

**2026 School District Meeting Minutes**  
**March 17th, 2026**

The Bethlehem School District held their annual election and meeting on March 17, 2026. The District Moderator, Mary Lou Krambeer, announced the polls open at 7:00pm and declared the polls closed at 7:30pm. During that time, 78 registered voters of the towns of Bethlehem cast their official non-partisan ballots. Tana LeClair, School District Clerk, and Supervisors of the Checklist Linda Goldstein, John Miller, & Julie Seely, participated in aiding the Moderator in overseeing the voting process as well as properly managing the checklists designated for school district use. The District Moderator announced the commencement of the 2026 School District Meeting at 7:30pm.

Mary Lou Krambeer opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance and then introduced CJ Watson, Superintendent; Toni Butterfield, Business Manager; Dawn Aldrich, Assistant to the Business Administrator; Bryan Smith, Bethlehem Elementary School Principal; Bethlehem Elementary School Technology teacher Stefan Shapiro; Board Clerk Tana LeClair; and community member Scott Caisse. She also introduced board members Bob Weir, James Noyes, Erin Campbell, Margaret Hocking, and Sarah Storella. She asked any present Bethlehem Elementary School teachers and staff to stand to acknowledge their hard work and dedication to the school community. Lastly, she explained the rules of the meeting.

Article 01: To choose all necessary Officers for the School District ensuing year: Two (2) School Board Member from the town of Bethlehem for a term of three (3) years.

**School Board Member: Susan Greenlaw with 74 votes is declared elected.**  
**School Board Member: Erin Campbell with 76 votes is declared elected.**  
**District Moderator: Mary Lou Krambeer with 10 votes is declared elected.**  
**District Clerk: Tana LeClair with 27 votes is declared elected.**

Article 02: To hear the reports of Agents, Auditors, Committees, or Officers heretofore chosen, and pass any vote relating thereto.

**Motion by Bob Weir to bring forward and accept Article 02 as written.**  
**Motion seconded by Paul Greenlaw. Voice vote in affirmative. Article 02 passed.**

Article 03: To see if the Bethlehem Elementary School District will vote to raise and appropriate the amount of \$4,192,589 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

The Board explained that the annual book had the amount of \$4,237,751 for article 03. Because of the reduction of one paraprofessional the amount that was posted on the warrant and that the motion will be made on is \$4,192,589.

Rich Southwell requested a breakdown of line item 2410 in the budget, specifically about principal salary vs. retirement payout; he also requested information about how many years of payout were expected. Toni Butterfield shared that there are two years of advance payout, at a total of \$5,000 each year. Mr. Southwell recommended that the board might want to consider planning ahead for future eventualities like this.

Chris McGrath asked how much his tax rate would go up per thousand. The answer is \$0.46 per thousand, if only taking the Bethlehem Elementary School budget into consideration.

Patrick Doughty asked how much of the budget is projected to be unspent at the end of the year; the hope is ~\$187,000, with ~\$100,000 to be distributed amongst the three upcoming trust fund articles.

**Motion by Patrick Doughty to reduce the budget by \$50,000, for a new total of \$4,142,589. The motion was seconded by Rich Southwell.**

**Hand vote taken to adjust Article 03:**

**23 Yay**

**62 Nay**

**Motion does not pass.**

Stefan Shapiro made a recommendation to the board to earmark \$5,000 of any unencumbered funds for teacher technology funding.

**Motion by Bob Weir to bring forward and accept Article 03 as written. Motion seconded by Paul Greenlaw. Voice vote in affirmative. Article 03 passed.**

**Motion made by Megan Schleck to move with no further consideration on Article 01, 02, and 03. Motion seconded by Padraic Foran. Voice vote in affirmative. Motion passed.**

Article 04: To see if the District will vote to authorize the school board to enter into a long-term lease/purchase agreement containing an escape clause, pursuant to RSA 33:7-e, in the amount of \$1,328,737 (gross budget) to finance the purchase and installation of energy efficiency equipment and further to finance building improvements related to installation, purpose, or operation of such equipment, said lease to be for a term of 10 years with estimated annual payments of \$161,434. The first annual payment will be raised and appropriated as part of the 2027-2028 annual meeting. (Simple Majority vote required)  
Recommended by the Bethlehem School District

**Motion by Bob Weir to amend Article 04 to reduce the total of the proposed gross budget of the lease/purchase agreement by \$31,000, bringing the amount to \$1,297,737; this would bring the estimated annual payments to**

**\$159,999. Motion to amend seconded by Erin Campbell. Voice vote in affirmative. Motion to amend Article 04 passed.**

Cheryl Jensen asked about why choosing to not remove the wood pellet boiler would only reduce the cost by \$31,000.

Tom Seekins and Adam Hodgkins with Energy Management Consultants presented and explained who they are as a company, how they assess and work with schools, and the list of recommended projects for Bethlehem Elementary School. Their answer to Mrs. Jensen was that the \$31,000 is the demolition cost for removing the boiler.

Chris McGrath asked if the CO2 levels in the school were checked while vents were off. EMC says yes, because often the vents are off while class is in session due to the vents making significant noise, and they wanted to measure conditions as close as possible to daily norms.

Mike Bruno thanked EMC for their presentation, and asked how future rising costs due to tariffs and inflation would affect their pricing. EMC shared that the estimated price is set, regardless of fluctuations over the ten years.

Mr. Bruno also asked the board how much money is currently in the capital reserve fund. The current balance is \$149,156.

Kim Johnson asked about the point at which the project will pay for itself, and commented that it seems like "we are just chasing the next best thing?"

Chris Jensen shared his confusion about the heating system, and asked why no one contacted Maine Energy Systems when the wood pellet boiler originally had issues?

Alan Jackson asked for some clarification on the state of the exhaust system. He said in his experience, the life expectancy of a heat exchanger is 10 years; is this still the case? The response was no.

Michelle Pezzulli wanted to clarify that, at the end of the ten years, would the financial obligation be complete? The answer is yes.

Ms. Pezzulli also wanted the board to be aware that, while it has been mentioned that the board wants transparency with the town, many residents feel that there is no transparency. The board encouraged everyone to attend monthly board meetings, and CJ Watson added that, should the article pass, there will be weekly updates shared on the SAU and BES websites.

Cheryl Jensen asked why the pellet boiler goes down "quite frequently." EMC mentioned a combustion box issue, which is pretty common.

Phyllis Bellavance contacted Maine Energy and shared information she learned. This included that there is still a warranty on the boiler, and questions about why BES discontinued purchasing pellets from them?

Dan Crosby requested, if the article passes, that there remain flexibility in the details with options. The reply was that these options have been discussed at board meetings for a year now, but we do want to collaborate with future projects.

**Megan Schleck made a motion to call the question; Moderator Mary Lou Krambeer allowed for four more people to speak.**

Rich Southwell asked what will happen if the article does not pass? The answer is that this would be brought up again at the next year's meeting.

Casey MacDonald reiterated a previously asked question: why did the school board not reach out to Maine Energy? Bob Weir answered "I don't know."

Patrick Doughty asked the board to clarify that the school currently has two wood pellet boilers and one backup oil burner. The answer: yes.

David van Houten asked EMC if they looked at heat pumps when doing their assessments. EMC says that they used a three year average of the school's electric bills.

**Patrick Doughty made a request for a secret ballot, with the five required signatures.**

**55 Yay  
25 Nay**

**Amended Article 04 passed.**

**Paul Greenlaw made a motion to restrict reconsideration of Article 04.  
David van Houten seconded. Voice vote in affirmative. Motion passed.**

Article 05: To see if the District shall vote to adopt the provisions of New Hampshire RSA Chapter 194-D and become an open enrollment school under the terms of the RSA, to admit 2 students from outside of the District with zero percent (0%) of the resident student population eligible to seek enrollment outside of the District. Recommended by the Bethlehem School Board

Patrick Doughty asked how the article really helps the kids, because each school is not right for every child. CJ Watson replied that the problem is that we don't know all of the answers yet, but he assured Mr. Doughty that the article does not eliminate "best interests" or "manifest hardship" situations.

Sarah Brass asked if the article means that open enrollment is capped at 2, from the perspective of a parent whose child is already in a class near capacity. It was shared that open enrollment can be specified by grade.

**Motion by Bob Weir to bring forward and accept Article 05 as written. Motion seconded by Scott Caisse. Voice vote in affirmative. Article 05 passed.**

Article 06: To see if the school district will vote to raise and appropriate up to the the sum of up to \$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

Nancy Strand asked about the current balance of the fund. The current balance is \$94,544. Ms. Strand also asked if there is a goal, and that answer was no, not specifically.

**Motion by Bob Weir to bring forward and accept Article 06 as written. Motion seconded by Scott Caisse. Voice vote in affirmative. Article 06 passed.**

Article 07: To see if the school district will vote to raise and appropriate up to the sum of up to \$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

**Stefan Shapiro made a motion to increase the total by \$10,000 due to deficiency in upkeep of the building; this would bring the new total to \$35,000. Motion seconded by Mitra Karimian.**

Phil Bell asked who is head of maintenance in the building; that would be Sean Monahan. Mr. Bell mentioned that it would have been interesting to hear his take during the meeting.

**Hand vote taken to amend Article 07:**

**28 Yay**

**19 Nay**

**Hand vote taken to accept Amended Article 07.**

**35 Yay**

**14 Nay**

**Amended Article 07 passes.**

Article 08: To see if the District will vote to establish a capital reserve fund under the provisions of RSA 35:1 to pay for unanticipated tuition costs and to raise and appropriate the sum of up to twenty-five thousand one hundred three dollars

(\$25,103) to be added to the fund, this amount to come from the June 30 fund balance in excess of twenty-five thousand one hundred three dollars (\$25,103) available for transfer on July 1. No amount to be raised from taxation. Furthermore, to name the school board as agents to expend from said fund. (Majority vote required)  
Recommended by Bethlehem School Board

**James Noyes made a motion to amend Article 08, renaming the fund as "Unanticipated Tuition Capital Reserve Fund."**

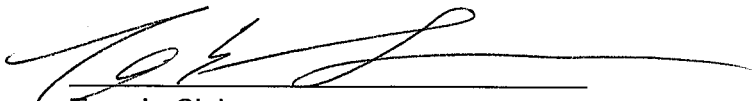
This is in preparation of open enrollment, and is the estimated cost of 1 student tuition to another district.

**Motion by James Noyes to bring forward and accept amended Article 08. Motion seconded by Bob Weir. Voice vote in affirmative. Article 08 passed.**

Article 09: To transact any other business that may come legally before this meeting.  
**Moderator Mary Lou Krambeer opened the floor for any other questions or discussions.**

Paul Greenlaw requested that article verbiage be changed from "no amount to be raised from taxation" to "no amount to be raised from new taxation." He also strongly suggested that the board should call Maine Energy to get answers.

**The Moderator asked if there was a motion to adjourn. Motion to adjourn by Paul Greenlaw. Motion seconded by Padraic Foran. 2026 School District adjourned at 9:51pm.**



Tana LeClair  
School District Clerk