

FIRST BRANCH UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES (draft)
MARCH 3, 2025

The duly warned meeting of the First Branch Unified School District was brought to order at 7 pm by Moderator, Israel Provoncha. Moderator read the warning.

Article 1: Nancy Howe nominated Israel Provoncha for Moderator for a 1 year term. There being no other nominations, School Clerk asked for the vote. All were in favor and Israel Provoncha was elected Moderator for a 1 year term.

Moderator explained Robert's Rules to the voters. He limited time to 5 minutes per person for comments.

Article 2: Sue Kay nominated Grace Kay for School District Clerk for the term of July 1, 2025 to June 30, 2026 or until the election and qualification of a successor, seconded by Kathy Galluzzo. There being no other nomination, the Moderator closed nominations and requested the vote. All were in favor, so moved. Grace Kay elected for School District Clerk for 1 year.

Article 3: Nancy Hoyt nominated Rebecca Hoyt School District Treasurer for a year term of July 1, 2025 to June 30, 2026 or until the election and qualification of a successor, seconded by Victoria Paquin. There being no other nominations, the Moderator closed nominations and requested the vote. All were in favor, so moved. Rebecca Hoyt elected for a School District Treasurer for a 1 year term.

Article 4: Victoria Paquin moved to hear the report of the District, including the reports of the Board of Directors, the Treasurer, the Auditor, and the Superintendent with Nancy Howe seconding the motion.

Discussion:

Kathy Galluzzo introduced the Board, the Principal, Janet Cash and Vice Principal, Mr. Dan Rivers and Superintendent Kinnarney. The Moderator asked if there were any objections to the Principal and Vice Principal giving their presentation. Seeing no objections, the presentation was shared with the voters.

Principal Cash and Vice Principal Rivers spoke to enrollment, tuition, student fulfillment, the inability to fill the world language position. She reported even though staffing challenges happened throughout the school year, the school stayed open. She noted class sizes were expected to grow in the next year. She reported how important the Pre-School was to the School District.

Superintendent Kinnarney spoke to the budget. He went over what is in local control of the School Board and what was not in the Education funding formula. He walked through how Education spending works out to the tax rate. He noted Secondary tuition costs are up. The Moderator opened the floor to questions.

Discussion:

A voter was concerned about the test scores remaining at 50% and they were not increasing. He noted there was not enough progress. He stated that if 50 % of the students were not meeting the standards, they were failing. Mr. O'Brien wanted clarification on the tuition expenses. Mr. Ackerman stated that the expenses in the pie chart were all the 9-12 students they pay tuition for. Mike McCullough expressed concern that the School budget continued to go up. He stated he did not see a stop to it. He noted he agreed that more time needed to be spent on teaching and less on the items parents were supposed to be providing. Linda Kuban wanted to see tuition capped. A voter wanted to hear justification on the half days taken as it impacts his work schedule and he felt students were not receiving their full education. It was noted by the Board that those half days were for professional development of Teachers. A voter spoke in behalf of the social aspect of the extra programs that benefited students. Mr. Szeg stated the only way to save costs was to shut one school and tuition capped. Kristianne Gale, asked the Board to speak to staffing issues, parents taking students out of the school, teacher to student ratio and teachers lesson planning during the school work day and bullying ongoing. Principal Cash, explained the procedures on bullying and they followed protocols for bullying. She stated all the teachers were in the classroom and teaching. She

noted Teachers may take a student out to work one on one with them. She noted sometimes a teacher calls out sick and a para will work in the room. She noted pre-school is for all students. Mr. Lathrop noted that the long term weighted students don't match the actual. Superintendent Kinnarney reported the State weights students differently. Mr. Lathrop stated that isn't the number of real students. He asked what the total amount raised from the property taxes from the two Towns was? Superintendent Kinnarney stated he didn't know what the Grand lists of the Towns were. Mr. Lathrop stated he was paying for imaginary students. Ms Tess from Tunbridge stated all could agree that there is a problem that would not be solved at the meeting but persons needed to speak with their legislators to change how schooling was funded. Rebecca Savidge noted that the Teachers are working very hard and goes above and beyond for students. She noted that there was magical work being done with the students. She praised the teachers. She said from a parents perspective she thought Teachers were doing a good work. Joe Paquin stated the skiing is being paid by a grant and was not funded by the budget. Evan asked if any Federal money was at risk. Superintendent pointed out to page 23 of the School Budget book. There was off setting revenue for the Nurse and Guidance., Title Funding, Head Start funding were federally funded. He stated they fall under the duties of the chief academic officer. Laura Ginsberg, asked about the other in Teacher Salaries and wanted to know if the teachers and paras pay had parity with other Districts. She asked if they kept cutting positions and programs, why should she keep her student in the school? Alan Ackerman said support and teacher salary are negotiated District wide. He noted our pay level is significantly lower when compared to other schools further out such as Barre, but they were comparable to local schools. He noted they were in ongoing negotiations. He noted there was school choice 9-12 but anything other than that the parent would bear the full cost of tuitioning to another school. Ms Ginsberg requested the salaries be published so voters would know what they were voting on at a meeting. Mr. Ackerman stated that teacher's salaries were public and they could provide that information going forward. Mr. Ashford stated the slide shows are great but would like to see them prior to the meeting and have them printed in the book. He also wanted to know how many classrooms and staff there were and that information should be in the book as well. He felt we haven't bounced back yet academically from Covid.

Nancy Howe called the question. Victoria Paquin seconded the motion. The Moderator stated that ends discussion of the Article 4. He requested the vote on

the motion to call the question. Almost all in favor, with one nay on a voice vote. Moderatos stated the motion passed.

He restated the motion and requested the vote. All were in favor, so moved. Article 4 passed.

Article 5: Nancy Howe moved to fix the annual salaries in the amount of \$1500 per member for the School Board for the term of July1, 2025 to June 30, 2026 with Elaine Howe seconding the motion.

There was no discussion of the Article.

The Moderator restated the motion and asked for the vote. All were in favor and the motion passed.

Article 6: Nancy Howe moved to fix the salary in the amount of \$1500 for the School District Treasurer for the term of July 1, 2025 to June 30, 2026 with Elaine Howe seconding the motion.

Discussion:

Mr. Welch asked what the Treasurer does differently from the Superintendent. Ms Tara Weatherell answered the question.

The Moderator restated the motion and requested the vote. All were in favor and the motion passed.

Article 7: Joe Pacquin moved to authorize the School Board of Directors to borrow money by issuance of notes not in excess of anticipated revenue for the fiscal year July 1, 2025 through June 30, 2026 with Nancy Howe seconding the motion.

Discussion:None

The Moderator restated the motion, and requested the vote. All were favor and the motion passed.

Article 8: Sue Kay nominated Bill Smith for School Director for Chelsea for a 3 year term.

Discussion: None

The Moderator asked if there were any other nominations and seeing none, closed nominations. He asked the voters if there was any objections to casting one ballot and seeing none, instructed the Clerk to cast on ballot for Bill Smith as School Director (Chelsea) for a 3 year term.

Elaine Howe nominated Stacy Dion for School Director for Tunbridge for a 3 year term.

Discussion: None

The Moderator asked if there were any other nominations and seeing none, closed nominations . He asked the voters if there was any objections to casting one ballot and seeing none, instructed the Clerk to cast one ballot for Stacy Dion as School Director (Tunbridge) for a 3 year term.

Article 9: Sue Kay moved to approve the school board to expend \$9,140,922 which is the amount the school board has determined to be necessary for the ensuing fiscal year. The First Branch District estimates that this proposed budget, if approved, will result in per pupil education spending of \$12, 881.19, which is 8.31% higher than per pupil education spending for the current year. Joe Paquin seconded the motion.

The Moderator stated if the voters wanted to vote by paper ballot, seven voters would have to request it. There were seven voters who requested it by standing up. He explained how the vote would be done by ballot.

No discussion period was initially offered but the Moderator noticed and offered a discussion period. No one asked for discussion so the vote proceeded.

The Moderator opened voting.

The Moderator stated the ballot box would close if there were no other voters. There being no other voters, he closed voting.

The Moderator read the results. There were 96 voters checked off the two checklists and 65 voted yes and 31 voted no. The motion passed.

Article 10: To transact any other lawful business to properly come before the voters.

Victoria Paquin moved to adjourn, seconded by Elaine Howe.

The Moderator noted it was a privileged motion which took precedence. He requested the vote. **All were in favor and the motion passed. The meeting concluded at 8:36 pm.**

Respectfully submitted,

Karen J. Lathrop

School District Clerk

Moderator

Selectboard Chair

Vermont Oath of Allegiance

(For Justice of the Peace and other local officials)

I, Israel Provancha, do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will be true and faithful to the State of Vermont, and that I will not, directly or indirectly, do any act or thing injurious to the Constitution or Government thereof. (oath) So help me God. (affirmation) Under pains and penalties of perjury.

Dated at Chelsea, VT this 3 day of March, 2025.


Signature Local Official

Chelsea

*****AND*****

The Oath of Office

(For Justice of the Peace and other local officials)

I, Israel Provancha, do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will faithfully execute the office of Moderator (1 Yr) for the STATE OF VERMONT and will therein do equal right and justice to all persons to the best of my judgment and ability, according to law. (oath) So help me God. (affirmation) Under the pains and penalties of perjury.

Dated at Chelsea, VT this 3 day of March, 2025.


Signature of Local Official

Chelsea

CERTIFICATE OF AUTHORITY BEFORE WHOM OATH IS TAKEN

STATE OF VERMONT)
Orange County, ss.)

I hereby certify that on the 3 day of March, 2025 personally appeared before me at Tunbridge, Vermont and took and subscribed the foregoing oaths or affirmations of office and allegiance.

Signature of Notary Public or person administering oath

Date Commission expires: 1/31/2027

Reminder to All Justices of the Peace: If you are elected and you are not already serving as a JP, your TERM OF OFFICE does not begin until FEBRUARY 1 of the year following the General Election and runs for two years. YOU CANNOT PERFORM ANY JP DUTIES UNTIL AFTER FEBRUARY 1 (unless you are an incumbent). NOTE: This oath is from the Vermont Constitution, Chapter II, §56. This oath may be given by, among others, a notary public (including the town clerk or any justice of the peace that has already filed a notary oath with the county clerk). Failure to file a copy of these oaths with the town clerk will prevent you from qualifying for office and may also subject you to a fine of not more than \$100.00. 4 V.S.A. § 492.

Vermont Oath of Allegiance

(For Justice of the Peace and other local officials)

I, William Smith, do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will be true and faithful to the State of Vermont, and that I will not, directly or indirectly, do any act or thing injurious to the Constitution or Government thereof. (oath) So help me God. (affirmation) Under pains and penalties of perjury.

Dated at Chelsea, VT this 3 day of MARCH, 2025.

William Smith
Signature Local Official

Chelsea

*****AND*****

The Oath of Office

(For Justice of the Peace and other local officials)

I, William Smith, do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will faithfully execute the office of School Board Director (Chelsea 3 Yr) for the STATE OF VERMONT and will therein do equal right and justice to all persons to the best of my judgment and ability, according to law. (oath) So help me God. (affirmation) Under the pains and penalties of perjury.

Dated at Chelsea, VT this 3 day of MARCH, 2025.

William Smith
Signature of Local Official

Chelsea

CERTIFICATE OF AUTHORITY BEFORE WHOM OATH IS TAKEN

STATE OF VERMONT)
Orange County, ss.)

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Vermont Oath of Allegiance

(For Justice of the Peace and other local officials)

I, Grace Kay, do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will be true and faithful to the State of Vermont, and that I will not, directly or indirectly, do any act or thing injurious to the Constitution or Government thereof. (oath) So help me God. (affirmation) Under pains and penalties of perjury.

Dated at Chelsea, VT this 3 day of March, 2025.

Grace Kay
Signature Local Official

Chelsea

*****AND*****

The Oath of Office

(For Justice of the Peace and other local officials)

I, Grace Kay, do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will faithfully execute the office of School District Clerk (1 Yr) for the STATE OF VERMONT and will therein do equal right and justice to all persons to the best of my judgment and ability, according to law. (oath) So help me God. (affirmation) Under the pains and penalties of perjury.

Dated at Chelsea, VT this 3 day of March, 2025.

Grace Kay
Signature of Local Official

Chelsea

CERTIFICATE OF AUTHORITY BEFORE WHOM OATH IS TAKEN

STATE OF VERMONT)
Orange County, ss.)

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personally appeared before me at Tunbridge, Vermont and took and subscribed the foregoing oaths or affirmations of office and allegiance.

Signature of Notary Public or person administering oath

Date Commission expires: 1/31/2027

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Vermont Oath of Allegiance

(For Justice of the Peace and other local officials)

I, Rebecca Hoyt, do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will be true and faithful to the State of Vermont, and that I will not, directly or indirectly, do any act or thing injurious to the Constitution or Government thereof. (oath) So help me God. (affirmation) Under pains and penalties of perjury.

Dated at Chelsea, VT this 3 day of March, 2025.

Rebecca Hoyt
Signature Local Official

Chelsea

*****AND*****

The Oath of Office

(For Justice of the Peace and other local officials)

I, Rebecca Hoyt, do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will faithfully execute the office of School District Treasurer (1 Yr) for the STATE OF VERMONT and will therein do equal right and justice to all persons to the best of my judgment and ability, according to law. (oath) So help me God. (affirmation) Under the pains and penalties of perjury.

Dated at Chelsea, VT this 3 day of March, 2025.

Rebecca Hoyt
Signature of Local Official

Chelsea

CERTIFICATE OF AUTHORITY BEFORE WHOM OATH IS TAKEN

STATE OF VERMONT)
Orange County, ss.)

I hereby certify that on the 3 day of March, 2025, Rebecca Hoyt personally appeared before me at Tunbridge, Vermont and took and subscribed the foregoing oaths or affirmations of office and allegiance.

Tara Weatherell
Signature of Notary Public or person administering oath

Date Commission expires: 1/31/2027

Reminder to All Justices of the Peace: If you are elected and you are not already serving as a JP, your **TERM OF OFFICE** does not begin until **FEBRUARY 1** of the year following the General Election and runs for two years. **YOU CANNOT PERFORM ANY JP DUTIES UNTIL AFTER FEBRUARY 1 (unless you are an incumbent).**
NOTE: This oath is from the Vermont Constitution, Chapter II, §56. This oath may be given by, among others, a notary public (including the town clerk or any justice of the peace that has already filed a notary oath with the county clerk). **Failure to file a copy of these oaths with the town clerk will prevent you from qualifying for office and may also subject you to a fine of not more than \$100.00. 4 V.S.A. § 492.**

Vermont Oath of Allegiance

(For Justice of the Peace and other local officials)

I, Stacy Dion, do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will be true and faithful to the State of Vermont, and that I will not, directly or indirectly, do any act or thing injurious to the Constitution or Government thereof. (oath) So help me God. (affirmation) Under pains and penalties of perjury.

Dated at Chelsea, VT this 3 day of MARCH, 2025.

Stacy S. Dion
Signature Local Official

Chelsea

*****AND*****

The Oath of Office

(For Justice of the Peace and other local officials)

I, STACY DION, do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will faithfully execute the office of School Board Director (Tunbridge 3 Yr) for the STATE OF VERMONT and will therein do equal right and justice to all persons to the best of my judgment and ability, according to law. (oath) So help me God. (affirmation) Under the pains and penalties of perjury.

Dated at Chelsea, VT this 3 day of MARCH, 2025

Stacy S. Dion
Signature of Local Official

Chelsea

CERTIFICATE OF AUTHORITY BEFORE WHOM OATH IS TAKEN

STATE OF VERMONT)
Orange County, ss.)

I hereby certify that on the 3 day of MARCH, 2025, Stacy Dion personally appeared before me at Tunbridge, Vermont and took and subscribed the foregoing oaths or affirmations of office and allegiance.

Jara Weatherall
Signature of Notary Public or person administering oath

Date Commission expires: 1/31/2027

Reminder to All Justices of the Peace: If you are elected and you are not already serving as a JP, your TERM OF OFFICE does not begin until FEBRUARY 1 of the year following the General Election and runs for two years. YOU CANNOT PERFORM ANY JP DUTIES UNTIL AFTER FEBRUARY 1 (unless you are an incumbent). NOTE: This oath is from the Vermont Constitution, Chapter II, §56. This oath may be given by, among others, a notary public (including the town clerk or any justice of the peace that has already filed a notary oath with the county clerk). Failure to file a copy of these oaths with the town clerk will prevent you from qualifying for office and may also subject you to a fine of not more than \$100.00. 4 V.S.A. § 492.