

# Hooksett School Board

## Deliberative Session 2024 Report



February 8, 2024

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Deliberative Sessions for the Town and School governments of Hooksett were held on Saturday, February 3, 2024. These Deliberative Sessions were the final official opportunity for public input to, and possible amendment of, the warrant articles moved to the ballot for the March election.

At the School Deliberative Session, residents voted to amend the proposed school operating budget. It was reduced by \$750,000, from \$41,422,137 to \$40,672,137, reducing tax impact by \$0.24 per thousand. This reduction places the proposed budget \$173,993 *below* the default budget of \$40,846,130. Neither the School Board (0-5), nor the Budget Committee (3-4), recommend the amended proposed operating budget. Should the default budget be approved by voters, RSA 49:13 indicates a special meeting may be held to take up the issue of a revised operating budget.

Residents also voted to amend the proposed 15-year lease purchase agreement for infrastructure replacements and improvements at all three local schools. It was reduced from a \$13.3 million maximum principal cost to \$0. Neither the School Board (1-4), nor the Budget Committee (2-5), recommend the amended proposed agreement, though the vote has no tax impact either way since the lease was amended to \$0.

Property tax bills sent to Hooksett residents in January saw significant increases, following the 5-year revaluation of the Town of Hooksett in the fall of 2023. It was summarized in the January 2024 Hooksett School Board Chair's report:

Because the 2023 revaluation increased residential properties more than commercial or industrial properties, residential property owners "own" a larger portion of Hooksett's total assessed value... and a correspondingly larger portion of Hooksett's total net expenses or tax liability.

Some residents saw thousands of dollars in additional cost on their property tax bill. This was frequently cited as motivation for budget adjustments at both Deliberative Sessions.

Sadly, neither Deliberative Session had robust representation by town residents. The first votes tallied at each Session indicated 67 and 46 residents attending the start of the Town and School meetings, respectively, which included the residents attending as elected officials or local government staff. For those who attended on a Saturday to represent Hooksett's 15,000 residents, of whom about 9,000 are eligible to vote, thank you.

The next meeting of the Hooksett School Board is Tuesday, February 20. It will include an agenda item for the School Board and administration to review scenarios and potential cuts, and develop plans of action for those scenarios to accommodate the Deliberative Session reduction to 2024-25 operating budget.

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You can find updated documents online at <https://hooksettschoolboard.sau15.net/> This includes the amended warrant articles for the Hooksett School District with updated tax impact calculations, the updated Deliberative Session Guide, meeting minutes from the School Deliberative Session, and a videorecording of the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

The Hooksett School Board  
*Wayne Goertel, Chair*  
*Jillian Godbout, Vice Chair*  
*Amy Tremblay, Clerk*  
*James Sullivan*  
*Jason Hyde*  
*Lynn Baker*  
*Vanessa Gelinis*

*The mission of the Hooksett School District is to develop a community of learners who are intellectually curious, resourceful, and respectful of self and others. Academic achievement, through constantly improving standards, is the District's highest priority.*