

Mt. Blue Regional School District



COMMUNITY | CULTURE | CURRICULUM

"Working together to provide high-quality educational opportunities for all."

227 Main Street, Farmington, ME 04938
(207) 778-6571 | (Fax) 778-4160

Chesterville | Farmington | Industry | New Sharon | New Vineyard | Starks | Temple | Vienna | Weld | Wilton

DATE: May 27, 2025

PLACE: Bjorn Auditorium

TIME: 7:00pm

LIVESTREAM LINK: <https://boxcast.tv/channel/unvoa3ijkfnyp9oufole>

Members Present: Jeff Barnum, Amanda Caruso, Gwen Doak, Kyle Fletcher, Lance Harvell, Greg Kimber, Wayne Kinney, Katie Martikke, Gloria McGraw, Gerald Provencher, Joshua Robbins, Dee Robinson, Rich Ruhlin, Debbie Smith, Dina Spenciner

Board Members Absent: Scott Erb

Student Reps Present:

Student Reps Absent: Adeline Colello, Brielle Tinker, Rowan Shanti, Julian Reynolds

Other Staff Present: Christian Elkington, Monique Poulin, Alison Gamache, Katie Merrill, Carol Kiesman, Tracy Williams, Cynthia Bernstein, Mike Hanson, Keith Acedo, Kevin Bremner, Richard Joseph, Nicole Ibarguen, Nichole Goodspeed, Galen Dalrymple, Katie Duchesne, James Black, Mary Redmond-Luce, Joel Smith, Todd Demmons, Jody Harmon, Debra Richmond, Kristi Leavitt, Erin Landry, Carol Kiesman

- I. **Call to Order** - Secretary of the Board Elkington
 - A. Called to order at 7:00
- II. **Pledge of Allegiance** - Secretary of the Board Elkington
- III. **Election of Moderator** - Secretary of the Board Elkington
 - A. **Paul Mills was nominated as moderator-**
 1. **Motion:** Wayne Kinney
 2. **Seconded:** Jeff Barnum
 - a) Six votes in favor
 - b) Paul Mills took the oath.
- IV. **Welcome from RSU 9 Board Chair** - Dee Robinson
- V. **Appointment and Swearing in of Ballot Clerks** - Moderator
 - A. Ballot Clerks were sworn in.
- VI. **Request of Motion from the Board Chair** - Moderator
 - *Request a motion from the Board Chair to allow the Superintendent of Schools, Christian Elkington (and non-resident district officials), who are not residents of*

RSU 9, to speak and respond to questions on the proposed budget at this meeting.

<i>Motion by: Audience member Seconded by: Audience member Passed by Audience Voice Vote</i>	<i>Discussion/Q&A's:</i>
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VII. Budget Consideration - Moderator

Articles 1 through 11 - Authorize Expenditures in Cost Center Categories

ARTICLE 1: To see what sum the RSU will be authorized to expend for Regular Instruction. *School Board Recommends \$12,979,901*

<i>Motion by: Gwen Doak Seconded by: Audience member Passed by Audience Vote as amended, \$13,129,901</i>	<i>Discussion/Q&A's: *Student teacher ratio questions-20/classroom-can we increase this number by \$150,000 to add classroom teachers? Motion to Amend Article 1 by \$150,000-Mike Wells Wilton & Seconded by audience member The superintendent shared that if we were to do this, CBS' 5th grade-is approximately 22 per class and would be where we would adjust. That we would need to wait on other potential grade levels towards the end of July early August. Move the vote-amendment-amendment passes Amended article-move the vote-amendment passes</i>
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ARTICLE 2: To see what sum the RSU will be authorized to expend for Special Education. *School Board Recommends \$8,101,782*

<i>Motion by: Rich Ruhlin Seconded by: Dee Robinson Passed by Audience Vote</i>	<i>Discussion/Q&A's: *None</i>
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ARTICLE 3: To see what sum the RSU will be authorized to expend for Career and Technical Education. *School Board Recommends \$4,271,404*

<i>Motion by: Dee Robinson Seconded by: Audience member Passed by Audience Vote</i>	<i>Discussion/Q&A's: *None</i>
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ARTICLE 4: To see what sum the RSU will be authorized to expend for Student and Staff Support. *School Board Recommends \$3,702,120*

<i>Motion by: Audience member Seconded by Gwen Doak: Passed by Audience Vote</i>	<i>Discussion/Q&A's: *None</i>
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ARTICLE 5: To see what sum the RSU will be authorized to expend for Other Instruction. *School Board Recommends \$680,899*

<i>Motion by: Audience member</i> <i>Seconded by: Gwen Doak</i> <i>Passed by Audience Vote</i>	<i>Discussion/Q&A's:</i> <i>*None</i>
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ARTICLE 6: To see what sum the RSU will be authorized to expend for System Administration. ***School Board Recommends \$1,526,092***

<i>Motion by: Ryan Morgan</i> <i>Seconded by: Josh Robbins</i> <i>Passed by Audience Vote</i>	<i>Discussion/Q&A's:</i> <i>*None</i>
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ARTICLE 7: To see what sum the RSU will be authorized to expend for School Administration. ***School Board Recommends \$1,987,612***

<i>Motion by: Audience member</i> <i>Seconded by: Audience member</i> <i>Passed by Audience Vote</i>	<i>Discussion/Q&A's:</i> <i>Mike Wells-amendment-Administrative costs in district-by 5% from last year's budget to \$1,857,182-allows for 100,000 to cover some of the teacher positions in Article 1. Seconded by audience member</i> <i>Question to the superintendent-how would it be addressed? We would look at all lines; MBHS 3 are covered (FCTEC covers the other), could not have other schools without admin, MBMS with 500+ students; would need to look at all other costs in this article and reduce those; would not want to cut a position. It would not be easy to reduce that amount. The board could direct the reduction of an administrator. The office staff are also included.</i> <i>Question about essential programs and services-What does the increase or reduction do to the local assessments? Additional raised would need to be calculated and would come directly from tax payers. Moved and seconded to cut off debate. Passed.</i> <i>Amendment moved-amendment failed</i> <i>Move the question and seconded-passed</i> <i>Original figures-passes</i>
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ARTICLE 8: To see what sum the RSU will be authorized to expend for Transportation and Buses. ***School Board Recommends \$3,158,545***

<i>Motion by: Rich Ruhlin</i> <i>Seconded by: Gwen Doak</i> <i>Passed by Audience Vote</i>	<i>Discussion/Q&A's:</i> <i>*None</i>
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ARTICLE 9: To see what sum the RSU will be authorized to expend for Facilities Maintenance. ***School Board Recommends \$5,116,855***

<i>Motion by: Audience member</i> <i>Seconded by: Debbie Smith</i> <i>Passed by Audience Vote</i>	<i>Discussion/Q&A's:</i> <i>*None</i>
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ARTICLE 10: To see what sum the RSU will be authorized to expend for Debt Service and Other Commitments. *School Board Recommends \$3,873,186*

<i>Motion by: Ryan Morgan Seconded by: Audience member Passed by Audience Vote</i>	<i>Discussion/Q&A's: Question about debt service-Total debt is about 27 million; the state pays over 90%; it is included in our revenue each year. We cannot restructure the debt because the state and Maine Bond Bank oversees the debt. We have to abide by their schedule.</i>
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ARTICLE 11: This will not be voted on at this Budget Hearing, as there are no additional expenditures needed this year.

Articles 12 through 14 - Raise Funds for the Proposed School Budget

ARTICLE 12: To see what sum the RSU will appropriate for the total cost of funding public education from kindergarten to grade 12 as described in the Essential Programs and Services Funding Act and to see what sum the RSU will raise and assess as each municipality's contribution to the total cost of funding public education from kindergarten to grade 12 as described in the Essential Programs and Services Funding Act in accordance with the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 20A, section 15688. *The School Board Recommends the amounts set forth in the table below:*

Municipality	Total Appropriated (By Municipality)	Total Raised by Municipality (District Required Assessment)
Chesterville	\$3,335,602.28	\$845,358.33
Farmington	\$12,818,362.69	\$3,848,998.33
Industry	\$1,431,697.13	\$784,460.00
New Sharon	\$2,919,056.30	\$790,560.00
New Vineyard	\$1,660,889.34	\$636,026.67
Starks	\$923,360.77	\$431,778.33
Temple	\$814,709.29	\$344,548.33
Vienna	\$1,272,358.26	\$570,350.00
Weld	\$468,016.66	\$449,256.02
Wilton	\$8,914,890.56	\$2,090,266.67
Total	\$34,558,943.28	\$10,791,602.68

<i>Motion by: Rich Ruhlin Seconded by: Ryan Morgan Passed by Audience Vote</i>	<i>Discussion/Q&A's: Question was asked if these #s have to change because of the change in Article 1. Answer from the superintendent is no as this is the minimum amount</i>
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	<i>needed in order to receive state funding.</i>
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ARTICLE 13: To see what sum the RSU will raise and appropriate for the annual payments on debt service previously approved by the RSU voters for non-state-funded school construction projects or non-state-funded portions of school construction projects in addition to the funds appropriated as the local share of the RSU's contribution to the total cost of funding public education from kindergarten to grade 12. *The School Board Recommends \$194,779.*

<i>Motion by: Audience member Seconded by: Audience member Passed by Audience Vote</i>	<i>Discussion/Q&A's: *None</i>
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ARTICLE 14: *(Written ballot required)* To see what sum the Regional School Unit will raise and appropriate in additional local funds *(The School Board Recommends \$4,231,899)*, which exceeds the State's Essential Programs and Services allocation model by \$4,231,899 as required to fund the budget recommended by the School Board.

The School Board Recommends \$4,231,899, which exceeds the State's Essential Programs and Services allocation model by \$4,231,899. The School Board gives the following reasons for exceeding the State's Essential Programs and Services funding model: EPS does not fully support all of the necessary costs of a comprehensive K-12 educational program, such as (1) athletics/co-curricular program costs; (2) transportation for rural school systems and athletics/co-curricular programs; (3) special education costs, (4) system administration costs, (5) costs of maintaining class size smaller than are recognized by the Essential Programs and Services funding model, and (6) student supports, such as counseling.

<i>Motion as amended by: Josh Robbins Seconded by: Gwen Doak Passed by Audience Vote In Favor: 73 Against: 0</i>	<i>Discussion/Q&A's: Questions were asked about the adjusted #.</i>
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Article 15 - Summarizes the Proposed School Budget

ARTICLE 15: To see what sum the Regional School Unit will authorize the School Board to expend for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2025 and ending June 30, 2026 from the Regional School Unit's contribution to the total cost of funding public education from kindergarten to grade 12 as described in the Essential Programs and Services Funding Act, local funds for non-state-funded school construction projects, additional local funds for school purposes under the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 20-A, section 15690, unexpended balances, tuition receipts, state subsidy and other receipts for the support of schools. *The School Board Recommends \$45,548,396*

<i>Motion as amended by: Josh Robbins</i>	<i>Discussion/Q&A's: Question about the adjusted #.</i>
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<i>Seconded by: Gwen Doak Passed by Audience Vote</i>	
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Article 16 - Authorizes the Adult Education Program and Raises the Local Share

ARTICLE 16: To see if the RSU will appropriate \$590,378 for Adult Education and raise \$212,875 as the local share, with authorization to expend any additional, incidental, or miscellaneous receipts in the interest and for the well-being of the adult education program.

<i>Motion by: Rich Ruhlin Seconded by: Gwen Doak Passed by Audience Vote</i>	<i>Discussion/Q&A's: *None</i>
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Article 17 - Authorizes Expenditures of Grants and Other Receipts

ARTICLE 17: In addition to amounts approved in the preceding articles, shall the School Board be authorized to expend such other sums as may be received from federal or state grants or programs or other sources during the fiscal year for school and other program purposes, provided that such grants, programs or other sources do not require the expenditure of other funds not previously appropriated?

<i>Motion by: Audience member Seconded by: Audience member Passed by Audience Vote</i>	<i>Discussion/Q&A's: *None</i>
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Article 18 - Authorizes Transfers Among Cost Centers

ARTICLE 18: Shall the School Board be authorized to transfer amounts exceeding 5% of the total appropriation for any cost center to another cost center or among other cost centers for the 2025-2026 fiscal year, provided that transfers shall not be permitted to increase the authorized total school budget?

<i>Motion by: Audience member Seconded by: Audience member Passed by Audience Vote</i>	<i>Discussion/Q&A's: Wording-transfer of 5%? Does this means that the board could put 6-100 percent to one article. Yes, but there are many laws and contracts that keep the guardrails in place. Put this in place for a large emergency. How long have we had this in place? This is the 4th time it has been proposed and has never been applied.</i>
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Article 19 - Authorizes the Disposition of any Additional State Subsidy Received

ARTICLE 19: In the event that the RSU receives more state education subsidy than the amount included in its budget, shall the School Board be authorized to use all or part of the additional state subsidy to increase expenditures for school purposes in cost center

categories approved by the School Board, increase the allocation of finances in a reserve fund approved by the School Board, and/or decrease the local cost share expectation, as defined in Title 20-A, section 15671A(1)(B), for local property taxpayers for funding public education as approved by the School Board?

<i>Motion by: Audience member</i> <i>Seconded by: Audience member</i> <i>Passed by Audience Vote</i>	<i>Discussion/Q&A's:</i> <i>Where could this go? All places mentioned but most likely it would be used to reduce next year's taxes.</i>
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Article 20 - Authorizes A Transfer To And Expenditure From The Capital Reserve Fund

Article 20: Shall the School Board be authorized to transfer up to \$450,000 from available fund balances to the Capital Reserve Fund and to expend said funds as needed at the discretion of the School Board?

<i>Motion by: Audience member</i> <i>Seconded by: Gwen Doak?</i> <i>Passed by Audience Vote</i>	<i>Discussion/Q&A's:</i> <i>Previous article gives the board the option to decrease taxpayer contribution, why not this one?</i> <i>The board is reducing the total amount to taxpayers by 800,000 in carry forward this year. It is in the revenue section of the budget. They has decided to put these funds in this account for a possible emergency or long-term planning.</i>
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Article 21 - Authorizes A Transfer To And Expenditure From the Special Education Reserve Fund

Article 21: Shall the School Board be authorized to transfer up to \$200,000 from available fund balances to the Special Education Reserve Fund and to expend said funds as needed at the discretion of the School Board?

<i>Motion by: Debbie Smith</i> <i>Seconded by: Audience member</i> <i>Passed by Audience Vote</i>	<i>Discussion/Q&A's:</i> <i>*None</i>
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Article 22 - Authorizes A Transfer To And Expenditure From The Technology Reserve Fund

Article 22: Shall the School Board be authorized to transfer up to \$300,000 from available fund balances to the Instruction Technology Reserve Fund and to expend said funds needed at the discretion of the School Board?

<i>Motion by: Audience member</i> <i>Seconded by: Audience member</i> <i>Passed by Audience Vote</i>	<i>Discussion/Q&A's:</i> <i>*None</i>
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VIII. Adjourn at 8:16

NEXT SCHEDULED BOARD MEETINGS

June 12, 2025 - 6:30 pm - The Forum, Mt. Blue Campus

- Board Reports - *School Nutrition, McKinney Vento*

June 24, 2025 - 6:30 pm - The Forum, Mt. Blue Campus

- Board Reports - *Athletics*

UPCOMING COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Operations - June 3, 2025 - 5:00pm - The Holman House, District Office

Personnel & Finance - June 3, 2025 - 6:00pm - The Holman House, District Office

Educational Policy - June 3, 2025 - 7:00pm - The Holman House, District Office