



**SPECIAL SCHOOL BOARD MINUTES**  
**WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 10, 2007**

PAGE 1

Present: Ginny Burley, Chair; Rob LaClair, Vice-Chair; Allen Gilbert, Clerk; Mark Berry, Susan Chickering, Tom Williams.

Also Present: Keith Gerritt, Principal; Tom McKone, HS Assistant Principal; Robbe Brook, Superintendent; Lori Bibeau, WCSU Business Manager; community members Ben & Dot Naylor, Mary Ellen Hill, Erin McDermott, Wes Cate, Michael Levine, Ed Deegan, and faculty/staff members Kathie Ball, Kenneth Saxe, Kathy Segar, Diane Parrott and Peg Wilmott.

1.0. The meeting was called to order at 6:10 p.m. by Chair, Ginny Burley.

1.1. All guests were welcomed.

Principal Keith Gerritt brought forward a non-agenda item concerning a request from a local agent of the State Farm Insurance Co. to provide support for a local sports program, in return for limited advertising on banners that the company would post. The company would also provide trophies, and the local representative would want to be present as part of the awards ceremonies.

**Allen Gilbert moved and Tom Williams seconded a motion to table discussion of the request, given that this could turn out to be a long discussion and the focus of the special meeting is to be on the FY 08 budget. Approval was unanimous.**

2.0. Discussion/Action Agenda

2.1. Finalize FY08 Budget Draft #3

Finance manager Lori Bibeau began the budget discussion with a general overview of tax rates in the various towns, taking into consideration the common level of appraisal, statewide tax rates, and proposed elementary and high school budgets. Spreadsheets showed tax rate changes in each of the five U-32 towns. Lori Bibeau then moved to a chart showing historical trends of U-32 education spending, up to the two proposed budget scenarios for this year, the first showing an increase of 4.86% and the second showing an increase of 4.1%.

Community members present expressed a range of opinions about the budget proposals. Some community members felt the per-pupil spending increases were too high; others felt the block grant increase of 5.54% justified higher spending than the board was considering.

Keith Gerritt then led the board through a discussion of the development of the different budgets since the budget-building process started in the fall. He noted that he started with a budget that increased 6.5%, then at the Finance Committee's urging reduced it to 5.98%, and then at the Full Board's urging reduced it to 4.8%. He also created a budget for discussion that would reduce the increase to 4.1%. He explained that items already negotiated, such as salaries, dictate at least a 4.0% increase. Tonight he is recommending the budget that results in a 4.86% per-pupil spending increase, which translates to a 4.78% budget increase.

**After extensive discussion, Rob LaClair moved and Mark Berry seconded a motion to approve a budget of \$11,916,712, which represents a per-pupil spending increase of 4.86%. More discussion ensued, mainly around future trends.**

**The motion passed 5-1.**

2.2. Approve U-32 District Warning

Keith Gerritt distributed a draft of the U-32 District Warning for town meeting.

**Tom Williams moved and Rob LaClair seconded a motion to approve the draft warning, with the correct figure for the budget amount to be inserted.**

**The motion passed.**

3.0. Board Comments – None.

**4.0. Rob LaClair moved and Tom Williams seconded a motion to adjourn.**

**By consensus, the meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.**

Allen Gilbert  
Board Clerk