that if the voters choose to reduce a line item which is then taken off the bottom line, the District can still move funds from other line items to cover those costs. This is called Transfer of Appropriations.

**Ted Hauri** stated that there seems to be a high cost of administration for such a small school. He asked if the school has investigated combining such services with the town to reduce costs. Chairperson Hemmer stated that yes but we are only one part of the equation. Chairperson Hemmer stated that unfortunately economy of scale works against us. There are some costs that are the same whether you have 10,000 students or 200 students. Chairperson Hemmer reminded the public that this is a District not just an Elementary School and that we are responsible for our students in Milford as well.

**Ted Hauri** stated that employees should take more personal responsibility over their health, dental, and retirement funds and perhaps there would be more savings for the district. Chairperson Hemmer stated that the retirement fund is state mandated and as for the other the District diligently reviews different options to get the best value and that because we work at a group rate we actually can provide such benefits at a better rate than if they were individuals. Ted Hauri suggested next year there be some sort of mark next to the line items that we can control and those that we cannot so the tax payers can understand it better.

**Mike McGuire** stated that he would much rather get things electronically. He stated that if we cannot control 78% of the budget we need to keep what we can control as tight as we can.

**Tim Leak** stated that at the last budget hearing it was stated that a full time teacher was going to be replaced by two part time teachers and that also there was going to be a discussion on Pre-School and Kindergarten. Chairperson Hemmer responded that this is not the forum to discuss who is hired and that they are not related to the budget. Such discussions are done at a Regular School Board meeting. Chairperson Hemmer stated that yes replacing a full time employee with two part time employees is a cost saving on the budget, however those decisions were educationally based not financially.

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**Patricia Cross** stated that she thought the next school board meeting was following this meeting and that the Pre-School / Kindergarten issue would be discussed. Chairperson Hemmer said yes there is a meeting following this session however the only thing being reviewed would be the payroll and manifests. The Pre-School / Kindergarten issue can be raised at the School Board meeting in March.

*On Motion of Nancy Richards, duly seconded, it was **VOTED** to move the previous question which stopped debate on the amended budget article.*

**Moderator Schwenk** put the question of the budget as amended to the voters. *It was **VOTED** to place on the official ballot Article 3 – Shall The Mason School District raise and appropriate as an operating budget, not including appropriations by special warrant articles and other appropriations voted separately, the amounts set forth on the budget posted with the warrant, or as amended by vote of the first session, for the purpose set forth therein, totaling \$2,981,373.00? Should this article be defeated, the default budget shall be \$3,076,296.00 which is the same as last year, with certain adjustments required by previous action of the Mason School District, or by law, or the governing body may hold one special meeting, in accordance with RSA 40:13 X and XVI, to take up the issue of a revised operating budget only.*

**Note:** The amendment to the budget article only references the typographical error amended to the article, there was no amendment to the dollar amount of this article.

*On Motion of Dr. Donald Hodges, duly seconded the meeting adjourned Sine Dai at 0937h.*

Respectfully Submitted,

Becky Partridge  
School District Clerk