

**TOWN OF GRISWOLD
SPECIAL TOWN BUDGET MEETING
JUNE 17, 2014**

The Special Town Budget Meeting held at the Griswold Middle School Cafeteria, 267 Slater Avenue, Griswold, CT was called to order by First Selectman Kevin Skulczyck at 6:30pm. Present were Selectmen Steve Mikutel, Philip Anthony, Superintendent of Schools, Paul Smith, Board of Finance Chairman, Steve Merchant, Registrar of Voters, George Kennedy, Cathlene Briody and approx. 100 interested townspeople.

NOMINATION FOR MODERATOR:

Leona Sharkey was nominated moderator by Brian Baker, 2nd by Steve Merchant. Nominations were closed.

**VOTE UNANIMOUS
LEONA SHARKEY WAS DULY CHOSEN MODERATOR**

WARNING was read by Town Clerk, Valerie Pudvah.

1. To consider and take action on the Board of Education Budget for FY 2015 in the amount of \$25,160,300 as recommended by the Board of Finance at their Special Meeting held on June 5, 2014. Notice and warning is further given that the question of whether to approve the amount of the proposed appropriation, as set by the Special Town Budget Meeting be adjourned to a date set by the Special Town Budget Meeting, such date to be not less than seven (7) days no more than fourteen (14) days after the Special Town Budget Meeting, for a **YES** or **NO** vote on the Optical Scan Voting Machines. The following polling places will be used:

DISTRICT #1 Griswold Town, 28 Main Street, Griswold, CT

DISTRICT #2 Pachaug Town Hall, 879 Voluntown Road, Griswold, CT

2. **Resolved:** That the Date and Hours of the Vote on the appropriation proposed by the Special Town Budget Meeting, shall be Tuesday June 24, 2014 between the hours of 6:00am and 8:00pm.

Motion to authorize made by Norman Sylvestre.

Moderator Leona Sharkey opened the meeting up for discussion, she noted that those that would like to speak should come forward, state their name and address for the record.

Many of the students came forward to voice their opinion on how the music and drama dept. have given them the confidence and ability to get up and speak today. Many of the students noted that they enrolled in the Griswold School system because of the great program that is here. One gentleman noted that he moved from Norwich so that his daughter could enroll in the school system so that she could participate in the program. Also, many Griswold Alumni spoke on how the program has affected them in their lives today and some have even moved back here so their children could attend Griswold schools.

Nick Tamburrino questioned why the budget was reduced by such an amount between referendum 2 and referendum 3 and is there a process to add money back into the budget. Chairman Steve Merchant noted that at this point there is nothing that can be done. He noted that it is "too little too late" at this point. Mr. Tamburrino asked how the board knew what the people wanted if the budget gets voted down. He wanted to know if a question could be added to the referendum, "too high or too low", so the board could have feed back on what the people want. Steve noted that it can be done in future referendums but not on this one because it is not on the call of the meeting. Moderator Sharkey explained the process for adding a question on a ballot per the Town Attorney's consultation.

Terry Cholewa wanted to know if tonight's call is not moved to a referendum, why can't 2 advisory questions be added tonight to this referendum. Selectman Skulczyck noted that it could not happen tonight because it is

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not in the call of the meeting. He also stated that if this meeting does not move the referendum on the 24th then a Selectmen's meeting will be set for the 19th to set the date for the 26th. Mrs. Cholewa also questioned if the referendum fails, at the next referendum will the two advisory questions be added to the ballot and can the Board of Finance legally add more money to the budget. Kevin Skulczyck answered yes to both questions. Selectman Steve Mikutel left the meeting at 7:20pm for a prior engagement.

Joann Flynn questioned when is the next Board of Finance meeting if this budget is voted down? A meeting would probably be scheduled within 48 hours of the vote. Also, she wanted to know if parents can voice concerns again at that meeting. Steve Merchant stated that if it is a Special Meeting opinions cannot be heard but at a Regular Meeting they can.

Peter Dorff spoke on the fact that everybody says that the referendums are not advertised enough. Mr. Dorff noted that the website has improved and all agenda and minutes are all posted on the town website and urges everyone to use it.

A student questioned what students can do, to get the word out about an upcoming referendum. A question was asked of Paul Smith, Superintendent of Schools of what is allowed in the schools to get the word out about a referendum. Mr. Smith said that as of 2013, new legislation for ConnectEd system was limited and they cannot inform parents about upcoming referendum by phone calls, emails, or text messages. The newsletter that is sent out on Mondays is not limited to this but this needs to be considered a regular newsletter. The school cannot use any technology or supplies that was purchased with taxpayers dollars to inform students, parents to vote. Have to be very careful on how it is done.

Jim Barnie spoke on the fact that everybody needs to get involved at the meetings and to participate in what is going on.

A few more students and alumni got up to speak on behalf of the music and drama dept. as well as items that are to be cut if this referendum passes.

Moderator Sharkey asked for any further discussion, hearing none, Norman Sylvestre made motion to close the discussion, 2nd by Steve Merchant. Moderator asked for a show of hands to approve item #1 and #2. Moderator Sharkey appointed Registrar of Voters, George Kennedy and Cathlene Briody to do the count.

YES 68
NO 20
VOTE UNANIMOUS
MOTION PASSED.

Motion to adjourn made by Norman Sylvestre, 2nd by Steve Merchant. All in favor, aye. Motion carries.

Meeting duly adjourned at 9:00pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Valerie Pudvah
Town Clerk

