

**BROOKLINE SCHOOL DISTRICT
ANNUAL MEETING
FEBRUARY 8, 2021
MEETING MINUTES**

The Annual Meeting of the Brookline School District was conducted on Monday, February 8, 2021 at 6:34 p.m., and in accordance with the alternative format governed by [House Bill 1129](#).

Peter Webb, Moderator, Brookline School District, presided.

Members of the School Board Present: Kenneth Haag, Chairman
 Erin Sarris, Vice Chairman
 Karen Jew, Secretary
 Rebecca Howie
 Alison Marsano

Members of the School Board Absent:

Members of the Finance Cmte. Present: Brian Rater, Chair
 Matthew Mailloux, Secretary
 Dennis Comeau

Members of the Finance Cmte. Absent:

Also in Attendance: Andrew Corey, Superintendent
 Gina Bergskaug, Asst. Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction
 Bob Thompson, Assistant Superintendent of Student Services
 Kelly Seeley, Business Administrator
 Patricia Bouley, Principal, Captain Samuel Douglass Academy
 Alana Justice, School District Clerk

Chairman Haag stated written notice of the two meetings was mailed to residents. The information session was conducted on February 1st. At that time, discussion occurred around each of the warrant articles and public input was received and responded to.

Leading up to this meeting, written input has been received from voters. Chairman Haag noted all timely submissions would be read into the record. Each article would be introduced, and consideration given to the public input provided. Members of the School Board and Finance Committee would take positions, any proposed amendments would be considered, and the Board would move the Articles one-by-one to the Alternative Ballot either as posted or as amended.

Chairman Haag read into the record the following input provided by Brookline voters.

Tom Solon, 2 Shady Rock Road

Thank you for a well-run, informative first session. The District Moderator stated that, in the absence this year of a deliberative session at which the voters can amend warrant articles, the board, you, are permitted to override the tax cap and put forth a warrant article with a budget exceeding the cap.

I encourage you to put forth a warrant article that includes the budget total you support *regardless* of the tax cap. I make this request for two reasons.

1. Your obligation as board members is to act in the best interest of the students.
2. The voters will be offered the option of voting against the budget in favor of the default budget which is only \$10k lower than the capped budget. Using the capped budget amount for the warrant effectively eliminates giving voters a choice.

We have elected you to dig into the details and make decisions in our best interests, balancing service with taxpayer expense. The tax cap is an artificial, arbitrary constraint and is needlessly duplicating the default budget. Please give the voters a real choice between a school board budget supported by you, the experts, or a default budget which prioritizes fiscal constraint alone.

Additionally, in his petition warrant article presentation for dissolution of the coop middle school and his argument made against the SAU budget, Mr. Pauer presented a great deal of information as fact. Most of it was his personal opinion and much was either misleading or false. These concerned costs, workloads, comparative sizes, etc. I don't know what format the next meeting takes, or what you intend to provide to the public prior to voting day but I encourage you to methodically rebut and dispute the falsehoods presented.

I would also like to see you provide some information to the public about the amount of resources consumed processing and attending to the requirements of petition articles, right to know requests, and frivolous legal challenges to operations of our school district. The citizens have the right to most of these activities, but they contribute significantly to the very costs about which Mr. Pauer complains. The labor hours committed to this work is part of what drives the need for staff in the central office. This information should be included in the so-called pursuit of transparency.

Thank you for your consideration of this input. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Jessica Hartman, 51 Mountain Road

As a parent of a 3rd and 6th grader, I would like to share my sincere thanks to our community for all that has been done for our kids this school year. My gratitude extends to the board, administrators, teachers, staff, parents and students for working hard as a team to provide the best education in the safest way possible. I am amazed with our remote and in-person options. As I look at other communities, I just want to say thank you to each and every person for making this year possible for our kids.

Eric Pauer, 12 Westview Road

Article 2 - This article should remain at the proposed operating budget of \$9,867,097, compliant with our 8% tax cap. Even at this operating budget level, the Brookline School District tax rate will go up 13.1% from last year, \$1.27 per thousand valuation, driven primarily by this article. For a \$400,000 home, that is an additional \$508 a year. This is a dramatic tax increase for taxpaying families in Brookline, especially those suffering from the pandemic and/or its economic impacts, and those on fixed incomes. We do not have the unconstrained ability to pay more. The operating budget does not need to be larger, as that would further drive the tax rate increase higher.

Article 3 - I recommend reducing this article to \$53,000 to cover the proposed uses for next year, and help keep the tax increase down.

Article 4 - I recommend reducing this article to \$5,000 to help keep the tax increase down. This trust is already 89% funded to the goal balance and we do not need to get to 100% of the goal balance during this difficult year.

Article 5 - I recommend reducing this article to \$20,000 to help keep the tax increase down.

Article 6 - I oppose this article. The SAU office budget has nearly doubled in 15 years since 2007, while students in the SAU has decreased over 13%. We are just one of 8 of 105 SAUs in New Hampshire that has multiple assistant superintendents. In 2007, we spent \$391 per student for SAU costs, and the 2022 proposal raises that to \$813 per student.

Inflation has been 23% in the past 15 years, so this SAU office budget has increased at more than four times the rate of inflation. We need to consider withdrawal from SAU 41 per RSA 194-C:2, IV(a) next year to return to a reasonable budget.

Article 9 - I recommend amending this article to a 1 percent level, instead of 2 percent. At the 1 percent level, this still enables the school board to retain more than \$100,000, plus the monies in the multiple trust funds. We also use the 1 percent level for the Hollis Brookline Cooperative School District. I oppose this article at the 2 percent level.

Article 10 - I support this article. All of the initial data shows that 7th and 8th grade students can benefit by remaining in Brookline educationally. The initial data also indicates significant economic savings of more than \$500,000 to Brookline taxpaying families while providing a state of the art middle school with the best in class pod layout and a modern healthy and efficient HVAC system. Please support this important study before time eludes us and we are looking at spending more money on building renovations and expansions in Hollis.

Article 11 - I support this article, which specifies that the tax impact will be including the wording of future warrant articles, which also includes the SB2 ballot. It provides a clear estimate of the tax impact of warrant articles directly on the warrant and ballot to better inform voters and increase transparency.

Alan Etlinger, 17 Westview Road

I agree 100% with Eric Pauer's comments as follows:

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Edward D. Arnold, 10 Milford Street

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increased at more than four times the rate of inflation. We need to consider withdrawal from SAU 41 per RSA 194-C:2, IV(a) next year to return to a reasonable budget.

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Article 11 - I support this article, which specifies that the tax impact will be including the wording of future warrant articles, which also includes the SB2 ballot. It provides a clear estimate of the tax impact of warrant articles directly on the warrant and ballot to better inform voters and increase transparency

Drew Kellner, 7 Yankee Way

I write to request the Brookline School District amend article 2 of the proposed warrant to an operating budget of \$10,025,776. This adjustment is necessary to remove the distortion caused by the FY21 State Grant that was unexpected and is not currently expected for FY22. The FY21 grant lowered the amount raised through local taxes making an artificially low base to calculate the tax cap against. The \$10,025,776 operating budget would have complied with the tax cap, had FY21 state grant not been received.

Mary Zore, 265 Route 13

I understand the Brookline school and COOP budgets want to raise the tax impact to 13.1% with increased spending in the schools. The rate of increase is supposed to be kept lower, isn't it? During this year, with a pandemic, many people have had lower incomes. In the spirit of shared sacrifice, I feel the school system and boards should be sympathetic to the needs of families in our towns and work toward lowering costs rather than raising taxes. This trend toward higher budgets annually, which has been going on for years, does not mean our schools are better, just more expensive. As much as teachers are important and classrooms are important, so is the home environment.

During the past month there is a notable rise in suicide and depression in younger people because of isolation and problems at homes often linked to unemployment and money difficulties. I had heard that three teens in Amherst schools committed suicide in this past year, and am not sure of what problems have been noticed in Brookline-Hollis in regard to depression because of the pandemic.

In the spirit of charity, our school boards should be working with families and have concern for the well-being of homes to meet their needs and not just concerned with desires for new materials or raises or added staff. Let's keep the cost of schools down until the virus is turned around, which seems to be happening. Give this year to families to recover rather than adding to the financial burdens.

I will vote no for any increase to school budgets because I feel the family is just more important or more so in educating our children.

Dana Ketchen, 59 Russell Hill Road, Brookline

Thank you all for navigating through the incredible challenges of this past year during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Here is my input on the budget:

In light of the fact that we are not receiving any funds from the state to help offset the budget this year, we will realize last years, and this year's increases this tax year. The tax impact of supporting the budget and warrants as written is far too drastic of a tax rate increase to bear for the taxpayers.

I implore you all to reduce the budget and proposed articles to a tax impact of 4% increase.

Article 3 should be reduced to \$37,500 and surplus returned to taxpayers.

Article 4 should be eliminated this year.

Article 5 should be reduced to \$25,000.

Article 6 should be rejected as written as I do not believe it is amendable. The SAU budget is out of control.

Article 9- I do not support the school district retaining any unused funds. Please return to the taxpayers.

I implore this board to take any action they can to reduce the articles that will be voted on. We are facing a 17% town tax rate increase last year that was absorbed by a school funding grant. We are in a global pandemic and in an economy supported by federal dollars at this time. Please make the difficult decisions. It is for one year.

Thank you for considering the above.

Diane Pauer, 12 Westview Road

Please share with the members of the Brookline School Board, my comments below. Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Article 2: I propose reducing the operating budget by \$100,000 to \$9,767,097 thus reducing the tax rate increase to about 11.5%. A tax rate increase of 13.1% associated with the proposed budget is unacceptably high especially in the present economic environment amidst a pandemic. Double digit percentage increases in taxation is fiscally irresponsible as well as unsustainable for Brookline residents. High taxes are the result of too much spending. Priorities must be made. The Brookline School District cannot expect taxpayers to pay for ever increasing budgets year after year.

Article 3: I propose reducing this article to \$53,000 to match the planned maintenance items and minimize the tax increase during this difficult economic time for many households in Brookline.

Article 4: I propose modifying this article to \$5,000 due to the fact that this trust is approximately 90% funded. Moreover, it is both prudent and just to return more of the unreserved fund balance to the taxpayers during this difficult economic time rather than retain the taxpayer's monies.

Article 5: I propose reducing this contingency fund article to \$20,000; thereby, returning more funds to the residents for the aforementioned reasons.

Article 6: I OPPOSE this article. In my opinion, a single year tax increase of 9.5% is unequivocally too high especially at time when Brookline residents are themselves not seeing wages increase at this rate--if they even have a job. Inflation has been 1.5%. As such, the increase for administrators is more than six times the rate of inflation. This is unjustifiable for the reasons stated previously.

Article 7: Having served as a *pro bono* Special Education advocate for students and their families as well as a strong advocate for Special Education in general, I SUPPORT this article.

Article 8: Again, I SUPPORT this article on behalf of Special Education students and their families.

Article 9: I proposed modifying this article to a 1% level, which is congruent to that which is done in the Hollis Brookline Cooperative School District. In my opinion, overall there are too many trust funds and contingency funds. Such funds should be minimally funded returning unreserved fund balances back to the taxpayers when possible.

Article 10: I SUPPORT this article. It is incumbent upon the Brookline taxpayers and the Brookline School board to openly, honestly, without bias, explore ways to reduce the costs to educate our children and to improve educational excellence. There is merit in exploring the idea of educating our seventh and eighth graders in Brookline. As a mother of two children, who went through the Hollis Brookline Cooperative School system, I never felt comfortable sending my children to a school in the next town (a 40 minute bus ride one way, with an obscenely early morning bus pick-up time) when they were in seventh and eighth grade. It makes more sense to send our students to a Coop school for High School (Grades 9-12) or even Senior High School (Grades 10-12).

Article 11: I SUPPORT this article because it provides a clear declaration of the tax impact of each warrant article published on both the warrant as well as on the official ballot utilized under the official ballot referendum form of meeting--SB2 system. Such information will serve to inform voters more fully. As a community, we should strive to provide both truth and transparency in governance.

Christina Haag, 9 Hobart Hill Road

Thank you for all of your hard work and dedication to our young learners in Brookline, specifically in this challenging year. I feel proud to live in a community that has been able to safely implement in-person learning -- something so essential for our children.

In review of the Warrant articles up for voting, I support Warrant article 2. In review of the financial report, it is obvious that the district has reviewed the budget closely, making reductions where possible but also supporting our educators with benefits and our community by adding an additional special education teacher. I also strongly support Warrant article 6. As our district continues to be one of the best school districts in the state of NH, it is not surprising that administrative costs have to increase slightly. Pooling our administrative resources with Hollis through the Co-Op allows our district to operate more efficiently and remain cost effective in our administrative costs.

I moved to Brookline, NH for the strong school district. In addition to our beautiful neighborhoods, it is the schools that make Brookline such a desirable community. While our taxes may be slightly increased by Warrant article 2 and 6, our property values also continue to grow as more families desire moving into Brookline for the school system. For the families who may no longer have children in the school district, I would challenge you to consider your growing property value and vote in favor of Warrant articles 2 and 6.

Our district operates at a lower cost/pupil than the state average while still achieving exceptional math and language scores. As a community, I would hope that we could support such a modest increase in the school budget and administrative costs.

Hon. Melanie Levesque, 2 McDaniels Drive

Thank you for the work you do on behalf of Brookline students and residents. I find your board to be thoughtful, fair and keeping in mind the goal of education for our children.

I want to express my support in your vote against the Brookline schools K-8 Feasibility study. In doing so we would lose our economies of scale; we would need more administrative staff not less and we would no doubt need to build another building to support the additional students. A point was made about the growth our children experience by meeting new people and being part of another school. Socialization is an important aspect. We see a tremendous amount of growth as they enter middle school and complete High School. I support the board decision against the feasibility study.

Thank you again for your service!

Becky Kellner, 7 Yankee Way

I write to support Drew Kellner's request that the Brookline School District amend article 2 of the proposed warrant to an operating budget of \$10,025,776. I am asking for this adjustment because of the distortion caused by the FY21 State Grant that was received, but not currently expected for the FY22. The FY21 grant lowered the amount raised through local taxes making an artificially low base to calculate the tax cap against. The \$10,025,776 operating budget would have complied with the tax cap, had FY21 state grant not been received.

Colleen Micavich, 29 Iron Works Road

I do not support the warrant article proposing a feasibility study of a K-8 Brookline school system. This is just one of many examples where Mr. Pauer is attempting to destroy our school system, and we have much more important things to spend our time on than this proposal.

Miranda and Eric Terry, 1 Laurence Way

I oppose the feasibility study proposed by Eric Pauer.

Amy Tate, 6 Muscatanipus Road

I oppose the feasibility study proposed by Eric Pauer.

Elyse Hobson, 2 Laurel Crest Drive

I have a daughter in kindergarten and two other children who will be in the school system in a few years. I am writing to tell you I oppose the feasibility study proposed by Eric Pauer.

Stacie Sanborn, 13 Jefts Drive

Please put it on record that I strongly oppose the feasibility study proposed by Eric Pauer. Our schools do not have time for this nonsense, and it will not save money. It is frustrating to have the same small group of residents cause such havoc each year. As a Brookline resident as well as someone who works within the SAU 41 school system I am strongly against this. Thank you for your time.

Karen Chiarizio, 4 Countryside Drive

I want to let you know I oppose the feasibility study.

Mallory Risler, 14 Hobart Hill

Just wanted to write I oppose Eric Pauer's feasibility study. Thank you and the school board for your continued great work!

Jeff McGarry, 3 Yankee Way

I write to request the Brookline School District amend article 2 of the proposed warrant to an operating budget of \$10,025,776. This adjustment is necessary to remove the distortion caused by the FY21 State Grant that was unexpected and is not currently expected for FY22. The FY21 grant lowered the amount raised through local taxes making an artificially low base to calculate the tax cap against. The \$10,025,776 operating budget would have complied with the tax cap, had FY21 state grant not been received.

Cathy Hazelton, 3 McDaniels Drive

I have been a resident of Brookline since 2004. I am writing to tell you that I firmly believe Article 10 is not in the best interest of our children, nor is it best for the budget of Brookline.

My two children have gone through the Brookline and COOP schools. The pedagogy and overall experience that my children were able to partake in at the Middle School cannot be replicated financially or academically in a stand-alone 6-8 grade school in Brookline. Please vote against the formation of this study committee and redirect the time and focus to supporting our existing framework of schools, teachers, curriculum and resources.

Thank you for hearing my opinion. I value your commitment, work and time that you give to support our children and schools.

Melanie Brooks, 51 Rocky Pond Road

Please be advised I oppose the feasibility study proposed by Eric Pauer.

Pease share with the rest of the school board on my behalf.

Drew Kellner, 7 Yankee Way

HB1129 gives the governing body (Brookline School Board) the sole authority to set the final form of the warrant that the legislative body will vote on. I am very confident that in a normal year (not under HB1129 structure) the legislative body would amend the operating budget to remove the distortion caused by the FY21 State grant. Under this virtual comment format, I am concerned that the vast majority of voters are not even aware of this unusual issue and thus comments to the BSD will be underwhelming. I do not believe unexpected revenue from the state was envisioned when the tax cap was implemented. The tax cap petitioner described the state grant as a one off event during the 1/13/21 public hearing; as such we should be reversing the impact it had.

Loren & Michelle Cole, 13 Halfyard Drive

Both my husband and I are opposed to the feasibility study proposed by Eric Pauer. We love our school system the way it is set up currently. Our kids are very much looking forward to integrating with the Hollis students when they start middle school.

Ryan Pauer, 12 Westview Road

Please find my inputs provided below for this year's Brookline School District (BSD) warrant articles to be read into the record for the second virtual deliberative session of the BSD on Monday, February 8th, 2021.

Article 2: Please keep the proposed operating budget at \$9,867,097. The tax increase of 13% is not reasonable and should not be higher. Please consider lowering the budget by \$100K to \$9,767,097 to make the tax increase lower.

Article 3: The proposed use this year is about \$53K, so I request this article be modified to \$53,000 so tax increase will be lowered.

Article 4: I request this article be changed to a new figure of \$5,000. This trust is almost at the goal number and taxpayers need a break.

Article 5: I request this article be changed to a new figure of \$20,000 to give taxpayers needed a break.

Article 6: I oppose this article. This budget is up 9.5% for Brookline which is a very high increase. Brookline should look at starting its own SAU with reduced costs.

Article 7: I support this article.

Article 9: 2% is too high a percentage to retain funds. The COOP only retains 1%. There are several other trust funds too. I request changing to 1%.

Article 10: This is a great article which I support. We need to look at improving education for our students and saving taxpayer dollars. This study will help to understand these improvements. I went to HB Middle School and did not like to go to Hollis in seventh and eighth grade.

Article 11: This is a great article which I support. It seems logical to tell voters how much each warrant article will cost and include this information on the SB2 ballot and warrant. Voters are smart and can figure out how much the article will cost if we provide them with this information.

Laura & John Finocchiaro, 7 Gilson Road

I am writing to let the board know that we do not support a k-8 in Brookline. We cannot sustain the costs we would incur by building a new school or adding to CSDA. We have been part of the COOP and our tax dollars have supported that. This will ensure that my children won't have access to the same educational opportunity that Hollis students do. Is Hollis willing to share the burden of expenses for this split? What does this do to our already ridiculous taxes? How can the small group petitioning for this justify this with any logic? This has been researched before and it was found not to be financially feasible for either town. What is really behind such a motion? We are opposed to this.

Chris Risler, 14 Hobart Hill Road

I wanted to tell you that I oppose the feasibility study, warrant article 10.

Susan Surette, 12 Jefts Drive

I oppose the feasibility study proposed by Eric Pauer.

Brian Surette, 12 Jefts Drive

I oppose the feasibility study proposed by Eric Pauer.

Diane Marsolini, 27 Laurel Crest Drive

I am writing in opposition to Petition Warrant Article 1: "Shall we direct the Brookline School Board to convene a study committee investigating the feasibility and suitability of expanding responsibility of the Brookline School District to grades K-8, with the committee consisting of a School Board member, Selectboard member, Finance or Budget Committee member, and two members of the public, reporting findings by November 3, 2021?"

The Hollis Brookline Middle School is an excellent school offering a wide variety of courses and activities to our students. Keeping 7th and 8th grade in Brookline results in the potential to reduce opportunities for the Brookline students. This also results in dividing the Hollis Brookline community which again results in fewer opportunities to interact with a broader community. I do not see this as a positive step for the Brookline school district.

Katrina & Graham Loff, 90 Russell Hill Road

Writing to extend our many thanks to you for *not supporting* the recent proposed warrant article for a K-8 feasibility study and consistently putting what is best for our schools and community at the forefront.

We know your service roles within our town are not easy. Please know your time, effort and decisions are appreciated and do not go unnoticed. We whole heartedly do not support this proposal alongside you.

Tom Rogers, 8A Louis Drive

I write to request the Brookline School District amend article 2 of the proposed warrant to an operating budget of \$10,025,776. This adjustment is necessary to remove the distortion caused by the FY21 State Grant that was unexpected and is not currently expected for FY22. The FY21 grant lowered the amount raised through local taxes making an artificially low base to calculate the tax cap against. The \$10,025,776 operating budget would have complied with the tax cap, had FY21 state grant not been received.

Melissa McGoldrick, 17 Wildwood Drive

I want to write you today in regard to the Feasibility Study of a K-8 Brookline School District. I am opposed to this study for 3 different reasons:

1. Over the years, there has always been interest in splitting the COOP, whether it be the middle school or middle school and high school. Every time a study occurs, or some research is done into the idea, the financial burden proves to be greater than the reward.
2. Since we will find the same as past residents, that the financial burden is greater than the reward to have K-8 within the Brookline School District, this study will only take away precious time and resources from our kids, as administrators need to spend more time on this study vs. spending time on bettering the kids and school system that we already have.
3. From a social emotional perspective, and as a graduate of HBHS myself, I can tell you that bringing the kids together in the 7th grade allows them to make friends with their Hollis peers and feel more connected to their wider community prior to going to High School. I know most decisions are made financially, but the ability to bring these kids together at the 7th grade is actually important, because middle school is the age where they settle into peer groups, and once they enter high school, there is no distinction between a Brookline or Hollis student.

Stephanie Rogers, 8A Louis Drive

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Mary McGarry, 3 Yankee Way

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Jessica Hartman, 51 Mountain Road

I am in favor of increasing or eliminating the tax cap on the budget. I trust the school board and administrators to create a prudent budget to support our students. I would be in favor of voting on that budget as there will still be the default on the ballot as well. Limiting with a cap does not seem necessary.

Also, I am not in favor of the article to do a feasibility study to pull out the middle school from the SAU. This is a waste of time and resources and our students benefit by combining at middle school!

Bettielue Hill, 47 Mountain Road

My kids are at the high school, I support the budget, and will be at the remote public hearing on Feb 11. Thank you for the work you do for our community.

Alyson Tersigni, 15 Taylor Drive

We support the school budget and our schools.

Jillian Gibson, 53 Cleveland Hill Road

I am writing to inform you and the school board that I oppose Petition Warrant Article 10 which proposes removing grades 7-8 from the Coop District and bringing the students into the Brookline School District.

Peter A. Cook, 10 Main Street

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Gordon Matthews, 11 Westview Road

I stand in opposition to Article 10. The school system is the lifeblood of these two towns and tearing it apart serves no valid purpose and will not save any money. Vote no on article 10.

John and Cailin Drugan, 30 Captain Seaver Road

We wanted to voice our support for the schools and the proposed school budget. Thank you.

Nicole Susko, 6 Burge Drive

I have grown up in the surrounding area my whole life, and moved to Brookline when our first child was born with the intention that he would attend the Hollis Brookline Cooperative School District.

I am writing to you today to voice my opposition to the petition article on removing grades 7 and 8 from the Hollis Brookline Cooperative School District. In the years that I have lived in this town, the idea of Brookline withdrawing from the Coop has come up numerous times. Last year the complete dissolution of the Coop was studied and voted down. My understanding is that this has happened other times in the past as well.

At this time, I do not support the removal of grades 7/8 from the coop as I do not feel it would be financially beneficial to the residents of Brookline to do so. The cost of withdrawing from the coop has been proven to be extraordinarily expensive, and the financial resources needed to add space to the school building, as well as staff the additional grades would be costly. Based on previous studies, I do not see how this would not negatively impact the taxes of Brookline residents.

I am also concerned about the impacts this would have socially on the students within the district. The ability to blend students from two towns as early as grades 7/8 provides additional social opportunities for the kids, an easier social transition into the high school, and also more diverse sports and extra-curricular activities.

Many of us moved to the Hollis-Brookline area specifically for the highly-regarded coop school district. Drastically changing a district that effectively attracts new residents to the area could potentially change the way that some residents move to or stay in this town because of the schools.

I appreciate you taking the time to review my opposition and concerns to the petition.

Joel Sanborn, 13 Jefts Drive

I oppose the feasibility study proposed by Eric Pauer.

Chase Cote, 24 Wallace Brook Road

I write to request the Brookline School District amend article 2 of the proposed warrant to an operating budget of \$10,025,776. This adjustment is necessary to remove the distortion caused by the FY21 State Grant that was unexpected and is not currently expected for FY22. The FY21 grant lowered the amount raised through local taxes making an artificially low base to calculate the tax cap against. The \$10,025,776 operating budget would have complied with the tax cap, had FY21 state grant not been received.

Nicole Smith, 42 Rocky Pond Road

I am against a feasibility study. I feel strongly grades 7 & 8 should stay part of the coop.

I am also against the “anti-discrimination” warrant that is trying to halt the progress of the DEI committee.

Joseph Hartman, 5 Mountain Road

I trust the school board and administrators to create a prudent budget to support our students. I would be in favor of voting on that budget as there will still be a default on the ballot as well. I am in favor of Brookline warrant articles 2, 3, 4, 5, 6,7, 8, 9. I am not in favor of Brookline warrant article 10 or any other provisions to initiate a change to the COOP or removal of Brookline from the COOP middle school or high school.

Elissa Rasmussen, 1 Winterberry Road

I wanted to reach out to voice my opposition to warrant article 10. As a parent of a 4th grader and 6th grader here in Brookline, I am very happy with the current set up and am not looking for change. I appreciate the opinion of the school board in the 0-5 vote and do not think there would be a tax savings, or any great positives related to this change. I imagine we have more important issues that this time can be used for. Thanks for your service. It's truly appreciated, and I look forward to supporting your reelection this year.

Gerrell Smith, 42 Rocky Pond Road

I am a parent of Brookline, NH. Both of my kids have moved on from HB Middle school. So my kids will not be impacted by this change. However, for the families that moved to Brookline to have their kids go through the HB coop, this is not fair.

I strongly oppose removing Brookline students from the HB Coop.

Kacie & Lloyd Ellis, 7 Smith Road

I am writing in opposition of the feasibility study proposed by Eric Pauer. This has been done in recent years with no findings that would benefit the taxpayers of Brookline. Additionally, Mr. Pauer no longer has children in the school system. It is unfortunate that he is not supportive of other families wanting their children to benefit from the wonderful school district his children once enjoyed.

Keith Micavich, 29 Ironworks Road

We are opposed to removing Brookline students from grades 7-8 in the Coop. It needs to remain the way it is now. Thank you!

Patricia Lynch, 35 Pepperell Road

I just watched part of the budget hearing of 2/1 and listened to the explanations of the budget and articles. I have these questions/comments:

1. As I understand, article 3 requests 75K. You have 50K already and plan on spending ~53K. Would it not be better to amend the spending, use what is in the account and return 75K to taxpayers?
2. Article 4 requests 25K for the special ed fund, which at present has 200K. Even though the special ed budget is going up 27%, no money is being used from that fund, but you want to add an additional 25K. So the taxpayer is paying 27% more for special ed, and I understand there is no choice here...but on top of the increase, taxpayers commit another 25K? Let's think about us taxpayers!
3. Article 5 requests 40K for 'unanticipated' expenses. The youtube video cut off and I did not hear what the balance and use for this money would be. Please enlighten.

4. Article 9 wants to keep a bunch more unanticipated fund balance. Not only that, you want to keep keeping it since 'until it is rescinded'. Which will be never. This money belongs to the TAXPAYER!

5. SAU budget: I cannot seem to find that budget online, but what is the 13% increase?

This has been a difficult year for many and the fact that the District wants to keep so much of the unanticipated fund balance I find troubling. Taxpayers need to be considered here! Even without COVID, the taxes in Brookline are astronomical. If things keep up this way, Brookline will be all "users" of the education system with no one else ever able to afford to live or retire here! Retired and others who have no kids in the school still pay those taxes.

PS. WHY do we want grades 7,8 taken into Brookline? Where is the plan to put them?

Alana Cote, 24 Wallace Brook Road

I write to request the Brookline School District amend article 2 of the proposed warrant to an operating budget of \$10,025,776. This adjustment is necessary to remove the distortion caused by the FY21 State Grant that was unexpected and is not currently expected for FY22. The FY21 grant lowered the amount raised through local taxes making an artificially low base to calculate the tax cap against. The \$10,025,776 operating budget would have complied with the tax cap, had FY21 state grant not been received.

I also am completely against the idea of Brookline becoming a K-8 district. I believe it is an enormous waste of resources and time. I am one of many families that moved my family to town to attend the SAU 41 district- which for my family includes joining with Hollis is grade 7. Thank you for your time.

Jeff Pouliot, Hollis Lane

I was directed to email you my input concerning the 2021 Brookline School District Warrant Articles. Enclosed is my input. Thank you for taking this into consideration.

In General, I am against the raising of taxes this year. We are currently in the midst of a worldwide pandemic of unprecedented proportions. There are many residents within our town and within the reaches of the SAU that are unemployed or underemployed. There are small business owners who are on the verge of bankruptcy, not being allowed to run their business at full capacity and yet still liable for related business expenses such as rent, utilities, etc. There has been little help from government at any level that has trickled down to assist those that are truly in need.

As an example, I was starting a small business when the pandemic hit. My son, who is disabled, was unable to attend school (he is in the Hollis Brookline High School). He needs full time care, and I was forced to suspend my small business endeavors to care for him full time (for the record, I adore spending time with him, and he and I are quite content spending the day together; however, that does not get the bills paid). There was no assistance provided from any level of government. The COOP expenses related to his education dropped substantially as he went from having a full time para, with support from a special ed teacher and various therapists and other professionals to a half hour a day zoom call with his para. This must represent a substantial savings, and yet here we are looking at a very substantial tax increase this year at the COOP level, the BSD level and the town level. A year in which many people, including myself, are struggling.

Here are my recommendations:

Article 2. I am in favor of leaving the budget as flat as possible as last year.

Articles 3, 4, 5 - I am firmly against further funding any trust funds or contingency funds this year.

Article 6 - I oppose any expansion to the SAU budget. This SAU budget has grown at an explosive rate while the student population has been on the decline. I would be in favor of sending a directive to the SAU to require them to consolidate positions and redistribute responsibilities among a smaller staff as appropriate.

Article 10 - I support this article.

Article 11 - I support this article.

In conclusion, I request that the Brookline School Board act in such a way as to keep taxes as flat as possible. When acting, please keep in mind those residents that have been negatively impacted by this terrible pandemic. (I personally have been quarantined with my son for almost a year now).

Karen Coutu, 1 Peterson Road (HBMS teacher)

I oppose petition warrant article 10 to expand Brookline to a K-8 program.

Splitting the two towns at this level would be detrimental for the students of our community. The middle school offers a wide range of opportunities. This petition article is a step backwards from an educational perspective as well as social emotional.

Steve Brogan, 9 Hollis Lane

I am opposed to the 13%-15% proposed increases in the school budget. In the current economic climate I see this as unreasonable and irresponsible to request such a large increase. I would not be opposed to a modest increase on 2-3% to cover basic increases and NECESSARY expenses only. We moved to this town for good schools and Brookline certainly has them. I appreciate all of the teachers and staff for their hard work but, to request such a large increase is just not acceptable in this current economic situation. I would be happy to see you revisit the larger items at a later date but for now, please be more reasonable.

Ella Arroyo, 4 Bennett Road

I am emailing you because I oppose the feasibility study in Warrant Article 10. I do not approve of removing grade 7-8 from the Hollis/Brookline Coop. Please let me know if there is any additional information I can provide.

Daniel Arroyo-Rodríguez, 4 Bennett Road

I am emailing you because I oppose the feasibility study in Warrant Article 10. I do not approve of removing grade 7-8 from the Hollis/Brookline Coop. Please let me know if there is any additional information I can provide.

Clinton Kucera, 9 Quigley Way

I'm writing to request the Brookline School District amend article 2 of the proposed warrant to an operating budget of \$10,025,776. This adjustment is necessary to remove a distortion caused by the FY21 State Grant that was unexpected and is not currently expected for FY22. The FY21 grant lowered the amount raised through local taxes making an artificially low base against which to calculate the tax cap. Had the FY21 state grant not been received, the \$10,025,776 operating budget would have complied with the tax cap.

Sarah Kelley, 4 Captain Seaver Road

I am writing to let you know that I oppose Warrant Articles 10 and 11, but support all the rest of the articles being discussed at this evening's meeting. Thank you!

Dr. Tamara Sorell, 12 Potanipo Hill Road

I am not sure what is on the agenda tonight, but I have been hearing some troubling things going around and would like to go on the record:

Consideration of pulling 7th and 8th grade out of HB - seems pretty counterproductive - I can't imagine either better educational resources or cost savings. If anything, more consolidation leads to economies of scale.

The petition warrant about "divisive policy," which seems to be a thinly veiled to muzzle open discussion of social equity (I realize this is a HB issue and may fall under a different administrative umbrella).

I also hear that there are state-level discussions and I wonder if and how the District is engaging with those:

[Commission to Study School Funding](#) suggestions that would draw resources out of well-funded districts- while I do feel that we need more equitable school funding in NH, the answer is to provide more state funding. Trying to promote equity with our decentralized tax model will only cause people to vote against school funding altogether.

HB-20 (school choice): this is a terrible idea that will only draw resources out of public schools to accommodate private and parochial schools. We have school choice already - you are free to send your children to the school of your choice at your expense or homeschool. Public funds should not be used.

Peter D'Agostino, 9 Louis Drive

I write to request the Brookline School District amend article 2 of the proposed warrant to an operating budget of \$9,911,587. This adjustment is necessary to remove the distortion caused by the FY21 State Grant that was unexpected and is not currently expected for FY22 and to restore the funds that were removed because of the artificial tax cap issue. The \$9,911,587 operating budget would have complied with the tax cap, had FY21 state grant not been received.

My proposed operating budget amendment represents the Tax Cap Limited Operating Budget of \$9,867,097 plus the addition of funds to cover the MTSS Para for \$43,640 and the Projectors to REAP Grant of \$850.

$\$9,867,097$ (Tax Cap Limited Budget) + $\$43,640$ (Paras) + $\$850$ (Projectors) = $\$9,911,587$ (Proposed Amended Budget)

I am requesting that the School Board NOT restore the \$114,189 Tech Integrator Position because the Superintendent indicated during the public hearing that the position and required funds were no longer necessary.

Cindy LaCroix, 3 Louis Drive

First I would like to thank the SAU and Board for their hard work and dedication to the students in Brookline as we have worked through the challenges of the last year. I would like to offer the following comments / amendments on the proposed warrant articles presented on February 1st during the Brookline School Board meeting:

Warrant Article 2 - Amend the requested budget to reflect a FY22 Operating Budget of \$10,024,926. This will allow the Tech Integrator Position and MTSS Paras to be restored in the budget. Not included is the \$850 in expense for projectors which has been proposed to be funded via a grant. While I can appreciate the intent behind the tax cap requirement, it does not allow for flexibility in times when there are unusual impacts to the budget, such as the adequacy grant received by the district in the last fiscal year. The budget should not be arbitrarily capped due to an atypical source of revenue in the prior year.

Warrant Article 10 - I strongly object to this article. This concept has been brought forward several times over the last few years in various forms and has been overwhelmingly rejected each time by the voters. The cost to remove any/all grades from the Coop District and incorporate into the Brookline School district will result in a significant cost to the Brookline tax payers in order to meet the real estate, capital improvements, operations and staffing needs in order to provide the level of education we expect and that our students deserve. The proposed committee will take resources, time and energy away from focusing on providing a strong educational experience for the students in our elementary schools.

Warrant Article 11 - I do not support this article as written. Impact to the individual taxpayer is valuable information for taxpayers to better understand how certain warrants will change the proposed tax rate. That said, the burden of analysis and proof should not be put on the SAU and/or Brookline School District for citizen petition warrant articles. I suggest the warrant article be amended to reflect the requirement that the tax impact be included only on those warrants drafted by the SAU/School Board.

Peter J. Rizzuto, 3 Louis Drive

I would like to offer the following comments on the proposed warrant article presented on February 1st during the Brookline School Board meeting:

Warrant Article 10 - I object to this. This has been rejected each time by the voters when brought up in the past. The cost to remove grades from the Coop District and incorporate into the Brookline School district will result in a significant cost to the Brookline tax payers in order to meet the real estate, capital improvements, operations and staffing needs in order to provide the level of education we expect and that our students deserve. The proposed committee will take resources, time and energy away from focusing on providing a strong educational experience for the students in our elementary schools.

Jill and Kevin Aitken, 14 Potanipo Hill Road

My husband and I are strongly opposed to Article 10, the feasibility study to look at the possibility of shifting grades K-8 to the Brookline School District.

We feel the study is unnecessary and that the students will be better served by keeping the districts as they are.

Jennifer Morrissey, 25 Laurel Crest Drive

I am writing in opposition to Petition Warrant Article 1: "Shall we direct the Brookline School Board to convene a study committee investigating the feasibility and suitability of expanding responsibility of the Brookline School District to grades K-8, with the committee consisting of a School Board member, Selectboard member, Finance or Budget Committee member, and two members of the public, reporting findings by November 3, 2021?"

There is a tremendous benefit in combining the kids from 2 different communities at an age when they really are starting to learn to socialize, diversify their skills and interests, and need to learn how to cope in new situations. I have heard (and experienced) nothing but positives in the Hollis/Brookline partnership. I don't see any scenario where there are benefits that outweigh the costs - for either town or for the kids. Please do not waste time, energy and money on such an effort - focus on how we build up in the schools and programs we have.

Katie Hallett, 34 Westview Road

I am firmly against the tax cap budget.

I firmly oppose #10. No study required to know this is a slippery slope and conversations that will be a waste of our money.

Alan Rosenberg, 68 Cleveland Hill Road

The purpose of this email is to request the Brookline School District amend article 2 of the proposed warrant to set the operating budget to \$10,025,776. This adjustment is necessary to account for the unexpected FY2021 state grant that lowered the amount raised through local taxes, making an artificially low base against which to calculate the tax cap. An operating budget of \$10,025,776 for FY2022 would comply with the 8% tax cap had the FY2021 grant not been received.

Beth Gildea, Ames Road

I recently watched the school board meeting where Petition Warrant Article 10 was discussed. Thank you for your opposition to this article. Like many families in Brookline (and Hollis!), the HB Cooperative was a draw to moving here. Our son has been attending the Pre-K program at RMMS, and we have been impressed with the Brookline system, too. While I understand the warrant article is just a study, there are many financial concerns I have regarding pulling 7th and 8th grade students from the Coop, and I find myself in staunch opposition to discussion of studies to pull any Brookline students from the Coop and have held this position for the close to 10 years we have lived here.

Thank you for your opposition to this warrant article.

Chairman Haag noted written comments received after the start of the meeting. Those that included the required address information were read:

Joseph Hartman, 51 Mountain Road

I support updating the budget without a cap and based on a budget with the normal basis instead of based on the state aid previous received. Thank you.

Shannon, John, and Jack Sinclair, 1 Lancy Brook Road

Thank you so much for your thoughtful support of our schools and the finances of our town. My family no longer has students in the Brookline schools, but we recognize the value of an educated populace. The 3 registered voters in our family strongly oppose the feasibility study. This redundant and time-consuming process has been proven time and again to not be in the best interest of our students or finances.

Matt Maguire, 4 Story Brook Lane

I strongly oppose the feasibility study for moving 7th and 8th grade from the COOP School District to the Brookline School District. I have had one kid who has made his way through the Brookline and COOP School districts and is a freshman in college now and have two kids currently in the COOP School District. We have been very happy with the 7th and 8th grade being part of the COOP. In my opinion, it would end up resulting in a higher cost for the Brookline taxpayers to move the two grades to Brookline. I would also have concerns that if the grades were moved to Brookline the same level of course offerings would not be available to the students due to the lack of economy of scale. It would also have a very detrimental effect for the students' after school programs and the middle school athletic programs. The 7th and 8th grades belong in the COOP.

Article 1

Election of Officers. To elect all necessary School District officers for the ensuing terms by official ballot vote on March 9, 2021, Captain Samuel Douglass Academy, 7:00 a.m. to 7:30 p.m.:

- To choose a Moderator for the ensuing year.
- To choose a Clerk for the ensuing year.
- To choose a Treasurer for the ensuing year.
- To choose one (1) member of the School Board for the ensuing three (3) years.

**MOTION BY MEMBER MARSANO TO MOVE ARTICLE 1 TO THE WARRANT
MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER SARRIS**

A Viva Voce Roll Call was conducted, which resulted as follows:

Yea: Rebecca Howie, Karen Jew, Alison Marsano, Erin Sarris, Kenneth Haag

5

Nay:

0

MOTION CARRIED

Article 1 will be placed on the official ballot.

Article 2

To see if the Brookline School District will vote to raise and appropriate as an operating budget, not including appropriations by special warrant articles and other appropriations voted separately, the amounts set forth on the budget posted with the warrant or as amended by vote of the first session, for the purposes set forth therein, totaling **\$9,867,097**. Should this article be defeated, the default budget shall be **\$9,857,075**, which is the same as last year, with certain adjustments required by previous action of the school district or by law or the governing body may hold one special meeting, in accordance with RSA 40:13, X and XVI, to take up the issue of a revised operating budget only. Majority vote required to pass. **The School Board recommends this article 5-0-0. The Finance Committee recommends this article 3-0-0.**

**MOTION BY MEMBER MARSANO TO MOVE ARTICLE 2 TO THE WARRANT
MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER HOWIE**

ON THE QUESTION

Member Jew remarked the overwhelming feedback received was that were we able to conduct a typical deliberative session, we would have a motion on the floor to amend.

**MOTION BY MEMBER SARRIS TO AMEND ARTICLE 2 TO AN OPERATING BUDGET IN THE
TOTAL AMOUNT OF TEN MILLION TWENTY FIVE THOUSAND SEVEN HUNDRED SEVENTY
SIX DOLLARS (\$10,025,776)**

MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER JEW

ON THE QUESTION

Superintendent Corey asked the Moderator to provide his interpretation of the law; whether the Board has the authority to do this.

Peter Webb, Moderator

Stated HB1129 clearly delegates, to the governing body, the right to make amendments of its own warrant. The power that is usually in the hands of the voters is in the hands of the governing body, this school board.

Superintendent Corey noted Attorney O'Shaughnessy had concerns about the tax cap in the virtual setting. There is one set of laws governing the tax cap and then HB1129, which governs the meeting. He understands there have been a number of requests from the public to make that amendment, he simply was uncertain with HB1129 being new, if this would be challenged.

Moderator Webb responded it is an entirely reasonable position, and of course anything is subject to challenge. Before this virtual meeting system, under HB1129, the school board would have had its deliberative session and the townspeople would have the right to amend anything they wished. The Legislature has changed the landscape dramatically and in the interest of public safety have clearly delegated to the board the right to make those amendments.

Brookline's situation is somewhat complicated by the fact that there is the issue of the tax cap. The tax cap is a separate statute, which was enacted before virtual hearings were considered and COVID descended upon us. Under the tax cap, only the voters, according to the language in the statute, are in a position to override the tax cap. But we now have this additional overlay where the right of the voters to amend has been passed to the governing body, which is in this case the school board. Otherwise the power to override is lost. The statute is not written expecting that the override cannot be accomplished. It is a less than ideal system, but what they have done in effect is to delegate to the school board the voters' right to override the tax cap. Yes, this is something that could employ lawyers for a long time.

Vice Chairman Sarris remarked the intent behind her amendment is not necessarily to act as a board, but to represent what the board heard from the voters. She feels she heard compelling enough testimony from the public to make that amendment.

Moderator Webb remarked that is the way it is supposed to work; you are supposed to listen to what they have to say and act accordingly. Your power to amend should be a function of the comments you receive.

Superintendent Corey reiterated the Moderator has control of the Annual Meeting, which is why he wished to receive his input.

Member Marsano remarked the down side is that we are unable to have the negotiation process following a proposed amendment. She is a little uncomfortable being the one to say we will override the tax cap. She has received the public input, but is getting a select segment of people who have organized to hear that, but she has not necessarily heard the counter to that and where negotiations might be somewhere in between.

She understands it is an odd year. Is it a year that we can manage to work within that tax cap? We have been told by the Administration that we can manage and work within the budget constraints of that 8% tax cap. Is it ideal, no, but can we manage it, yes. She is hesitant to just say yes let's override it, and put it forth to the voters.

Member Jew remarked one thing that struck her from the comment provided was that the default budget was only \$10,000 less than the tax cap budget so you are not really giving the votes much of a choice. This way if there is overwhelming support for the tax cap budget there is the default budget voters can vote for.

Finance Committee Member Comeau commented there is ample time between this meeting and voting day for the contents of the conversation we are having tonight to propagate through the community, and for people to understand what they are voting on represents our efforts to act in the interest of how we felt voters would act in terms of amending the article. The fallback is only \$10,000 off from what we are operating under now. They can choose.

Chairman Haag commented his only hesitation is the legal aspect. He has heard the Moderator state the Board has the authority to do this.

Moderator Webb responded “you do”. Lawyers will disagree depending on who their client is. It is not an unreasonable interpretation to reach the conclusion that only the voters can override the tax cap, but he is faced with this irrefutable language in HB1129 that gives the governing body the right to amend. It doesn’t specifically mention for the purpose of a tax cap, but the power of amendment has clearly been passed to the governing body as odd as that is because it is your warrant. These are odd times and that is one of the ways the Legislature has seen fit to attend to this situation. It is an opinion. He cannot say that it is gospel.

Member Marsano asked for clarification the proposed amendment is a budget totaling \$10,025,776. The default is \$9,857,075 for a difference of \$168,701. Chairman Haag stated that to be correct.

Chairman Haag questioned the comfort level of the Superintendent with the Board making an amendment, e.g., is there concern it would be challenged.

Superintendent Corey stated he agrees with the Moderator that there is always the potential for challenges. You have the Moderator taking a position, and he believes when looking at the other articles that involve money, were the board to increase or decrease those there would be no question; this is just a conflict between the tax cap law and HB1129. He is uncertain if anyone foresaw this scenario when HB1129 was put forth.

The only other thing he would say to the Board is there are many pieces of legislation in Concord that are asking the Legislators to hold harmless school districts and keep funding level for next year. We may see revenue coming in to offset this. That won’t be decided for a while. He commented he is always comfortable at a meeting when we consult the Moderator.

A Viva Voce Roll Call was conducted, which resulted as follows:

Yea: Rebecca Howie, Karen Jew, Alison Marsano, Erin Sarris, Kenneth Haag

5

Nay:

0

MOTION CARRIED

Finance Committee Chairman Rater remarked the decision to make the amendment is purely that of the School Board. What the Finance Committee can decide is whether to continue with its existing recommendation or change it. Given that the total has changed, he suggested the Committee take another vote.

MOTION BY MEMBER MAILLOUX TO RECONSIDER THE RECOMMENDATION OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE

MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER COMEAU

ON THE QUESTION

Member Mailloux remarked this is an unusual year for the reasons that have been discussed. He has reservations to reverse the good work the School Board has done to budget within the existing tax cap, and he encouraged the budget to go forward as presented.

Member Comeau spoke of the public feedback provided and of this being the vessel for addressing that. Since the voters cannot take this action themselves, we have a duty to do that.

Member Mailloux stated agreement with the comments that have been brought forward regarding the likelihood that voters would amend the base to reflect the one-time revenue from the State, but would also state that this decision is impacted by the town's prior action to reduce the tax burden last year, which has clearly had an impact on the upcoming budget. Moving forward, with regard to one-time revenue, strategic decisions need to be made regarding how one-time dollars are invested.

Finance Committee Chairman Rater questioned if the School Board would also vote on whether or not to recommend the amended article, and was told that would occur.

Finance Committee Chairman Rater questioned the will of the Committee relative to recommending the article.

A Viva Voce Roll Call vote was taken, which resulted as follows:

Yea: Brian Rater, Dennis Comeau	2
Nay: Matthew Mailloux	1

Finance Committee recommends 2-1

Member Marsano noted the original motion was still on the floor.

Moderator Webb stated what would be voted on is whether to amend the original motion. You are not voting to approve this new number, you are voting to change the issue on the floor to that number, and then you vote after you pass the motion to amend.

Chairman Haag noted the vote that was taken (passed 5-0) to amend. Moderator Webb remarked that did occur. You still have to vote on the main motion; the amended version.

Chairman Haag stated the vote would be on the main motion to move Article 2 to the Warrant, as amended to reflect the total amount of \$10,025,776.

Member Marsano asked what the dollar value was before removing the position of Tech Integrator at RMMS, two proposed Multi-Tier Support System (MTSS) Paraprofessionals and movement of the cost of projectors to achieve a value that was within the tax cap. Superintendent Corey stated it to have been the \$10,025,776.

**MOTION BY MEMBER SARRIS TO RECOMMEND ARTICLE 2, AS AMENDED, TOTALING TEN MILLION TWENTY FIVE THOUSAND SEVEN HUNDRED SEVENTY SIX DOLLARS (\$10,025,776) WITH A DEFAULT BUDGET OF NINE MILLION EIGHT HUNDRED FIFTY SEVEN THOUSAND SEVENTY FIVE DOLLARS (\$9,857,075)
MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER HOWIE**

A Viva Voce Roll Call was conducted, which resulted as follows:

Yea: Rebecca Howie, Karen Jew, Alison Marsano, Erin Sarris, Kenneth Haag
5
Nay: 0

MOTION CARRIED

Vote on the main motion to move Article 2 to the Warrant, as amended.

A Viva Voce Roll Call was conducted, which resulted as follows:

Yea: Rebecca Howie, Karen Jew, Alison Marsano, Erin Sarris, Kenneth Haag
5
Nay: 0

MOTION CARRIED

Article 2 will be placed on the official ballot, as amended.

Article 3

To see if the school district will vote to raise and appropriate a sum of up to **\$75,000** from the June 30 unassigned fund balance (surplus) available for transfer on July 1, 2021 to be added to the previously established SCHOOL FACILITIES MAINTENANCE FUND. **The School Board recommends this article 5-0-0. The Finance Committee recommends this article 2-1-0.**

**MOTION BY MEMBER SARRIS TO MOVE ARTICLE 3 TO THE WARRANT
MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER HOWIE**

ON THE QUESTION

Vice Chairman Sarris spoke of her appreciation of the feedback provided, and recognized the concerns of taxpayers. She supports placing this article on the warrant as written. This represents the decision made by the Administration and Board.

Chairman Haag stated the amount of feedback received on this and the next few articles, in his opinion, did not provide an overwhelmingly convincing justification for the Board to amend. He proposed, given the environment we are in, putting the articles before the voters as written.

A Viva Voce Roll Call was conducted, which resulted as follows:

Yea: Rebecca Howie, Karen Jew, Alison Marsano, Erin Sarris, Kenneth Haag
5
Nay: 0

MOTION CARRIED

Finance Committee Chairman Rater questioned if the vote of the Board was on its recommendation or to move the article to the warrant. Chairman Haag stated the vote was to move the article to the warrant. Finance Committee Chairman Rater stated the desire, for each of the articles, to question the will of the Finance Committee with regard to its stated position, based on public input received.

The decision of the Finance Committee was to maintain its stated recommendation.

Article 3 will be placed on the official ballot.

Article 4

To see if the school district will vote to raise and appropriate a sum of up to **\$25,000** to be added to the previously established SPECIAL EDUCATION EXPENDABLE TRUST FUND, this sum to come from the June 30 unassigned fund balance (surplus) available for transfer on July 1, 2021. No amount to be raised from taxation. **The School Board recommends this article 5-0-0. The Finance Committee recommends this article 1-2-0.**

The decision of the Finance Committee was to maintain its stated recommendation.

MOTION BY MEMBER MARSANO TO MOVE ARTICLE 4 TO THE WARRANT MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER JEW

A Viva Voce Roll Call was conducted, which resulted as follows:

Yea: Rebecca Howie, Karen Jew, Alison Marsano, Erin Sarris, Kenneth Haag

5

Nay:

0

MOTION CARRIED

Article 4 will be placed on the official ballot.

Article 5

To see if the school district will vote to establish a contingency fund for the current year for unanticipated expenses that may arise and further to raise and appropriate a sum of up to **\$40,000** to go into said fund. This sum to come from the unassigned fund balance (surplus) available for transfer on July 1, 2021. **The School Board recommends this article 5-0-0. The Finance Committee recommends this article 2-1-0.**

Finance Committee Chairman Rater questioned the will of the Committee relative to changing its previous recommendation.

Member Mailloux stated the desire for the School Board to first move the article to the warrant, and then look to the Finance Committee to see if the desire is to change its recommendation. Finance Committee Chairman Rater stated his understanding that in moving the article to the warrant the language includes the recommendation of the two entities, which is why he suggested a decision of the Finance Committee prior to the article being moved.

Moderator Webb stated it is irregular for that recommendation to be modified based on public discussion. He did not see a particular reason why that could not occur. That same right might apply to the School Board. By doing so you are re-doing the whole process, but he would allow it.

The decision of the Finance Committee was to maintain its stated recommendation.

**MOTION BY MEMBER HOWIE TO RECOMMEND ARTICLE 5, AS WRITTEN
MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER SARRIS**

A Viva Voce Roll Call was conducted, which resulted as follows:

Yea: Rebecca Howie, Karen Jew, Alison Marsano, Erin Sarris, Kenneth Haag

5

Nay:

0

MOTION CARRIED

**MOTION BY MEMBER HOWIE TO MOVE ARTICLE 5 TO THE WARRANT
MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER SARRIS**

A Viva Voce Roll Call was conducted, which resulted as follows:

Yea: Rebecca Howie, Karen Jew, Alison Marsano, Erin Sarris, Kenneth Haag

5

Nay:

0

MOTION CARRIED

Article 5 will be placed on the official ballot.

Article 6

Shall the voters of the Brookline School District adopt a school administrative unit budget of \$1,953,257 for the forthcoming fiscal year in which **\$361,236** is assigned to the school budget of this school district? This year's adjusted budget of \$1,918,864 with \$354,875 assigned to the school budget of this school district will be adopted if the article does not receive a majority vote of all the school district voters voting in this school administrative unit. **The School Board recommends this article 5-0-0. The Finance Committee recommends this article 2-1-0.**

The decision of the School Board was to move forward with its prior recommendation.

Finance Committee Chairman Rater suggested it would be easiest to disregard the previous recommendation, move forward with a new vote to recommend, and utilize the outcome of that vote for the recommendation that will be posted as part of the warrant article.

A Viva Voce Roll Call was conducted, which resulted as follows:

Yea: Dennis Comeau, Brian Rater	2
Nay: Matthew Mailloux	1

The Finance Committee recommends 2-1

**MOTION BY MEMBER MARSANO TO MOVE ARTICLE 6 TO THE WARRANT
MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER JEW**

A Viva Voce Roll Call was conducted, which resulted as follows:

Yea: Rebecca Howie, Karen Jew, Alison Marsano, Erin Sarris, Kenneth Haag	5
Nay:	0

MOTION CARRIED

Article 6 will be placed on the official ballot.

Article 7

Shall the school district accept the provisions of RSA 198:20-b providing that any school district at an annual meeting may adopt an article authorizing indefinitely, until specific rescission of such authority, the school board to apply for, accept and expend, without further action by the school district, unanticipated money from a state, federal or other governmental unit or a private source which becomes available during the fiscal year?

The School Board recommends this article 5-0-0.

The decision of the Finance Committee was to maintain its stated recommendation.

**MOTION BY MEMBER HOWIE TO MOVE ARTICLE 7 TO THE WARRANT
MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER MARSANO**

ON THE QUESTION

Member Marsano noted the language “private source”, and questioned the implications. She spoke of concerns with this authorization being in place “until specific rescission”, and how future boards might utilize it.

Superintendent Corey stated any offer of a donation from a private entity would have to be brought before the Board. The Board would be able to determine if it aligns with the values and philosophies of the Town and School before the donation could be accepted. This article simply provides the Board that authority, should it so choose, to accept such a donation. District policy already covers acceptance of donations.

A Viva Voce Roll Call was conducted, which resulted as follows:

Yea: Rebecca Howie, Karen Jew, Alison Marsano, Erin Sarris, Kenneth Haag
5
Nay: 0

MOTION CARRIED

Article 7 will be placed on the official ballot.

Article 8 (Contingent Article)

If Article 7 passes, this article is unnecessary: to see if the school district voters will authorize the Brookline School District to access future year state and federal special education aid funds in the event that special education costs exceed budget limitations. **The School Board recommends this article 5-0-0. The Finance Committee recommends this article 3-0-0.**

The decision of the School Board was to move forward with its prior recommendation.

Finance Committee Member Mailloux questioned if a motion to move the article to the warrant was made.

Moderator Webb stated a pattern was set and the meeting was moving that way. Brookline is an SB2 community. At the SB2 Deliberative Session, which this is a pretend diluted version of, people don't approve or disapprove, they just stop talking and then the matter goes onto the warrant. He has participated in conflating a couple of systems here, but since we started that way, he recommended continuing with the pattern of whether each board recommends and then the School Board would approve it sufficient to put it on the warrant.

The decision of the Finance Committee was to maintain its stated recommendation.

**MOTION BY MEMBER HOWIE TO MOVE ARTICLE 8 TO THE WARRANT
MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER MARSANO**

A Viva Voce Roll Call was conducted, which resulted as follows:

Yea: Rebecca Howie, Karen Jew, Alison Marsano, Erin Sarris, Kenneth Haag
5
Nay: 0

MOTION CARRIED

Article 8 will be placed on the official ballot.

Article 9

To see if the school district will vote to authorize, indefinitely until rescinded, to retain any unused portion of the year-end unassigned general funds, from the preceding fiscal year in subsequent fiscal years, provided that the amount of year-end unassigned general funds does not exceed, in any fiscal year, 2.0 percent (can be up to 5.0%) of the current fiscal year's net assessment under RSA 198:5. **The School Board recommends this article 4-1-0. The Finance Committee recommends this article 1-1-1.**

**MOTION BY MEMBER MARSANO TO RECOMMEND ARTICLE 9
MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER SARRIS**

ON THE QUESTION

Chairman Haag noted the public input provided on the article. He questioned the will of the Board.

Member Jew noted the language states not to exceed 2%. She believes the practices of the Hollis and COOP School Districts is to retain approximately 1%. The district could apply an amount under 2%.

Ms. Seeley stated the Board would have to vote on the amount to be retained on a yearly basis. The Board could choose any amount up to the 2%.

A Viva Voce Roll Call was conducted, which resulted as follows:

Yea: Rebecca Howie, Karen Jew, Alison Marsano, Erin Sarris
4

Nay: Kenneth Haag
1

**MOTION CARRIED
4-1-0**

Finance Committee Chairman Rater questioned the will of the Finance Committee.

Member Mailloux reiterated this would allow the Board to decide on what they do at the end of the year up to 2%. The Board would still take a vote at the end of each fiscal year to determine what portion of the unassigned fund balance to either return to the tax base or retain, up to this limit. Ms. Seeley stated that to be correct.

Finance Committee Chairman Rater stated the question before the Committee to be whether to recommend Article 9.

A Viva Voce Roll Call was conducted, which resulted as follows:

Yea: Matthew Mailloux, Dennis Comeau
2

Nay: Brian Rater
1

The Finance Committee recommends 2-1-0

**MOTION BY MEMBER SARRIS TO MOVE ARTICLE 9 TO THE WARRANT WITH A
RECOMMENDATION OF 4-1-0 BY THE SCHOOL BOARD AND A RECOMMENDATION OF 2-1-0
BY THE FINANCE COMMITTEE
MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER JEW**

ON THE QUESTION

Chairman Haag commented his concern is with the language “indefinitely until rescinded”. He appreciates that each year unexpended monies allocated to funds such as the contingency are returned to the tax base and taxpayers are asked to again approve the appropriation. He believes that provides for additional transparency. He fully supports those contingency funds and that mechanism; he simply appreciates addressing them on an annual basis.

Member Marsano commented she does not disagree with the remarks of the Chairman. She is hopeful, if approved, some of the other funds, such as the contingency, would no longer be necessary.

Ms. Seeley clarified it would reset every year and there would be the requirement for a vote on the amount to be retained, each year.

Chairman Haag asked for additional clarification; if the Board votes to retain 1% in one year, would it not carry over into the next year and be the existing balance prior to an additional vote of the board to retain some amount the following year.

Ms. Seeley stated “No” every year the monies would be returned (would not carry over) and each year a vote would be required to identify the amount, if any, to retain.

Member Marsano stated her impression it was a similar mechanism to the contingency fund, only the potential for a larger amount.

Ms. Seeley remarked in prior years, the retained fund balance could only be utilized for emergencies. That restriction is no longer in place. She commented, in her mind, it makes perfect sense, if this article is approved, the contingency fund would no longer be required.

Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug stated the difference to be that this dollar amount is voted on by the Board where the contingency fund amount is voted on by all taxpayers.

Member Jew questioned, and was informed a public hearing is not required.

A Viva Voce Roll Call was conducted, which resulted as follows:

Yea: Rebecca Howie, Karen Jew, Alison Marsano, Erin Sarris, Kenneth Haag

5

Nay:

0

MOTION CARRIED

Article 9 will be placed on the official ballot as amended to reflect the recommendations of the School Board (4-1-0-) and Finance Committee (2-1-0).

Article 10 - Petition Warrant Article

Shall we direct the Brookline School Board to convene a study committee investigating the feasibility and suitability of expanding responsibility of the Brookline School District to grades K to 8, with the committee consisting of a School Board member, Selectboard member, Finance Committee member, and two members of the public, reporting findings by November 3, 2021?

Chairman Haag questioned the will of the Board relative to its recommendation.

A Viva Voce Roll Call was taken, which resulted as follows:

Yea: 0

Nay: Rebecca Howie, Karen Jew, Alison Marsano, Erin Sarris, Kenneth Haag
5

The School Board recommends 0-5-0

Finance Committee Chairman Rater questioned the will of the Committee relative to taking a position on the article.

A Viva Voce Roll Call was taken, which resulted as follows:

Yea: 0

Nay: Matthew Mailloux, Dennis Comeau, Brian Rater
3

The Finance Committee did not take a position on the article.

Moderator Webb remarked in the absence of a motion to amend, this article goes forward to the ballot. The curious thing is the Board has the right to amend a petition warrant article just as the voters could. Advisability of that is another issue. If there is no motion to amend, it goes forward to the ballot.

Chairman Haag stated his belief the Board should proceed as is; the Board has provided its feedback, and the article will move to the voters at this point. Moderator Webb responded that is how he would recommend the Board proceed.

Article 10 will be placed on the official ballot, as written.

Article 11 - Petition Warrant Article

Shall we adopt the provisions of RSA 32:5 V-b, requiring that the annual budget and all special warrant articles having a tax impact, as determined by the school board, shall contain a notation stating the estimated tax impact of the article: The determination of the estimated tax impact shall be subject to approval by the governing body. Member Jew stated she is not in favor of this article. She is not certain she likes how it is framed that you are either for or against transparency. She feels the Board could state in policy that its presentations include the tax impact. She would go as far as linking the Board presentation to every warrant article so that the voters have the full picture of not only the tax impact but also the rationale behind the warrant. Providing that full picture is more responsible than just a number.

Chairman Haag found that idea appealing. He spoke of feedback received around only keeping it to the SAU introduced articles (not requiring the Administration to identify a tax impact on articles put forward through petition warrant articles). The idea of a policy that drives that but in a different mechanism makes more sense.

Vice Chairman Sarris commented it is a good conversation and something the Board should deliberate on.

A Viva Voce Roll Call was taken, which resulted as follows:

Yea: Alison Marsano

1

Nay: Rebecca Howie, Karen Jew, Erin Sarris, Kenneth Haag

4

MOTION FAILED

Chairman Haag remarked he believes this to be worthy of a policy discussion with the Policy Committee as soon as that opportunity is available.

School Board recommends 1-4-0

Finance Committee Chairman Rater questioned the will of the Committee relative to taking a position on the article.

Member Mailloux stated he believes more information is always beneficial, and he does not see any concern with including this information on the warrant. He believes it to be a disservice to the voters to not include the information on the warrant.

Member Comeau stated agreement commenting that ultimately that is the number that is most meaningful and most accessible to a voter.

The unanimous decision of the Finance Committee was to take a position on the article.

The Finance Committee was asked to vote on recommending Article 11

Member Comeau questioned the amount of work placed on the Administration to identify/include this information on the warrant.

Chairman Haag stated that to be the concern of the Board. Outside of the scope of the schools, it becomes a burden. That is why he changed his vote.

Ms. Seeley responded depending on what the petition warrant article is, it could be a lot. In some cases, she would have to interpret the intention.

A Viva Voce Roll Call was taken, which resulted as follows:

Yea: Matthew Mailloux, Dennis Comeau, Brian Rater 3
Nay: 0

The Finance Committee recommends 3-0-0

Article 11 will be placed on the official ballot.

Article 12

To transact any other business which may legally come before said meeting?

Moderator Webb stated, in the absence of any action by the Board, the article would go on the ballot.

Article 12 will be placed on the official ballot.

The February 8, 2021 Annual Meeting of the Brookline School District was adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

Kenneth Haag, Chairman, Brookline School Board Date: _____

Erin Sarris, Vice Chairman, Brookline School Board Date: _____

Karen Jew, Secretary, Brookline School Board Date: _____

Rebecca Howie, Brookline School Board Date: _____

Alison Marsano, Brookline School Board Date: _____

Alana Justice, Clerk, Brookline School District Date: _____