

STRAFFORD BOARD OF SCHOOL DIRECTORS

**Regular Meeting
Tuesday, March 8, 2016
5:30 PM**

**@
The Newton School
APPROVED Minutes**

Newton School Mission Statement

“Our mission is to develop each child’s potential for academic success, engagement and overall well being. Through this process, we will enrich each child’s education with community involvement, collaboration and outreach.”

In attendance: Board members: Erik Reimanis, Erik Goodling, Hilary Linehan, Jeff Solsaa, Glenn Wylie (via video conference), Superintendent: Bruce Labs, Business Manager: Donna Benoit, Principal: Greg Bagnato, Recording Secretary: Becky Proulx, Newton Staff: Kate Hill (arrived 5:37pm), Community Members: Meg Albee, Charlie Buttrey (Thetford School Board, arrived 6:38, Departed 7:03), Barrie North (arrived 6:40), Ellen Bagnato (arrived 6:47), Jason Loomis (arrived 6:50), Lori Mikusa (arrived 6:52 pm), Jenny Mullins (arrived 6:56 pm), Andrew Lane, Amy Donohue, Calvin Benjamin, Christine Bailey-Kellogg, Mary Mulloy, Sam Greene, John Lloyd, Ann Kynor, Shannon Varley, Jess Tidman, Tom Scull, Lys Ray, Dustin Ray

Action Items:

4.2 Glenn will distribute minutes from the February 26, 2016 meeting for approval at the next meeting.

4.3 Erik G will check with Kristy about wagon wheel meeting minutes.

7.4 Greg will contact Ed Eastman about serving as the Truant Officer.

7.8 Bruce will convey to Kristy that the Valley News is the Newspaper for Official Notices.

8.0 Hilary will find the designation contract with TA and make it available to the public.

9.1 Kristy will warn WRV 1, 2, 3, 5, 6 for adoption at the next meeting.

9.1.1 WRV1 Donna will clarify the language in the first sentence of the policy and distribute an updated policy to the Board.

9.1.3 WRV3 Donna will make changes and distribute revised policy to the board for adoption.

9.1.4 WRV5 Donna will make changes and distribute revised policy to the board for adoption.

9.1.5 WRV6 Donna will make changes and distribute revised policy to the board for adoption.

13.0 Jeff and Erik G will set up a meeting with Beth Cobb.

13.0 Board will host a public meeting regarding Act 46 on Tuesday, March 29, 2016, 7pm with a survey to follow

13.0 Erik R will schedule with Barrett Hall.

13.0 Glenn will attend the senior lunch.

13.0 Greg set up child care.

13.0 Jason, Barrie and Hilary will work on the survey.

16.0 Kristy will warn a Wagon Wheel for April 7 in Stockbridge. Strafford will have their regular evening meeting on April 12.

17.0 Jeff will follow up with the Lewis family regarding their waiver for high school.

17.0 Hilary will follow up with families who have not yet indicated their high school preference.

Decisions Made:

4.1 Minutes of February 9, 2016 approved with changed

7.1 Erik G was elected Chairperson.

7.2 Hilary was elected Vice-Chair

7.3 Glenn was elected Clerk.

7.4 Ed Eastman was appointed Truant Officer contingent on his acceptance.

7.5 Hilary, Erik G, and Glenn were elected to the Supervisory Union Full Board.

7.6 Erik G was elected to the SU Executive Committee Board.

7.6 Jeff was elected as the alternate to the SU Executive Committee Board.

7.7 Regular meeting will be the second Tuesday of the month at 5:30pm at the Newton School.

- 7.8 The Valley News was designated the Newspaper for Official Notices.
- 7.9 Board adopted Robert's Rules for Small Boards.
- 7.10 Glenn and Erik R were appointed Coordinators for Secondary Waivers.
- 7.11 Hilary was elected as the Thetford Academy Representative.
- 7.12 Jeff was appointed Signer for Accounts Payable and Payroll. All the remaining Board members were appointed as back up signers.
- 7.13 Erik R was appointed as the Representative to the Newton Cultural Committee.
- 7.14 Hilary was appointed the SU Collaborative Bargaining Team representative. Erik R was appointed the SU Collaborative Bargaining Team Alternate.
- 7.15 Erik R was appointed the Facilities Liaison.
- 7.16 Jeff was appointed the Liaison to the Selectboard.
- 7.17 Erik G was appointed the Legislative Contact.
- 10.2.3 Board approved the audit for FY2015.

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- 1.0 Call to Order – Erik G called the meeting to order at 5:34pm.
 - 2.0 Adjustments to the Agenda
 - 2.1 Appoint Time Keeper- Erik R
 - 3.0 Public Comment: Kate Hill thanked the board for the work and efforts during this time. She expressed that it is a hard time to be on the Board. Meg Albee expressed her interest in the act 46 discussion and thanked the board for their work.
 - 4.0 Minutes
 - 4.1 Action: Act to Approve the Minutes of February 9, 2016 (Regular)- Motion (Hilary) to approve with changes. Approved unanimously.
 - 4.2 Action: Act to Approve the Minutes of February 26, 2016 (Special)- Minutes are not yet available. Glenn will complete minutes to be approved next meeting.
 - 4.3 Other: Erik G will check with Kristy about wagon wheel meeting minutes. Two different sets of minutes have been distributed.
 - 5.0 Action Items:
 - 5.8 Erik R will clarify the time and date for a Pre-town/school meeting with the select board and communicate it to the School Board. Complete
 - 6.1 . Erik R will send the correspondence from Charlotte Faccio to Glenn to be stored electronically in an Act 46 folder. Complete
 - 7.1 Board members will review Financial Policies – WRVSU 1, 2, 3, 5, 6 and bring comments to the next meeting. Complete
 - 7.2 Bruce will send recently revised policies to the Board for review. Complete.
 - 8.1.1 Jeff will contact Debbie to discuss trash hauling. Complete
 - 8.1.1 Jeff will communicate with the Select Board regarding trash and recycling for town buildings and recreation areas. Complete
 - 8.2.2 Bruce will clarify the Study Grants possibilities with Steve Dale. Complete
 - 9.3 Erik R to ask about tax incentives at the next Thetford/Rivendell Act 46 discussion meeting. Erik G did attend.
 - 12.2 . School District Meeting preparation: Erik G will make a tax sheet for community members. Not complete.
 - 12.2 . School District Meeting preparation: Hilary will print out information about Act 46. Complete
 - 12.2 . School District Meeting preparation: Erik G will ask Donna about tax rate calculations for this year versus next. Complete
 - 12.2 . School District Meeting preparation: Hilary will talk with Bill Bugg about speaking. Complete

- 6.0 Correspondence
- 6.1 Report: Board has received correspondence regarding secondary tuitions and waivers. Erik G has had Act 46 email exchanges with individuals to answer questions.

7.0 Board Re-Organization

- 7.1 Elect a Chairperson- Bruce opened nominations. Hilary/Erik R nominated Erik G. Erik G was elected by unanimous vote.
- 7.2 Elect a Vice-Chair. Jeff/Erik R nominated Hilary. Elected by unanimous vote.
- 7.3 Elect a Clerk. Erik R/Jeff nominated Glenn. Glenn was elected by unanimous vote.
- 7.4 Appoint a Truant Officer- Hilary/Jeff nominated Ed Eastman. Contingent upon his acceptance. Greg will contact Ed.
- 7.5 Elect Three Members to the Supervisory Union Full Board. Erik R nominated Hilary, Erik G, and Glenn. Unanimous vote.
- 7.6 Elect One Member and One Alternate to the SU Executive Committee Board. Hilary / Jeff nominated Erik G. Unanimous Hilary/ Erik R nominated Jeff for alternate. Unanimously accepted.
- 7.7 Set Date and Time of the Regular School Board Meetings. Regular meeting will be the second Tuesday of the month at 5:30pm at the Newton School.
- 7.8 Designate Newspaper for Official Notices- Motion to designate Valley News as the Newspaper for Official Notices. Bruce will convey to Kristy. Unanimously accepted.
- 7.9 Adopt Robert's Rules for Small Boards. Hilary moved to adopt. Unanimously accepted.
- 7.10 Appoint Two Coordinators for Secondary Waivers- Glenn and Erik R appointed.
- 7.11 Elect One Member as the Thetford Academy Representative- Erik R/Jeff nominated Hilary. Unanimously accepted.
- 7.12 Appoint One Signer and One back up Signer for Accounts Payable and Payroll. Jeff was appointed. All the remaining Board members were appointed as back up signers.
- 7.13 Appoint Representative to the Newton Cultural Committee. Erik R was appointed the Representative.
- 7.14 Appoint Representative to SU Collaborative Bargaining Team and Alternate. Hilary was appointed to the SU Collaborative Bargaining Team. Erik R was appointed to the SU Collaborative Bargaining Team Alternate.
- 7.15 Appoint a Facilities Liaison- Erik R was appointed the Facilities Liaison.
- 7.16 Appoint Liaison to Selectboard- Jeff was appointed the Liaison to the Selectboard.
- 7.17 Appoint Legislative Contact- Erik G was appointed the Legislative Contact.

8.0 Act 46 Discussion @ 7:00 pm

Charlie Buttrey, a member of the Thetford School Board, addressed the assembly. Charlie reported that Thetford will have a forum 2 weeks from tonight. He asked to speak as a member of the community, not as a board member. He cited the history of the Thetford- Strafford relationship and suggested a model of merging that would maintain the current relationship with TA. He pointed out two reasons why it is in Strafford's interest to continue to designate TA as our high school: a designated high school must accept all students (even if they require special education), and it allows us to know what our maximum cost will be for educating our high school pupils. Charlie suggested a two-town district. He acknowledged that a flexible waiver system would need to be in place.

Charlie invited everyone to the forum in Thetford. He would welcome the opportunity to merge.

Greg stated that many of the things that are important to Strafford include "choice", local control over the curriculum, local control of governance. Greg believes that middle school students are growing incredibly fast, they need to get their emotional, physical, social and intellectual needs met. There is a movement in more populated areas to move towards K-8 schools. He believes it is important for middle school children to feel secure in their location during middle school. He believes that having fewer transitions during this time of growth is important. The K-8 system also allows for consistent student support services. He does not want Act 46 to turn into something that would jeopardize the very special school that we have built in our town.

Lori stated that the K-8 model has allowed her children to stay innocent. Nikki Kendall asked about the satellite possibilities. Erik G said that it needs to be discussed and investigated more. Hilary clarified procedures. She said that the Board has not decided what study group to join so many things will be worked out in the study committee.

Tom Scull read a prepared piece that explained his beliefs on Act 46. He believes that a decision of this magnitude needs to be decided by those community members willing to take part in the discussion. He believes that the outcome of this discussion could change property values. He said that there are many stakeholders and personal conflicts. He stated that he felt that School Meeting had a tone of defeatism – that we have been focused on what we might lose rather than what we might gain. He sees Act 46 as an opportunity for change and a better outcome. Hilary asked for Tom’s prepared words to be filed with the minutes, and they appear at the end of this document.

Shannon asked about the decision to join a study group. Erik G reported that joining a study group would avoid loss of a grant of about \$100,000 and would prevent us from being placed into a district by the state. Bruce reported that at the end of the study group process there may be no ‘dance partners’ – meaning that if we do not join a study group, we may find that no other town wants to include us in their new district. Nikki asked what kind of study committee. Erik G said that it was a 706B study committee. Todd Binzen asked if the Board could elaborate on a RED (Regional Education District). Erik G reported that REDs have existed under previous legislation. A RED can consist of 4 towns merging or a combination of towns with 1,250 students or both. It can be placed within an SU or ‘if large enough’ it could become its own SU. Under Act 46 details have been added. A ‘side by side’ refers to similar districts (e.g., K-8, in the case of Strafford) coming together within a Supervisory Union, with at least one side-by-side operating a pre-K-12 district. For our SU, there would be three side-by-sides: a non-operating district (all the children in these towns would go elsewhere for schooling), a pre-K-12 district, and a pre-K-6 district with choice. Erik G reiterated a comment made by Greg about Act 46: districts will not be forced to change structure (cease operation of grades) or change designation/choice. We are the only k-8 school with designation in the State. Jim Masland and Tim Briglin have proposed legislation to allow a k-6 with designation and a k-8 with designation to combine, but the Board of Education does not appear to favor this legislation. Jessica asked about the results of the survey. Glenn responded that the top five survey items were:

1. End current relationship with TA and become a choice town
2. Maintain governance responsive to the citizens of Strafford
3. Maintain a strong local curriculum
4. Maintain K-8
5. Maintain the high quality of Newton’s teachers

Erik R said that way at the bottom was go to a k-6 model, meaning that Strafford residents do not appear to favor going to a K-6 school.

Hilary said that the top 5 had significantly higher weights than the rest of the items.

Glenn reported that there were 99 survey responses, including those from the town forum, the online survey and the Town Meeting.

Barrie North spoke about the K-8 research. He said that much of the research is done without proper blind studies. He believes that conclusions about K-6 vs K-8 will be based on emotion. He believes that the research needs to be looked at in the context of the students of Strafford. Barrie would like to not have decisions made based on the survey. He recommends that the Board take a step back and have more people take a new survey. What are the key questions that need to be answered? Lys Ray stated that she wants to piggyback on Barrie’s mathematical conclusions. Lys would like to see the Board give greater consideration to those affected by the decision. Christine said that she did the survey a while ago and now she is better informed and things are more crystallized as choices. She would like the opportunity to weigh in more specifically now. Erik G said that the Board is not rushing and he believes that everyone is looking for the same thing: the best possible school system. Ann Kynor said that she feels the urgency of the April deadline. Erik G said that we could be part of an ‘advisory’ district in a study group (meaning that Strafford would have no vote in the study group, but could be included). Greg asked if there are other options.

Hilary reviewed the different options. Study committees are made of Board members and community members. Four of our options are:

1. In the WRVSU: join a study group comprised of Stockbridge, Sharon, Tunbridge, and Strafford. The study group would decide if it is K-6 or K-8 and also if it has choice for high school or whether it designates some number of high schools (up to 3).
2. In the WRVSU: join a study group comprised of Strafford and Tunbridge. This would be a K-8 district, with full choice for high school
3. In or perhaps not in the WRVSU: join a study group comprised of Thetford and Strafford. This would be a K-6 district, with designation
4. Form a RED comprised of Sharon, Strafford, Stockbridge and Tunbridge. This would be a K-6 RED with choice for middle and high school.

Discussion followed of Special Education and the role of designation vs choice. Jessica asked why the Board is not starting with choice in mind if that was the top hit on the survey. Lori asked how special education is payed for. Greg responded that services for each student are explained and then Strafford pays for it. Lori said that community members who do not have a student in school should still be heard. Meg asked if we joined the WRVSU would that open us to losing our 7-8? Meg said that she has not answered the survey because she doesn't know how she wants to answer the survey. Patrick asked what some of the survey questions had to do with Act 46. Hilary responded that the survey came out of a forum where the educational priorities of Strafford were discussed. The forum was not focused on Act 46. Amy Donohue asked if there was time to do another survey. Erik G said that it was possible to put together another survey. Barrie asked to clarify the designation and special education on the TA website. Hilary will find the designation contract and make it available to the public.

Bruce reported on the study group process in WRVSU. He said that the towns with high schools are likely to take formal votes in March or April but the towns with K-6 and K-8 are still considering their options. Mary asked if 7-8 could be its own entity. Erik G said that state has said that we cannot operate a middle school and at the same time designate one. Andrew Lane stated that in Sharon they have K-6 and then choice for middle and high school. The Sharon Academy has students that attend middle school, then some go on to TSA while others go to other high schools. He stated that choice puts families in the driver's seat of their child's education. If Strafford went to a K-6 he would be in the Newton School meeting with students about their transition. He is happy to answer questions about TSA. Lys suggested the idea that Strafford create a private school for the middle school level. Meg echoed the words of Tom Scull that it affects the face of the community and property values. She thanked Greg for looking at the possibility of exemption. She asked if this could be a question on the survey. Hilary said that there is a process written out in Act 46 for exemptions. Greg said that one of the risks is that we may get denied and, because study groups will already have been formed by that point, we risk having no seat at the table. Greg said that he does not want to lose control of the situation. We would lose some funding that would equal about 3% of our budget.

Glenn stated that 3 out of the top 5 items on the survey (choice, governance, K-8) can be achieved with a side by side with Tunbridge. He has heard concerns in the community about joining with Tunbridge. He has heard that people would be willing to join with Thetford but that would jeopardize choice, governance and K-8. Nikki advocated the backwards design based on what is valued the most. We could designate 3 schools (TA, TSA, Hanover) and 7/8 satellite and that would allow the top 3 survey items to be achieved. Bruce Labs said that there are problems with designating TSA- Special education, Admissions policy. They would basically need to become a public school to designate. Kate asked about the TA designation and the possibilities. Andrew responded to Bruce's comments about designation that any approved independent school could be designated. Charlotte Faccio asked where Tunbridge was 'at' regarding their decision about how to deal with Act 46. Erik G reported that they have not made a decision. They are considering going to K-6 and considering opting out. Calvin asked if bussing is required. Erik G responded that bussing is not required. Hilary said that TA pays for the bus. Tom asked why the Board does not jump in the WRVSU

‘option 1’ (join a study group with Sharon, Stockbridge and Tunbridge), which will study whether K-8 vs K-6 is more feasible. Hilary said she believes that it will be problem at the state level if we enter the study group and do not choose to go with the resulting plan. Hilary said that ‘option 1’ will not end up with all K-8 schools because it is not economical to build a 7-8 program in K-6 schools (i.e., Sharon and Stockbridge). Shannon asked if it took 4-6 months to do the research we would have to assume that the different options would still be open to us. Bruce said that he thinks that Thetford could be invited to join WRVSU. Barrie reported that Sharon has sent a letter to Hartland, Strafford, Thetford, Stockbridge, and Tunbridge and they are looking for 4 schools who would be willing to form a new Supervisory District. Lys said that local governance is not tied to the curricular choices. Erik G said that it is tied to governance through budget and SU curriculum coordination. Lys said what she is hearing from local high schools is: ‘How do we get more kids in the door?’ She believes that Strafford students are well regarded. Hilary would like to have one more well-attended public forum with a follow-up survey in the next couple weeks. Dustin asked if we are trying to meet the April deadline. Hilary said that the deadline is to join or not join the WRVSU study group. Tom stated that he thinks we should influence Tunbridge to join the study group. Barrie suggested using an online survey tool. Thanks was expressed to the Board.

9.0 Policy Review – (2nd reading)

9.1 Financial Policies – WRVSU 1, 2, 3, 5, 6 – Hilary stated that there was inconsistency in the SU named in the policies.

- 9.1.1 WRV1- Erik G stated that the “Contract for Services” section was more procedural. Donna suggested removing the section. Hilary suggested having a sentence regarding purchases between \$3500 and \$15,000. Donna will clarify the language in the first sentence of the policy and distribute an updated policy to the Board.
- 9.1.2 Discussion about WRV2. Donna stated that some equipment was lumped together and collectively depreciated. Erik G wanted to know if there needed to be a change to cover all the technology equipment at the school. Erik G asked who the ‘designee’ is in the policy. Donna responded that she is the designee. Policy needs to be warned 10 days in advance by Kristy.
- 9.1.3 WRV3 Second paragraph ‘supply’ should be ‘surplus’. Policy will be warned for adoption after correction.
- 9.1.4 WRV5 Hilary would like all the policies to say Supervisory Union in the policy instead of listing all the districts. Donna will make changes and distribute to the Board for adoption after the correction. Policy will be warned for adoption. Donna suggested sharing the policies (once adopted) with staff. Discussion about different scenarios that would apply.
- 9.1.5 WRV6- 2nd paragraph WRVSU will become Supervisory Union. It was moved to delete the word ‘Procedures’ immediately following the 2nd paragraph. Motion to warn for adoption at next meeting. Unanimously passed.

10.0 Reports:

10.1 Principal

- 10.1.1 Report: Greg reported on the Principal Chat. The comments he received included keeping 7/8 and the generous waiver system. Parents would like pros and cons of each choice. Staff have been looking at Star 360 data. In-service on 2/29 was focused on de-escalation and work with grade/subject specific teachers. Basketball had great participation this year with 45% of 3rd-8th graders participating, culminating in the basketball banquet. A long-term counselor was hired and will start on 3/8/2016. Enrollment has seen the loss of one and gain of one student in the past month. The Facilities Manager and Guidance Counselor positions have been posted and the hope is to have hiring completed by May. Greg would like to have parents involved in the hiring committees. Greg will attend the 8th grade Teen Summit on 3/9/2016 at VLS. Two students are presenting as the VTVLC (Vermont Virtual Learning Collaborative) Conference on 8/18/2016. South Royalton teachers are visiting the school to look at the cluster system. Greg spoke to some issues of Act

46: one of the more divisive areas is the K-6 or K-8 choice. Greg said that Act 46 was not intended to change governance or structure. He fears that Act 46 may make Strafford change structure. He distributed a handout that outlined some of the benefits of K-8 education. Hilary suggested Greg review his handout during the Act 46 discussion (above).

10.1.2 Other: Erik G apologized to Greg for not giving him an opportunity to talk during Town Meeting.

10.2 Business Manager

10.2.1 Report: Current Financial Report- Donna reported on the current financials. The anticipated surplus of \$54,677.

10.2.2 Report: FY15 Audit Summary- Donna distributed the hard copies of the audit. There is more in the tuition reserve fund than anticipated. Donna reported that the audit was a clean audit. The Board needs to approve the audit.

10.2.3 Action: Act to accept the FY15 Audit- Motion (Hilary/Erik R) to approve the audit. Unanimously approved.

10.3 Superintendent

10.3.1 Report: Transition Board/Committee Updates- Bruce Labs stated that on April 7th, at 6pm, Sharon, Stockbridge, Tunbridge, and Strafford will have a Wagon Wheel meeting in Stockbridge. Bruce will distribute directions to the Board.

10.3.2 The next Leadership and Governance meeting will be on March 14 6pm at the SU office, the Transition Board will meet on the 30th at 6pm in Bethel.

11.0 OWSU Future Meeting Dates

11.1 OWSU EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE SCHEDULE

11.1.1 March 10, 2016 @ 6:30

11.2 SUPERVISORY TRANSITION BOARD MEETINGS

11.2.1 March 30, 2016 @ 6:00 pm in Tunbridge

12.0 Old Business- none.

13.0 New Business- Act 46 continuation

13.1 Hilary would like to narrow down the realistic options and list the pros and cons of each option. Erik G has begun making a document that represents the options. Erik G asked the community to also submit pros and cons to him. Hilary said that the Board needs to report to the Transition committee at the end of April. Erik G suggested having a public meeting before the April School Board meeting. He suggested explaining the choices at the public meeting and then allowing the survey to be a more informed tool. Greg suggested a survey that would encompass the choices. Erik G suggested finishing the document and then having a public meeting during the week of March 28. Erik G would like to gather the tax information over the past 5 years of the towns that we might join with. Bruce suggested asking the AOE if it would be possible to create a RED. Hilary would like to talk with Thetford and Tunbridge directly. Erik G would like to meet with Beth Cobb the new superintendent of Oxbow/Blue Mt SU. Jeff and Erik G will set up a meeting with Beth Cobb. Board decided to have a public meeting on Tuesday, March 29, 2016 7pm with a survey to follow. This will give town residents 2 weeks to answer their survey. Shannon asked that the options be summarized on the survey. Erik R will schedule with Barrett Hall. Glenn will attend the senior lunch. Greg set up childcare. Jason, Barrie and Hilary will work on the survey. Discussion about the viability of the different options. 1. Document, 2. Survey, 3. Meeting

- 14.0 Other Business- none.
- 15.0 Future Agenda Items- none.
- 16.0 Future Strafford Board Meetings
 - 16.1.1 Wagon Wheel April 7, 2016 6pm in Stockbridge (Kristy warn a the regular wagon wheel meeting and not conduct Strafford specific meeting)
 - 16.1.2 April 12, 2016 @ 5:30 pm (dedicated to Act 46)
 - 16.1.3 March 29, 2016 @ 7:00 pm at Barrett Hall – Public Forum
- 17.0 Executive session:
 - 17.1 Hilary moved to enter executive session at 9.33 to discuss student records
 - 17.1.1 Exited executive session at 10.05
 - 17.1.2 Conditionally approve waiver for Lewis family, pending further clarification, to attend TSA.
 - 17.1.3 Approved waiver for Reimanis family to attend TSA
 - 17.1.4 Approved waiver for Stoffel family to attend Hanover High School
 - 17.1.5 Approved waiver for Becker family to attend TSA
 - 17.1.6 Declined waiver request for Lamb family to attend an unaccredited school
 - 17.1.7 Approved waiver for Ray family to attend Hanover High School
 - 17.2 Erik moved to enter executive session to discuss contracts that would put the board at a disadvantage if discussed in public session at 10.10. Hilary seconded.
 - 17.2.1 Exited at 11.00.
 - 17.2.2 No action taken.
- 18.0 Adjourn (*Target Time 11.01 PM*)

Prepared statement from Tom Scull:

I want to share some concerns that should be in the open as we discuss these issues in more depth over the next few months.

The issue surrounding Act 46 as it relates to Strafford is much bigger than a 5 person Board and while the Board is an elected body to learn, guide and drive decisions, a decision of this magnitude needs to be fully supported by the majority who are willing to take the time and help guide the Board. The outcome of this deliberation has the potential to change our town radically and quickly. Whether you are retired or young with children, we all need to care about the outcome because any decision may change the local economy, real-estate market and feeling in our town. While I expect the outcome will only better our community, there is the potential to hurt our community as we know it.

A concerning dynamic that is felt that needs to be said is the conflicts of interest that riddle this consideration. While it would be nice to have a third party study our needs and come back with recommendations, we don't seem to have that luxury. Therefore we have conflicts:

1. We have conflicts with people who have historically moved to Strafford for the choice of Hanover.
2. We have people more recently for the choice of Sharon Academy.
3. We have people who care strongly about a designation to Thetford.
4. We have people who feel passionate about what Strafford once was when their kids were in school and who are maybe disconnected with today or what a new family in town feels.
5. We have people with jobs potentially at stake both at Newton, but also at Sharon and in Thetford.

The list goes on. I'd ask that you please check the personal conflicts at the door. I'd ask that we be open to change. I'd ask that NO ONE take anything personal. If the Board is challenged, that is healthy. If individual ideas are challenged, it's healthy. Nothing is personal.

Finally, I'd like to share my view of the School Budget session at Town Meeting. It is my opinion that the mood felt deflated. I walked away thinking why are we so down about this law. Sure we can vote to appeal it to get some press and share our mood, but the tone set by our legislators at the meeting and also by

the board made me feel like we've been defeated and already lost. I'd ask that we look at the law as an opportunity. - an opportunity to make Strafford better, better for our kids and a better community by attracting families who share our ideals. This is how Strafford has historically been so unique in the Upper Valley. Act 46 is needed from a business perspective. If we're honest with ourselves, we need the economies of sharing with others for obvious reasons and to compete in the changing world. We voted to limit the purchase of books for our kids in order to reduce the budget at Town Meeting and afford health insurance. The Principal asked for a needed 8% and we can't afford 1%. We have a school gym that many 7th and 8th grade teams won't play us in due to its size. The list goes on. It is my view that we can get behind a plan that will make for a better outcome and use Act 46 for what it was intended.

Tom Scull