

*Unapproved Draft Minutes
Subject to review and revision, pending final approval
at the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Municipal Budget Committee*

**Municipal Budget Committee
Minutes of the Public Meeting
Kearsarge Regional School District
12/09/2025**

I. Call to Order	Call to order @ 6:30 by Richard Anderson
II. Roll Call	Present: Richard Anderson – New London Claire Ketteler – Newbury Winifred Feneberg – New London Debbie Reznicek– Warner (6:40) James Bibbo – Bradford Tom Schamberg- Wilmot Rebecca Harned – Sutton (virtual- not voting) Jesse Evans - Warner Luke Gorman – Springfield John Fortney - Superintendent Michael Bessette – Assistant Superintendent Larry LeBoeuf – Business Administrator Absent: Kristen Schultz - School Board Representative
III. Approval of Minutes	<i>Luke Gorman motioned to approve the minutes of 11/18/2025 as corrected. Seconded by Jesse Evans. 8/0/0 motion carried</i>
V. Public Comment	Mr. Anderson acknowledged the community members in attendance. John Ellis of New London, Bebe Casey of New London, and Cathy Robjent of New London. Also, those who joined the MBC meeting online. See public comments below under individual Article numbers.
IV. New Business	<i>Deliberative Session :</i> • Will be held at the Middle School this year due to building size and handicap accessibility • On January 10, 2026 (January 17th will be the inclement weather date). The event will be published in multiple locations. • Shuttles will be available for overflow parking at the High School. <i>Vote on Article 2 and Article 3:</i> • Supt. Fortney presented an overview of Article II of the 2026 Warrant Article, the collective bargaining agreement with PEAK <i>Reading of Article 2 by Ms. Reznicek. Ms. Evans motioned to approve Article 2 as written. Seconded by Ms. Reznicek. 8/0/0 Motion carried</i> <i>Reading of Article 3 read by Ms. Evans. Mr. Bibbo motioned to approve Article 3 as written. Seconded by Mr. Schamberg. 8/0/0 Motion carried</i> <i>Other Business as required:</i> • Supt. Fortney wanted to make the MBC aware of the upcoming discussion at the next school board meeting about open enrollment in the State of NH

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- He spoke about a current open enrollment school in the state and the effect those situations have had on the district of liability
- (John Ellis)-NL asked about current enrollment?
 - October 1st count 1634 district
- (John Ellis)-NL asked how many teachers are employed?
 - 210.8 FTE
- (John Ellis)-NL asked how many Principals?
 - Nine total, 6 lead and 3 assistants
- (John Ellis) - NL asked what the principal-to-teacher ratio is.
 - Depends on what building
- (Mag) - NL disagrees on the district Student number, stating numbers have decreased by up to 30%, last 20 years
 - October 1st count 1571 K- 12 and 1634 PK - 12

Opening of Public Hearing: Called to order by Chair, Mr. Anderson

This is a Public Hearing of the Municipal Budget Committee. This hearing was posted on the KRSD website as well as the Kearsarge Shopper and the Intertown Record. RSA 32.5 requires that the hearing is posted at least 7 days before the hearing.

Reading of Article 1 by Ms. Ketteler

Article 1: To see if the School District will vote to raise and appropriate the Municipal Budget Committee's recommended amount of **\$56,653,713** for the support of schools, for the payment of salaries for the school District Officials and Agents, and for the payment of the statutory obligations of the District. The School Board Recommends **\$56,653,713**. This article does not include appropriations voted in other warrant articles. This warrant article asks the voters to raise and appropriate for the support of schools, the salaries of School District Officials and Agents, and for the statutory obligations of said District, and to authorize the application against said appropriation of such sums as are estimated to be received from the State sources, together with other Income, the School Board to certify to the Selectmen of each of the Towns of Bradford, New London, Newbury, Springfield, Sutton, Warner, and Wilmot, the amount to be raised by taxation by said towns.

(School Board Recommends 7-0) (Municipal Budget Committee Recommends 7-1)

- (John Ellis) NL- What was the figure from Article 1 last year?
 - 54,666,697
- (John Ellis)NL- Compare figures in Article 2- 26/27 vs 25/26?
 - 166,972 is the difference
 - 27/28 vs 28/29 increased figure is caused by an increase in health care and a reduction in wages
 - Mr. Fortney explained the scale in wages and the increase in out-of-pocket costs for individual health care
- (John Ellis)NL - Describe the pain point in the budget, referring to minutes from the last meeting?
 - Mr. Fortney explained that there is an ongoing discussion with the Facilities Committee about the district's building priorities.

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Plan B for any scenario would have multiple moving parts at an unpredictable cost.

Reading of Article 2 by Mr. Bibbo

Article 2: To see if the School District will vote to approve the cost item included in the Collective Bargaining Agreement reached between the Kearsarge Regional School Board and Para Educators Association of Kearsarge (PEAK), which calls for the following increases in salaries and benefits:

Year Estimated Increase

2026-2027 - \$166,972 2027-2028 - \$202,703 2028-2029 - \$194,665

And further to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$166,972 for the 2026-27** fiscal year, such sum representing the additional costs attributable to the increase in salaries and benefits required by the new agreement over those that would be paid at current staffing levels.

(School Board Recommends 6- 0) (Municipal Budget Committee Recommends 8-0)

- Increase in wages.
- 7.8% increase in Health Insurance this year, including changes to the health plan options with a higher deductible for employees.
- Paras will be spending more on their health care contributions.
- An addition of a life insurance policy option.
- Total 1.20% increase in the budget, including this PEAK agreement.
- If voters do not approve Article 2, the previous contract in place would stay
- All Para positions are filled at this time
- Pay scale adjustments to allow for district attraction
- Para positions are the highest turnover positions by far.

Reading of Article 3 by Mr. Schamberg

Article 3: To see if the School District will vote to raise and appropriate up to **\$ 500,000** to be placed in the School Buildings Maintenance Expendable Trust Fund for the purpose of repair, unanticipated utility costs, and maintaining the school buildings and equipment, with such amount to be funded from unassigned fund Balance (surplus funds) remaining on hand as of June 30, 2026.

(School Board Recommends 6-0) (Municipal Budget Committee Recommends 8-0)

- At the last MBC meeting, Luke Gorman requested the School Board to consider the MBC request to increase the amount of the School Building Maintenance Expendable Trust Fund to \$500K. The School Board agreed to that request.
- (Mag) NL is glad Luke brought attention to the additional money, the first step to reverse course.
- (Cathy R) - NL Can the district add a lesser amount?
 - That would be up to the School Board.

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	<i>Reading of Article 4 by Mr. Feneberg</i> Article 4: To see if the school district will vote to raise and appropriate up to \$100,000 to be placed in the Capital Reserve Roof Fund for the purpose of replacement or major repairs to roofs in the district, with such amounts to be funded from unassigned fund balance (surplus funds) remaining on hand as of June 30, 2026. (School Board Recommends 6-0) (Municipal Budget Committee Recommends 8-0) <i>Reading of Article 5 by Mr. Gorman</i> Article 5 To see if the School District will vote to raise and appropriate up to \$200,000 to be placed in the Special Education Expendable Trust Fund, established in 2008 within the provisions of RSA 198:20-c for the purpose of emergency funding of unforeseen Special Education costs incurred by the District, with such amount to be funded from unassigned fund balance (surplus funds) remaining on hand as of June 30, 2026. (School Board Recommends 7-0) (Municipal Budget Committee Recommends 8-0) Article 6: To transact any other business that may legally come before the meeting. <u>MS27 form signed by the following MBC members:</u> <i>Winifred Feneberg - New London Debbie Reznicek- Warner James Bibbo - Bradford Tom Schamberg- Wilmot Jesse Evans - Warner Luke Gorman – Springfield Richard Anderson - New London</i> <u>Non Public Session:</u> None
V. Adjourn	<i>Mr. Bibbo motioned to adjourn the MBC Meeting. Seconded by Mr. Schamberg. 8/0/0 Motion Carried, meeting adjourned at 7:40</i> <i>Mr. Schamberg motioned to adjourn the MBC Public Meeting. Mr. Gorman seconded. 8/0 the Motion Carried, meeting adjourned at 8:10</i>

Respectfully submitted,

Carolyn Kershaw
MBC Clerk