

**INTER-LAKES SCHOOL DISTRICT**  
**Center Harbor, Meredith, Sandwich**  
**INTER-LAKES ANNUAL SCHOOL DISTRICT MEETING**  
**MARCH 4, 2009**

The Annual Meeting of the Inter-Lakes School District was held on Wednesday, March 4, 2009, at the Robert F. Pottle Memorial Auditorium of Inter-Lakes High School.

At 7:00 p.m., Moderator Lee Quimby called the meeting to order.

The Moderator stated that the Invocation would be given by Rev. Carol Snow Asher of the Center Harbor Congregational Church. Following the Invocation, Meredith Junior Girl Scout Troop 10135 led the Pledge of Allegiance.

The Moderator asked that all join in and sing the *Star Spangled Banner*.

The Moderator requested that those joining him in the front introduce themselves starting with School District Council, followed by the Assistant Superintendent, Superintendent, School Board Chair and School Board Members.

The Moderator stated that the meeting would not be conducted under Robert's Rules.

The Moderator read the rules of the meeting as follows:

- A.) Anyone wishing to make a motion, second a motion, or wishing to speak on an Article must first be recognized by the Moderator. 40:7
- B.) All speakers must address the Moderator; there will be no cross-floor debates.
- C.) When recognized, please go to a microphone. State name and town when making or seconding a motion.
- D.) Voting will be done by a show of voting cards.
- E.) Seven voters may challenge the declared vote on any Article, before the next Article is brought up, then a secret ballot must be held. 40:4b
- F.) If a secret ballot is desired on any Article, a written request signed by five voters (in attendance at the meeting) is required and presented to the Moderator. 40:4a
- G.) Any Article may be legally amended; each amendment will be discussed independently and acted upon before the Article is called.
- H.) Motion to reconsider an Article may be made at any time prior to final adjournment and the Article would be taken up again immediately unless protected by a vote to restrict reconsideration. 40:10
- I.) Five voters (in attendance at the meeting) may request a recount of a secret ballot before the next Article is taken up. (The vote margin must be less than 10% of total votes cast.) 40:4a
- J.) Only registered voters may vote.
- K.) Only registered voters may speak to questions, unless the meeting votes to allow non-voters to speak.

- L.) Moderator can be overruled by a simple majority vote. Any challenger will be recognized and no second is required. The challenger has the right to state his or her reasons for the challenge. RSA's cannot be overruled at a District meeting.
- M.) RSA's cannot be overruled by the town meeting.

Peter Brothers, Meredith, moved to amend the rules of this assembly to include the non-resident officials, administrators, and district's attorney in order to allow the assembly to have clarification or to get additional information or explanation if needed. Motion was seconded by William Bayard, Meredith. Motion carried.

**ARTICLE 1**

The Moderator read Article 1.

It was moved by Mr. Carty, Meredith, and seconded by Sen. Johnson, Meredith, to see what action the District will vote relative to the reports of Agents, Committees, or Officers chosen.

Mr. Carty stated that this was just a housekeeping motion to get the meeting going.

Article 1 carried in the affirmative.

**ARTICLE 2**

The Moderator read Article 2.

It was moved by Mr. Hanson, Center Harbor, and seconded by Mr. Dan Cunningham, Sandwich, to see if the District will set the salaries of District officers for the coming year as follows:

Moderator	\$ 100.00
District Clerk	\$ 20.00 per hour
School Board Chairperson	\$1,200.00
School Board Members (6) each	\$ 900.00
District Treasurer	\$1,500.00

Article 2 carried in the affirmative.

**ARTICLE 3**

The Moderator read Article 3.

It was moved by Sen. Johnson, Meredith, and seconded by Mr. Carty, Meredith, to see if the District will vote to raise and appropriate the amount of \$18,912,973 (eighteen million, nine hundred twelve thousand, nine hundred seventy-three dollars) for the support of schools, for the payment of salaries for the School District officials and agents, and for the payment of statutory obligations of the District. This article does not include appropriations voted in the other warrant articles. The Inter-Lakes School Board recommends this article. A majority vote is required.

Mr. Carty stated that there is a blue handout that was put together by Ms. Temperino that does a good job of explaining some of the details. I am going to go briefly over some highlights and try to fill in a little bit of background. We've heard the amount to be raised, which is approximately \$19,000,000; that's an increase of 0.25% or \$46,774. This budget does not compromise any existing educational programs or services to our children. There is new spending for infrastructure and we've minimized

replacement of equipment and furniture. The one exception is in technology and we will get to that later on. Staffing and personnel, because we are essentially a people organization, are 73% of the operating costs. That includes basic salaries, Social Security, Medicare, and benefits. The teachers' contract has increases of roughly 6% annually which includes cost of living, step increases and, next year, an increase of one day in the school year. This budget that we are addressing tonight addresses year two of the teachers' contract; year one is the current year. We also have a paraprofessional/teacher aide/support staff contract. Their increases are roughly 6% annually which includes cost of living and merit increases based on superior performance. This budget addresses year three of a three-year contract. The teachers' contract was approved last year before the roof fell in on the economics. The support staff contract was approved the previous year.

Health insurance costs have gone up about 14.8% or \$225,000. Each year we get an estimate from our health insurance provider of a maximum that our health insurance will go up; that's 14.8%. If we are lucky and everyone stays healthy, the actual fees that were charged do not reflect that 14.8%, but we've got to budget for it, otherwise we'd wind up in the hole. Retirement savings for the state have increased 1.16% which is an overall increase to the district of \$89,582. Payment of existing debt is a very small portion of the budget, 1.7% of the overall budget in the amount of \$321,183. This is for the athletic field and the track which was voted on at district meeting last year by a 79% majority. This 5-year bond will be paid off in 2012. That is the only indebtedness that the district has. We presently get 45% state aid for this project. The balance we owe at this time is \$870,000 which will go down as we pay it down.

Page 4 discusses the overall personnel reduction. This gets a little tricky. There is an overall personnel reduction from last year's budget but, after last year's budget was passed, we added the Spanish program to the elementary schools and that increased our staff 1.2 teachers. You see the phrase FTE, which stands for Full Time Equivalent. The net decrease in staff for Regular Education is about 1.3 Full Time Equivalents; Special Education and Guidance Personnel are also reduced due to changing student needs. Regular Education costs are up about 1.4%, almost \$100,000, due mostly to health insurance increases and retirement cost increases. Special Education costs went down \$146,000 and, for those of you who have been here before and are aware that Special Education costs are variable and we cannot control them, they can be very expensive. When that cost goes away, there's a significant increase in savings, but it could change at any moment.

Technology costs increased at 10.7%, \$49,000, mainly due to a revised replacement schedule wherein we are leasing computers on a three-year rotating schedule rather than purchasing them outright. Some of our computers are getting very, very old and last year the board voted to go with a leasing arrangement thereby we will lease these computers over a three-year period. We add 1/3 new computers each year so basically at the end of a three-year period, no computer in the system will be older than 3 years. This is an exception to the equipment costs I mentioned. After the initial three-year period of leasing computers, we can then adjust the quantity of what we want to do in the fourth year depending on student requirements. For example, if we had 25 students that no longer needed computers, we would not have to lease the same number that we had before and it could also be influenced by the availability of money.

Even though we are seeing significant savings from the Honeywell energy efficiency project, which was completed last year, I think most of you realize that some of these savings, at least in your own lives, have been offset by increased fuel costs and increased electricity rates. Our initial bid for fuel oil for the coming year was in excess of \$4/gallon. Ms. Temperino was able to negotiate with the vendor and presently we are paying market price plus \$0.50/gallon which is roughly \$2 less a gallon. Had we not completed the Honeywell Project, we would have had to purchase an additional 47,000 gallons of fuel plus increased electricity costs. In the Honeywell Project there is a guarantee that we will save "x" amount of electricity, not a dollar savings, but "x" amount of kilowatts.

Next year we are going to begin a course sharing arrangement with Moultonborough Academy wherein their students can take our Advanced Placement Computer Science course and our students can take their Advanced Placement Environment Science course. Neither school offers both of these. This provides increased opportunity for students at both schools in the face of declining enrollments and staffing constraints without any increased costs.

Last item, over the last four years an average of 75% of the graduating class has gone on to post secondary education. That's a number we can all be proud of. It's a very high number. Seventy-five percent, 3 out of 4 students leave and go on to college of some sort. Most of those students are accepted into the school of their choice. Thank you.

Karen Sticht, Meredith, at the budget hearing I confused an awful lot of people because I was confused about tax rates and cents per thousand that were going up and I looked at the budget and noted that yes, indeed, the budget's only gone up \$46,774 or 2.25%. But then how can the tax assessment go up almost twenty cents? But what I didn't look at and where I confused people and I shouldn't have, and it did get televised thanks to Lisa, and I confused an awful lot of other people, there's an added cost of \$403,538 that the board has put into the net assessment increase to deal with revenues that might not come in, so actually the budget is going up 2.1%, something like that, and when I started looking at it, I was confused so I went home and I pulled my papers from the last five years and what seems to happen is that you put in money to the budget that is anticipated revenue decrease and then you end up giving a surplus of, for example 2006/2007 there was a \$234,066 surplus, 2007/2008 it was \$537,482, 2008/2009 it was \$618,785 and 2009/2010 you gave a \$685,282 back as surplus which I really commend you for. You are fiscally responsible, you don't bring the budget up, but I would much rather not have to raise the money in taxes just to give it back because, and this is still my confusion, I think that the translation between us giving the money back to the state and the state reducing our tax rate is not showing up properly so my thought is, and I think this is the year you could, actually, because your track record is so good at having revenue and also to give surplus back, that I was hoping that you would just level fund the budget from last year and give everyone a break this year. Looking at the audience I'm certainly not going to make an amendment to that because I'm pretty sure it wouldn't pass, but I wish you would consider in the future when you are making your budget not to be quite so afraid just to drop that revenue expectation because who knows what's going to come from the mother load, from Obama with the, we don't know, it may drop like manna from the heavens for education and special education, you just don't know, but your track record shows that you give a lot of money back each year and I'm not sure all of our taxes reflect it.

Steve Merrill, Meredith, my comment is actually related to the stimulus bill which, from reading, has \$80 billion for education including a bunch for the IDEA program, a bunch for Title I and a bunch for general education, but if this is so, how would that money come to us from that, how would it impact the overall budget, what would happen to it, is what Mrs. Sticht just described, end up in the general fund or where would it end up. Dr. McCormack stated that, as recently as this morning, he called to get more clarification on this issue. It is still very confusing. Nothing is cast in concrete. Two weeks ago he attended a session with Carol Shay Porter and she and people from Washington explained that basically there are three ways in which that money is coming to the state, 80+% is coming in what they refer to as stabilization funding, which the primary intent of that, as it was explained at that meeting, was that that money would be used to make districts whole from any shortfalls in the State budget, so part of the answer is that that stimulus money, if that money comes from the Feds via the state, that would be less that we would have to raise at the local level. The two other areas, which combined about 18% of that, would be coming, and I think Mrs. Sticht made mention, would be coming in the way of Title 1, approximately, the figure I was given was \$209,000 additional dollars and in IDEA \$290,000. That is the amount of money. Two weeks ago they had no idea as to the way in which that would be implemented. They are cognizant of the fact that there does need to be flexibility. For example, usually with Special Ed IDEA funding you are not allowed to carry that over from one year to the next, but even if they were to give that \$290,000 additional monies to us, it would actually be difficult to spend because we would only

have from now to June 30<sup>th</sup>, so they have said that they will make that available through fiscal 2010. You run into the issue of supplanting if you have money in your budget and then you try to use federal money to offset the expenditures of that fund. There was no answer when the question was raised, but there was not a definitive answer as to how would the Feds deal with that issue because they have not established the rules for implementing the money and it does change week to week because a number of towns are also trying to get access to some of those funds and it ultimately will depend on what the governor does.

The Moderator stated that a member of the school board requested to define IDEA. Dr. McCormack stated that IDEA is the grant source or funding that local districts receive from the federal government to implement its special education for students with some type of learning disability.

The Moderator asked if there was any further discussion.

The Moderator re-read Article 3.

Article 3 carried in the affirmative.

#### **ARTICLE 4**

The Moderator read Article 4.

It was moved by Mr. Howard Cunningham, Sandwich, and seconded by Mr. Hanson, Center Harbor, to see if the District will vote to raise and appropriate up to \$20,000 (twenty thousand dollars) to be placed in the previously established Special Education Expendable Trust Fund, with such amount to be funded from the June 30th unreserved fund balance available for transfer on July 1st. The Inter-Lakes School Board recommends this appropriation. A majority vote is required.

Karen Sticht, Meredith, stated that last year, in the budget hearing booklet under this article, it asked to approve the use – or to use \$25,000 of surplus money to be put in the special education expendable trust. And it said that this trust has a current balance of \$99,399. the District's goal is to have \$125,000 in the trust, so this year in the budget hearing book, it said that this article asks the District to approve the use and it has a current balance of \$127,490, so if the goal was to have \$125,000, it already has \$127,000, I guess I'm asking why we need to put more money in, although I do know that, if a child moves to the district with special problems, it could be catastrophic but, in the old days, before the use of expendable trusts funds, there were remedies for that, it was the same discussion, and our special ed budget is over \$3 million so I guess I'm wondering what's the new cap? Mr. Howard Cunningham stated that this is getting to be an annual event. He stated, just like anything else in life, the cost of special education has escalated. We, in fact, believed last year that \$125,000 would insure our program. I use the term insure because that's exactly what this expendable trust does, that is, in fact, if we had an unexpected, unplanned, unbudgeted special education expense and that can happen tomorrow, they can walk through the door at 2:00 in the afternoon, then in fact, we have the money to use to pay for the program. Ostensibly and hopefully without cutting into other programs, that becomes increasingly important this year because this budget is very, very tight. In addition to that issue, the expense for placements that the district has been experiencing have gone up in costs just like everything else has gone up in cost, the figure we are now working with, unhappily but realistically, is \$185,000. We are asking that, over time, we build the fund to that amount. The article, as read, will increase the amount in the fund by \$20,000 and that \$20,000 will, as explained in the article, come out of any unexpended monies at the end of the year.

Karen Sticht, Meredith, you covered the question but, as I said, in the days before expendable trusts, there were different remedies and one thing our district was trying to do was to be one of the places that the tuition kids came to so that we could, in fact, generate revenue from the special education department. I know that was a long, long time ago, but at least three of you know it too. Mr. Howard Cunningham, reiterated, correct me if I'm wrong, I believe you are referring to the possibility of our accepting tuition special education students from other districts. In fact, that has become increasing difficult to do with federal regulations. Federal regulations require the least restrictive educational placement and wherever that is possible, that means the town and the school in which the student would ordinarily attend. Districts are conforming to that regulation increasingly. It is only the more severe and only those students whose needs cannot possibly be met in a local setting that are now being tuitioned out of district in addition to some court cases. Courts, for example, may place a student and then require the district to pay the education costs of that placement, but other than those students, the students that are being placed out of district are the more complex, the more needy and, in fact, the more expensive placements.

Chris Mega, Meredith, stated, also related to the stimulus package, does anyone have a feeling for whether the stimulus money might be able to fund this particular special education trust or is it monies we are supposed to spend, literally, on actual expenses this year? Does anyone have any idea? In other words, do we not need to raise taxpayer dollars to fund this trust? We might be able to use stimulus dollars to fund this trust. Dr. McCormack stated that, although we would have to appropriate the money anyway, that's one issue, I guess I honestly don't know if money would be available for that type of thing or not. Sorry I can't answer that, but in all honesty, I really would be probably somewhat surprised if we get all of what we're supposed to get once the state gets done doing what it's going to do. Hopefully we will. I think that's the intent. It still becomes questionable, would that be supplanting or supplementing? We don't know the rules yet as to how they are going to view that. Ms. Temperino stated that the only way state law allows us to put money into an expendable trust is through an appropriation.

Article 4 carried in the affirmative.

## **ARTICLE 5**

The Moderator read Article 5.

It was moved by Mr. Carty, Meredith, and seconded by Mr. Candage, Center Harbor, to see if the District will vote to raise and appropriate up to \$15,976 (fifteen thousand, nine hundred seventy-six dollars) for the purchase and installation of video equipment and related fees and labor costs for the purpose of videotaping school board meetings. The Inter-Lakes School Board recommends this appropriation. A majority vote is required.

Mr. Carty stated that this is one of two articles that addresses the hot issue of tonight, TV or no TV. This article is the board's response to requests made by two Meredith residents that the school board videotape its meetings and have them broadcast on the cable channel, Lakes Region Public Access. This request was originally made in April, 2008. When we began to look into it, two questions developed, how accessible is Lakes Region Public Access to all of the district's communities and what is required for clear useable video imagery and audio recording? Cable Access is not available in Sandwich, it's only partially available in Center Harbor and we were unable to get a specific number from Metrocass, the cable provider, for how many customers they have in Meredith and we were unable to get a number, obviously, of how many watched. Lakes Region Public Access channel is only available on cable. The second question of video tape quality was researched by comparing the experiences of a neighboring town that does tape its meetings. Initially they tried an inexpensive system. It did not deliver quality information. Ultimately they had to upgrade to a cost comparable to this warrant, \$16,000, to get a useable system that could put out useable TV and information on the proceedings of the board. We also

reviewed a recording of the Meredith select board workshop using the existing facilities in the Community Center. Based upon this and other research, the board set the following criteria if the district chooses to fund a TV effort. Each member of the board needs to be clearly visible and clearly audible. It does not make for great TV to have the camera sitting on me or Dr. McCormack for an hour and a half meeting. Members of the public and administrators also have to be clearly visible and audible when speaking. We need to place a face with an audible comment. It does not good if an administrator addresses a response or a question from one of the board members and you don't know who that administrator is or where the voice is coming from. Same thing with members of the public. If a member of the public asks a question, it does very little good, very little information if it comes from somewhere from the back of the room. We also decided that if we were going to electronic recording, we would expand the option to anyone with a high speed connection. The service would cost about \$100 per month. Unfortunately, high speed internet is not universally available within the district either. We would also make meetings available on pod casts for downloading on your iPod. The cost of this warrant article, with installation of equipment at our regular meeting site, the Humiston Building, and operation for one year. The breakdown for cost of round numbers is \$14,000 for installation and hardware, \$1,200 for high speed video streaming, and \$800 for the operator.

Lisa Merrill, Meredith, addressed warrant Articles 5 and 6. Some of the issues that Mr. Carty brought up I'd like to touch upon. The \$1,200 to post streaming videos to an alternative site – you can do this free using Google video, I have done it and I have posted on my own website and that would save the taxpayers money. Also, \$750 would be an annual cost for a videographer and that cost can also be eliminated by actually opening it up to the Inter-Lakes High School photography curriculum and having a student volunteer or for a credited course. This has been done in other school districts quite successfully, so I'd like to bring to your attention that Article 6 does not have any appropriated monies to it because we have \$19,000 worth of video equipment in Conference Room B at the Community Center and right now the only board that uses that is the select board. The selectmen do utilize conference Room B. No other group uses it and I did talk to the town, Brenda Vittner, Acting Town Manager. It is not a problem for you to gain access to conference room B. It has state-of-the-art equipment, has over \$19,000 worth of equipment, it's a much larger conference room with many, many seats, a podium, as you pointed out in the public session of the school board meeting when we, as citizens, try to speak or try to fit in there, there is barely room in that back area to sit and to be able to speak. It's just a really tight room. I do have pictures, I would have liked to do a power point presentation; however, we don't have the equipment set up but I do have pictures and I can show you how tight that room is and I know because videotaping has turned out to be my forte, but you know, I would like to ask you to think about both articles, especially Article 6, which can save money, utilize existing video equipment that is in conference room B, has a lot of plusses, especially for the streaming video, when you use the video you can download to an iPod very easily. I understand that we want an open and transparent government, we want other towns that might not have access to cable or high speed Internet, have access, and this is a perfect way to do it and to save the taxpayers money.

Miriam Simmons, Meredith, just in hearing the presentation by Mr. Carty and the background and the depth of thought that has gone into putting the warrant article on for tonight's consideration, we have all seen a lot of change in the last six months and perhaps when this question was originally addressed by a resident or two wanting to have access or being able to see school board meetings taped and have a visible record of that, maybe the economy was at a better point, I think where we are right now, my personal thought would be could we try another option for the coming year or months, and use this money or be careful with our budget and our expenditures. I know that I have been readily able to access, through the district website, all minutes of school board meetings, it's been very transparent, I don't need to see your faces on the public television, your voices speak to me in the minutes, they are well written, they are usually posted in a timely manner and, to me, that is transparent operation of town and school government. My opinion, at this point, after hearing the presentations and considering the money and the other costs that may be ahead of us this year, would be that I would not vote in favor of this article.

Steve Merrill, Meredith, just a couple of comments. First I would agree that I would prefer to see this done in Conference Room B, but I think it's critically important that these important meetings be videotaped and I think it will provide better access for all our citizens who can't always make those meetings. Yes, the minutes are available, but, I can tell you from going to all the meetings, the minutes don't capture everything that happens because I've been sitting at them and many, many things happen that get lost in the details, let's say and I watch a lot on TV, a lot of towns, and many towns have been doing this for many, many years and Meredith and Inter-Lakes School District is really behind the times in adopting this type of approach towards getting the word out and expressing what the school board is doing and how we're spending the \$19 million that we just appropriated a few minutes ago. Even if we did it in the school, I support both amendments and I'd like to see both of them pass, but I'd like the school board to then not spend the money and go off to the other building and do it there and I also want to bring up that Mr. Carty did speak to the motion here a moment ago, he was one of the only ones opposed to it on the board. The board, as a whole, did support this motion so a lot of his comments may or may not be agreed to by his board members.

Barbara Clark, Meredith, I would like to respectfully disagree with the board's recommendation on this and I don't share her paranoia about the transparency of the board's activities. I think, in times like this, we need to be focusing on the kids and the best education and the taxpayers and putting the least burden on them. I think there is a possibility that, if we have a situation like the HVAC system, we implement where the payback justifies, more specifically, the discounted cash flow is justified the expenditure that would be one thing, but to spend even \$15,000 on something with no payback that does not benefit the kids, and doesn't, in my opinion, reflect good stewardship over our resources at this time. I don't think we should do it.

Mr. Carty stated that there is a reason why, and it relates to the next article also, we want to have this done in the Humiston Building. It is the district office, all the resources of the district are there and available, not in some remote place. We own three buildings in the Town of Meredith for the District. It's not a question that we're looking for real estate, it's a question of where we have the information that we can best provide for people who come to the meetings and ask questions. Board members ask questions during a debate. Mr. Merrill is correct that perhaps I did inject a personal opinion on that about that it doesn't make for great TV, I still don't think it makes for great TV, but the board recommended it and I'll stand behind the recommendation of the board.

Article 5 was declared defeated by a voice vote.

#### **ARTICLE 6 (Submitted by Petition)**

To see if the District will vote (1) to approve the videotaping and broadcasting of the Inter-Lakes School Board meetings on the Lakes Region Public Access channel, utilizing the existing taxpayer-owned video equipment located at the Community Center's Conference Room "B"; and, (2) to direct the Inter-Lakes School Board to change the location of all meetings and work sessions scheduled after April 1, 2009 to said Conference Room "B". This article will remain in effect until rescinded by the voters. This motion was moved by Lisa Meredith, Meredith and seconded by Steve Merrill, Meredith.

Diane Drenkhahn, Center Harbor, I was a school board member for 11 plus years. I'm heartened to hear the comments about the transparency of the school board and very proud of the fact that I served on the school board for that long. I, as Mr. Carty mentioned, have a problem with moving it for several reasons, to the Meredith Community Center. We are a cooperative school district; there are three towns involved, not just Meredith. There are several occasions, for instance, Sen. Johnson asked the business administrator what a check was written for. She was able to access that piece of paper and say, we bought software for the computer or whatever reason, for her to have to haul all the paperwork into Meredith to the Community Center to answer simple questions, without having to digress with a "I'll get back to you on that" wouldn't do. Again, as Mr. Carty said, we own real estate in the district. If we

wanted to move to a larger building and haul things around we could come here, we could use the auditorium, we could use any one of the libraries, the cafeteria, we choose the Humiston, it's the home of the school board office. There is another article coming up later about SB2. Just quickly, we are in New England, it's a New England town; we have a lot of traditions that I hold dear to my heart. I was not born and raised here, but I consider myself a citizen of New England. We moved to Center Harbor because of what Center Harbor is. We would be happy if we moved to Center Harbor 50 or 100 years ago because of the feel of the town, the people, the camaraderie, the neighborhood, friendship, the family. Some things don't need to get on the Internet highway. Not all of us sit at a desk in front of a computer all day. Some of us tend gardens, tend to our animals, do things at school with our children. Not everybody will have access to these videotapes, I am one of them. A lot of my friends in Sandwich are also those people. For an elite few to not have to get off their couch and actually go and attend a meeting which is important to them, I think is a sorry state of affairs for New England.

Bill Bayard, Meredith, it appears to me that the school board is reluctant to go to the Community Center. The town does manage to go to the Community Center which is not the Town offices. There are such things as laptops. My personal feeling on this would be, I don't have a problem if the motion goes to defeat, but I would like to see you experiment with doing it occasionally at the Community Center to see if it does or does not work. I certainly don't think if you do it a few times it is going to totally disrupt the school board process, so that would be my suggestion. I am willing to go along with what appears to be the board's reluctance to be directed to do it at this time.

Steve Merrill, a couple of things. First I do go to a lot of the meetings. I am not sitting as one of the elite few on the couch. I go to the meetings and I sit there and I can tell you that there are very few chairs accessible to the few of us who do show up. Once the administrators fill that room, it's really not very inviting room to handle a large meeting. One or two meeting there were a lot of people jammed in there it was just not welcoming. My second comment would be that I really don't see it as a big deal to move to the Community Center. Other towns do it, other boards do it all the time, so that argument doesn't carry any weight, at least with me, personally. My final comment is that I am not sure that the board is reluctant to support this measure, we have only heard from Mr. Carty, the board did not vote on this measure so please don't draw that conclusion that the board is opposed to this. Mr. Carty, I think is, based on his comments, but I don't think you can draw that conclusion from anything else we have heard here this evening.

Mr. Carty stated that Mrs. Drenkhahn has already explained some of the logistic problems with moving from the Humiston Building, packing up files, etc., and moving to another site. That's a real problem and it becomes a real problem when people say, as Mr. Merrill has asked, I want a copy of this, where's the back up on this, and the answer at the Community Center would be it's at the Humiston Building, that's closed for the night, come in tomorrow. Any document or any information discussed during public school board meetings should be accessible to the public at that meeting and as it exists now at the Humiston Building, it is. As far as the issue of chairs, those chairs are exactly like you are presently sitting on. We are not about to go buy new chairs, so district wide, we are stuck with what we've got. In addition to the logistics of the files and the information, we also have a built in projector, a wifi project that someone can come in with a laptop and give a presentation. This we are doing more and more. An example of the presentations that we've had are the technology program, the NECAP results, middle tier initiatives, the AVID program and the board has about a half a dozen to eight times a year for the administrators to come in and explain where you are on a project or where you want to go or what you want to do. It's not clear whether that capability would be available at the Community Center. This projection capability is used regularly and it informs both the board and the public. The suggestion to move to the Community Center will carve two nights a month out of prime meeting time. The Community facility was paid for the taxpayers of Meredith, presumably for the priority use of its residents. That's assuming that a schedule can be worked out. If we elected tonight to move it would be an interesting situation because the planning board meets on the same nights that we do, who has priority, there may be other nights, but it is a prime meeting room in the community center for the Town

of Meredith. The board feels very strongly that if we are going to broadcast our meetings using public money and facilities, we should ensure that it is a quality product that can be seen and heard clearly and available to the maximum number of taxpayers of the district. Simply to move to the Community Center so that we can be on limited TV access, separated from district resources, is not in the best interest of the district, Town of Meredith or the public.

Roger Simmons, Meredith, I think we have wandered away from the issue and I thank the chairman for bringing us back to the issue of videotaping. To me we are actually talking about an apple and an orange here. One is whether or not we videotape the school district board meetings and the other is whether the meetings are accessible, are they held in a location where a sufficient number of citizens can come and participate, does the board have the kind of information the board needs, etc. I view them as two completely separate questions and I think the Board addressing the issue at some time of holding accessible meetings, being able to accommodate sufficient number of interested citizens, etc. separate from the issue of videotaping. Because, really they are two separate questions.

Mr. Carty, Meredith, on the question of accessibility, we hold our meetings in the conference room in the Humiston Building. In the last five years I have never seen anyone turned away from coming into the conference room and having a seat at the meeting. I think I missed some, but the seats have been available. We've had concerned parents come in and talk about a number of issues regarding kids in school. We had half the football team show up asking us to fund the football program. Somehow we managed to stagger through and managed to get everyone a seat where they could have a clear view of the board and have ample opportunity. As far as accessibility, any citizen who chooses to come to a school board meeting will be heard. The first item on the agenda is Public Input. We have had Public Input on some rather controversial issues that go for an hour and a half with people explaining their concerns or asking for clarification; if you choose to come, you will have your day in court, you will have your opportunity to speak your mind in an unrestricted manner.

Steve Merrill, Meredith, my wife has been videotaping the meetings for quite a while and I can tell you that the demeanor and the tone of the meetings and the room the discussion has changed for the better.

Mr. Carty, Meredith, stated that Mrs. Merrill has been volunteering and taping the meetings. As chair I have been trying to observe this very carefully to see if the conduct and the attitude of the board changes. I am reasonably confident that I have seen no change. We still have free and open discussions, nobody plays to the camera, the one change I have seen, possibly, is if a parent or a member of the public is particularly inflamed, they may be a little bit more careful if they're going to be on TV. As far as the board operations and the deliberations, so far as I can see, they have not changed one bit in the way we go about conducting our business. It's wide open and accessible to anyone who chooses to come and it's well reported on. If it is controversial, it will be a headline in at least one paper the next day. It's not like we're meeting in the dead of night.

Diane Drenkhahn, Center Harbor, moved the question.

Article 6 was declared defeated by a voice vote.

#### **ARTICLE 7 (Submitted by Petition)**

Shall we adopt the provisions of RSA 40:13 (known as SB 2) to allow official ballot voting on all issues before the Inter-Lakes School District on the second Tuesday of March?

This is for discussion purposes only. This question appears on the school district election warrant for March 10, 2009, for voting upon. No motion to be made by the Board.

Senate Bill 2 is a form of town meeting that has two sessions. The first session is the deliberative session. It's for explanation, discussion, debate and amendments for the proposed operating budget and warrant articles. The second session, voting session, allows voters to cast an official ballot to pass/fail proposed articles. This meeting tonight will be something like an SB 2 meeting on this article. We're going to have the discussion tonight, but we're not going to vote tonight, we're going to vote one week later. With an SB 2 town, would have the discussion at one session, and you would then vote 30 days later. So that's what you are here to discuss tonight and give us your thoughts.

Diane Drenkhahn, Center Harbor, I don't think I spoke this much the whole time I was on the Board. I want to applaud the board on a well done budget. As I walked in tonight, saw the parking lot half empty, my first thought was, boy, they must have done a really good job because nobody is pissed off, everybody must know what's in the budget, what's going on, so I commend you. Usually when meetings are not as well attended that means you are doing your job. Again, to reiterate, the flavor of our community is town meeting and school district meeting. It's not only a time to vote and discuss, it's time to see some friends you haven't seen in a while, see someone your child may have had in elementary school, let them know how they're doing in college, he's doing great. Again, I think the flavor of New England is being whittled away and I think this is a really big chunk that is going to come out of all of our hearts and I would pray that everyone would really think about this before they vote on Tuesday.

Michael Hatch, Meredith, custodian at the elementary school. I want to talk against SB 2. One of the things that irked me ever since it started, we have a personal interest. I have an interest too. Standing here, people talk, vote, go to something that my mother and father went to. I told a couple other people that back years ago, Boston Tea Party, some guys said I don't think we should do this, so what they do, they went to the North Church, went behind the building, went in the outhouse, and voted.

Phyllis Hamblett, Meredith, I would vote against this article. I have talked to a number of people in different towns that have gone that way. Most people who have been in New England and New Hampshire for years and years, are very upset with it because, once again, they cannot come together at a town meeting. They can't discuss everything on that day or evening, whenever the meeting is and I'm really hoping that people will vote it down.

Barbara Clark, Meredith, I can't get really excited about this article, but I just wanted to state a couple of facts. I've spent a lot of time with the town clerks in our district town. Meredith has 4700-4800 registered voters. Last town election 1100 voted and I was very surprised that there were 25 absentee ballots. Center Harbor 8972 registered voters, about 25% voted at the last town election, six absentee ballots. I haven't been to Sandwich yet. I just thought people might be interested. That's a statement against SB 2.

Steve Merrill, Meredith, I am in favor of SB 2 for a number of reasons. I see a town meeting form of government as being designed for another time in our lives, another time in Colonial America when our forefathers came to this country and they were farmers and there were a few families in the community and they got together and went behind the woodshed and voted and they all knew everybody and the issues were very straight forward and few and today's issues are much more complicated, our budget is much larger, our lives exponentially more complicated, that we warrant it's time for a change, it's time for a different form of government and, to the points that were made earlier, SB 2 still preserves the town meeting deliberative session that has significant power. For those of you who attended the SB 2 public hearings, you would know that there is a significant power to change and amend any motion, any article that is being placed on the ballot on election day. Definitely a couple of percent may be voted by absentee ballot, but to those 2-1/2% that voted by absentee ballot, do their votes count any less than yours or mine, don't they have a right to vote. If I'm away on a business trip, don't I have a right to vote? I think everyone has that right to vote and should be disenfranchised and choose to vote by absentee ballot, some just can't be here. There have been times when I've done all my homework and

studied the town budget and come to town meeting and I'm away on a business trip. That's my priority, I've got a job and I've got to do it first and I wish I could be here to vote, but sometimes you just can't. So, I think it's time for a new form of government, for a new day in our community.

The Moderator stated that you will be voting on this issue next Tuesday at: Center Harbor at the Cary Mead Room, Center Harbor Municipal Building, 10 am to 6 pm; Meredith, Community Center, 7 am to 7 pm; and Sandwich, Central Fire Station, 10 am to 7 pm.

### **ARTICLE 8**

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

The Moderator invited Sen. Johnson to join him at the microphone. Carl and I go back many years. I first met Carl, I believe, on the steps of the Sandwich Town Hall when we were both campaigning something or other. It was March and we were talking about baseball. Carl mentioned that at one time he was signed by the Boston Braves and I had to tell him that my dad was signed by the Boston Red Sox before World War II. Then I had the pleasure of serving with Carl in the New Hampshire State Legislature. I think, more importantly, is the service that he has given to the Inter-Lakes School District and these folks here, Carl, feel very strongly about that service and they have asked me to read a resolution which is dated March 4, 2009.

Whereas, Carl R. Johnson has faithfully served as a school board member of the Inter-Lakes School District for 27 years, and was vice chairman of the board for several of those years, as well as serving on the New Hampshire School Administrative Unite #2 School Board; and,

Whereas, Carl R. Johnson, as a community leader, served with distinction as a State Representative and Senator, acting as liaison for the board and serving as a delegate to the New Hampshire School Boards Association; and,

Whereas, Carl R. Johnson successfully and completely managed his school board responsibilities while fulfilling his demanding roles of State Representative and Senator; and,

Whereas, Carl R. Johnson has worked diligently with the board and employees in the area of collective bargaining, an example of this to be found in his service as negotiator for the Inter-Lakes Education Association agreements, was a avid supporter of the Inter-Lakes Auditorium project and a strong advocate for arts in the community; and,

Whereas, Carl R. Johnson's knowledge and commitment to education has been evidenced by his willingness to talk with, and listen to community members to become better informed as to the needs and wants of the community; and,

Whereas, Carl R. Johnson always conducted his duties in a gentlemanly manner, striving to provide all students with the highest quality programming and, as a board member, ensuring to always state his reasons for a vote. Mr. Johnson kept his eyes on tomorrow when dealing with the issues of today; and,

Whereas, Carl R. Johnson's distinguished efforts in support of the school system and its children have been evident by his devoted service, genuine enthusiasm and dedication; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, that the voters of the Inter-Lakes School District recognize, with gratitude, Carl R. Johnson's contribution to the children, the schools and the Town of Meredith by unanimously adopting this resolution as a tribute to Carl R. Johnson to be entered into the permanent records of the District and that a copy be presented to Mr. Johnson.

The Moderator congratulated Mr. Johnson, who received a standing ovation from the voters present.

Mr. Johnson stated that the 27 years went by very, very quickly and I just think I wouldn't have been on the board that long if we hadn't had dedicated school board members in all of those years and many of you board members are here this evening. I was so proud when new members came on the board and how well and how hard they worked. I want to thank you very much for extending this tribute to me and I'll be around for a few more years and I'll be attending the school board meetings to be sure we're all on track. Thank you very much.

The Moderator entertained a motion to adjourn.

At 8:36 p.m., it was moved by Mr. Carty, Meredith, and seconded by Mr. Howard Cunningham, Sandwich, to adjourn the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Karla J. Cashman  
School District Clerk

I hereby attest that this is a true copy.

Karla J. Cashman  
School District Clerk