

Bethlehem Elementary School Budget Hearing -
2/18/2025

Present: Board Chair Bob Weir; Members Dr. James Noyes, Sarah Storella, Margaret Hocking; Business Manager Toni Butterfield; Board Clerk Tana LeClair; BES Principal Bryan Smith, Superintendent Kate Segal

Public: Chris Jensen, Cheryl Jensen, Nancy Strand, Michael Bruno, Tammy Reardon, Paul Nandico

Budget Hearing Commenced at 5:30pm

Warrant Articles:

Article 01 - Officers

To choose all necessary officers for the School District for the ensuing year:

One (1) School Board member from the town of Bethlehem for a term of three (3) years.

No discussion.

Article 02 - Reports

To hear the reports of Agents, Auditors, Committees, or Officers heretofore chosen, and pass any vote relating thereto.

No discussion.

Article 03 - Operating Budget

To see if the Bethlehem Elementary School District will vote to raise and appropriate the amount of \$3,854,009 for the support of schools, for the payment of salaries for the school district officials and agents, and for the payment for the statutory obligations of the district. This article does not include appropriations contained in special or individual articles addressed separately. (Majority vote required.)

Recommended by the Bethlehem School Board.

Discussion: Questions were asked for clarification on a few line items in the presented budget. Tammy Reardon asked if the line items for Chromebooks and a new server would be an annual cost; the answer was no, and that it would be several years before a similar cost might come up again. Nancy Strand asked if, in the event that Lisbon withdraws from the SAU, would this increase the cost to the other schools in the SAU? The answer was yes, but

that it would not affect the current proposed budget.

Article 04 - Teacher Collective Bargaining

To see if the school district will vote to approve the cost items included in the collective bargaining agreement reached between the {GOVERNING BODY} and the {UNION} which calls for the following increases and benefits at the current staffing level:

Fiscal Year	Estimated Increase
2025-26	\$79,357
2026-27	\$77,520
2027-28	\$73,258

And further to raise and appropriate \$79,357 for the current fiscal year, such sum representing the additional costs attributable to the increase in salaries and benefits required by the new agreement over those that would be paid at current staffing levels. (Majority vote required.)

Recommended by the Bethlehem School Board.

Discussion: Paul Nandico wanted to clarify the possibility that not passing article #4 might mean difficulty in retaining current teachers.

Article 05 - Special Meeting

Shall the school district, if WARRANT ARTICLE #4 is defeated, authorize the governing body to call one special meeting, at its option, to address WARRANT ARTICLE #4 cost items only? (Majority vote required.)

Recommended by the Bethlehem School Board.

No discussion.

Article 06 - Transfer to Special Education Trust

To see if the school district will vote to raise and appropriate up to the sum of \$50,000 to be added to the Special Education Capital Reserve Fund previously established on March 21, 1989. This sum to come from June 30 fund balance available for transfer on July 1. No amount to be raised from taxation. (Majority vote required.)

Recommended by the Bethlehem School Board.

No discussion.

Article 07 - Transfer to School Facilities Trust Fund

To see if the school district will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$25,000 to be added to the School Facilities Maintenance Capital Reserve Fund previously established March 22, 1994. This sum to come from June 30 fund balance available for transfer on July 1. No amount to be raised from taxation. (Majority vote required.)

Recommended by the Bethlehem School Board.

Discussion: Discussion was had about work the school building needs funding for, including repainting window frames and the entrance to the building. Tammy Reardon shared that the entry to the building is original, from before the fire that led to the current school being built. The Board mentioned that they would also be looking into a lead grant in case of issues with the paint.

Article 08 - Planning Committee

Shall the Bethlehem School District, pursuant to RSA 195, create a planning committee to study the advisability of the collaborate with the Lafayette and Profile School Districts to become one District of SAU 35.

Discussion: Discussion was had about the necessity of this article being on the ballot, as it would not cost money; it would just require information gathering. It was decided that this article would be scrapped.

Article 09 - Other Business

To transact any other business that may legally come before this meeting.

No discussion.

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 6:48pm; the motion passed.