

**Town Meeting Forum
Orange Center School
February 28, 2018 6:30 p.m.
OWUUSD MEETING**

DRAFT OF MINUTES

In attendance: Kathie Felch, Sue Perreault, William Crowther, Eric Holmgren, Tom Dwyer, Joe Bresette, Susan Childs, David Childs, Harry Roush, Lee Youngman, H. Brooke Paige, Jen Trombly, Jessica Foster, Tim Franke, Carol Davis, Chris Locarno, Lee Gardner, and Susette Bollard.

Jessica Foster called the School portion of the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m.

Jessica highlighted that the School budget increase for Orange residents would .02 cents and the increase for Washington residents would .01. She thanked the staff, committees, town clerks, boards members and the kids in both communities for the joint effort to make the merger happen.

The beginning of the meeting was a discussion regarding pending litigation against the Washington School Board which was not on the topic of discussion for the Town Forum. The Forum was intended to discuss the articles on the School and Town Meeting Warnings.

The meeting was adjourned for approximately 5 minutes so we could move from the gym to a classroom because a blower for heat was running which could not be turned off. The majority in attendance couldn't hear the discussion.

David Childs asked why the administrative fees were 25% of the \$4,828,377.00 budget presented and asked why the need for 2 full time principals on staff. Chris Locarno, business manager explained that due to 2 schools still running and being a transition year that it was necessary. Jessica Foster said that would be revisited after this transition year and the both Schools need 2 strong leaders, times have changed and educators are helping children who have difficulties at home, some are food insecure and staff has to help kids survive based on regulations put forth by the state. Chris stated Increases to include: Special Education, the busing of students between both schools, salaries and benefits for staff and adding a community-based person for Orange, Washington, Williamstown and Northfield who will be teaching students in all 4 communities about outdoor learning and engaging them in science and nature which all contributed to the 25% of administration.

H. Brooke Paige would like to be sure students in Washington maintain test scores in the combined School District. Jen Trombly explained that it would now be combined and there is a website called track my progress through the Department of Education which is posted for public view. He also asked about the amount of meals that are served currently for both Schools.

Chris Locarno wanted to touch on the deficit in the lunch program. He stated that between Orange, Washington and Williamstown approximately 62,000 meals per year. When we add Northfield, the total will go up to approximately 135,000. The \$40,000.00 deficit is the combined total for both Schools.

There was brief discussion about the water issues at Orange Center School. Chris stated that he and Principal Franke have taken care of that with holding tanks and there haven't been any water issues for a long time.

There was also some discussion on costs for the boiler at Orange School and the paving of parking lot at Washington School. All expenses are now part of the Unified School District.

The Town of Washington took over the bridge and will be able to get some grant funds for a 2019 replacement. It won't be an expense to the School District.

Lee Gardner felt that the Schoolboard has been proactive to bring the kids up to the standards and are working to teach kids in a way that they have a fully rounded life. He is happy that there has never been a nay vote for the budget from the floor.

The School portion of the meeting was adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

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Eric Holmgren, opened up the Town's portion of the meeting at 7:48 p.m.

Eric explained that the equipment repair budget went over again this year. The board will be exploring a few different possibilities for this year. The Road Foreman has been getting quotes on new plow trucks. One of the companies offers a lease option. Eric said the state replaces trucks every 7 years so they still have a trade-in value. We will be developing an equipment replacement plan for 2018 along with a 5-year road plan.

David Childs asked the board to take a look at Tucker Road. The section that was paved last year is cracking and asked if the town could restrict the weight limit. The board agreed that it should have a weight restriction for now and we will get it posted. Eric will ask Green Mountain Paving to also take a look at it.

The Town portion of the meeting adjourned at 8:07 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Kathie Felch
Town Clerk/Treasurer