

second paragraph). He remarked that the request was brought to the selectboard because it became the only governing body of the town when the unified district replaced the Ferrisburgh school board.

Rick said as was seen with the motion to amend not moving forward there is definitely some hesitation, and timing is the big issue plus a need to know more. He said the board was asked on Monday by the superintendent of ANWSD to amend tonight's agenda to add the warning. So, it would not seem appropriate for the selectboard to amend an agenda that has not been publicized. Rick said in order for the selectboard to warn a vote there would need to be better communication about what the outcomes would look like. He said he does not think the selectboard is opposed to putting out a vote; this request came too quickly with seemingly not enough due diligence to warn the community, especially given the gravity of the vote. He said the selectboard is willing to work with the school board and the warning could be on the next selectboard meeting agenda or a special meeting is also possible. Bill Clark said he would collect as much specific feedback as possible to bring back to the school board about what can be done to get the warning approved. Rick said it is also important to take time now because the agreement the district has with the town has a four-year timeframe, after which, in 2021, the school board has the authority to make decisions without coming to the town for a vote.

Jim Benoit expressed concern that the warning does not say what was stated at previous meetings. When he questioned Bill Clark about use of the fields if the school is closed, he replied a motion was made at the September 27 school board meeting to clarify that if the district is not using Ferrisburgh Central School (FCS) for educational purposes then it would as quickly as possible, pursuant to law, make that transfer back to the town to include all real property and the building. Jim said he was very concerned he still has not seen the numbers. Stating the numbers that have been publicized are not good enough, he said he would not endorse the warning without the real numbers, including the savings from closing the school, and a timeline and plan of the process. He questioned how the school board knows that closing both schools is the right thing to do without knowing the numbers.

Discussion continued to focus around the need to have more information from the school board including the specific financial impact and consequences for each scenario: if only FSC closes, if only Addison Central School (ACS) closes, or if both schools close. Stressing the school budget will be based on the results of the vote, George Gardner, a Ferrisburgh representative to the unified district, said there are several viable options that keep FCS open for a year or two. Red Muir said the school board has been stuck to option 3 from the time of its retreat to the last meeting on September 27. He said he feels if the town votes to close FCS, the school board would go with option 3. When pressed by Red Muir, George said if the results are to close both FCS and ACS then the school budget would most likely be created based on option 3. He added if one or the other school closes then the budget would be created based on another scenario.

Clark Hinsdale spoke about the selectboard's fiduciary relationship to look out for the residents' investments (real estate, buildings, etc.) and said in order to recommend a warning to vote to close the school he would like to see a sample contract of the deal from the school board. He said the choices and impacts should be clear, and he wants to be able to answer questions posed at selectboard meetings about this issue and suggested an educational packet created by the selectboard be mailed to residents.

Matt Vogel read the text of a petition created by some residents of Ferrisburgh who are committed to saving FCS, which was signed by 262 people (largely Ferrisburgh voters). It states: "We petition the administration of the board of directors to withdraw the motion for special election to close FCS and instead adopt a budget that will allow FCS to operate as a school in some capacity to be determined through further community engagement." He said the petition was presented to the school board at Friday night's meeting and from his perspective was largely ignored.

Clark Hinsdale talked about issues he mentioned at a prior meeting, which included asking Addison County Regional Planning Commission for input about growth in the next 10 years, considering the future potential of the Vergennes Economic Corridor to bring growth, recruiting kids from private schools to attend FCS, and increasing school choice for kids from Hinesburg and Monkton to come to FCS.

Bill Clark reiterated the driving force for closing the schools is the need to cut \$1M from the budget this year and year after year for the considerable future. He said he would send tonight's feedback to the superintendent and school board chair, as early as tonight, imploring them to quickly contact Rick Ebel by email to send him some of the information the school board has already put together, welcome questions, and get prompt answers.

George Gardner said 16 V.S.A. § 722(d) compels the selectboard to warn the vote. In response, Jessica James read the entire statute: "The functions of the legislative branch of each pre-existing school district in warning meetings and conducting elections of unified union school district board members shall be performed by the corresponding board of alderpersons of a city or city council, a selectboard of a town, or the trustees of an incorporated school district as appropriate. Responding further, Jessica cited 1 V.S.A. § 312(d)(3)(B), which states "A public body may table or otherwise postpone an item on their meeting agenda when necessary, as in situations where additional information is needed before a decision may be made."

Commenting that the odds of the vote passing in Ferrisburgh are pretty slim, Carl Cole said he thinks the school board is wasting valuable time and should bite the bullet and do the best budget it can for this year, and come back with some real substantial facts next year and vote then. He stated he is willing to pay extra taxes this year if he has to before voting for something he does not know the full consequences of. Chris Campbell said he understands the penalty from the state but there is a willingness among some of us to pay more taxes because our school is more important than the tax rate, and this option is not being offered by the school board.

Many visitors present expressed concerns including what the reconfiguration would look like, how property taxes would be affected after absorbing the \$850,000 debt from pre-unification, how issues at the high school such as overcrowding in the cafeteria would be resolved, what the cost of putting the school board administration in the high school would be, and what the cost of fixing the mold problem at FCS would be. Visitors noted positive things happening, which include a recent grant for zoning changes to increase the town's population and the North Ferrisburgh Village Association creating a town center. Others ideas talked about were forming a committee to come up with creative solutions to promote the town and consider other educational options for the school.

Kristina MacKulin, a Ferrisburgh representative to the unified district school board, encouraged visitors to attend the next informational meeting on October 8, 2019, at 6:30 p.m. at Vergennes Elementary School. She said the board would be adding in pieces about what happens if FCS votes no or votes yes. Rick Ebel commented that in his communications with school board personnel in the central office they are generating information as they get questions and concerns.

**(b) Building maintenance — town offices needs/update on communication with Breadload Construction re: town office roof and front entrance maintenance.** Rick Ebel spoke about emails he exchanged with Paul Wyncoop of Bread Loaf Construction. After discussion, which included input from Red Muir and Carl Cole, Rick said he would contact Paul to ask him to attend a site visit at the town offices on October 9, 2019, between 12:30 and 1:30 p.m.