

The District Budget Meeting is over. What happens next?

On Wednesday, May 17th, the citizens of Eliot and South Berwick overwhelmingly voted to send the district's budget for next year to the voters for final approval. The citizens at the District Budget Meeting also voted to endorse the important 16th warrant authorizing the Board to use any additional state subsidy to invest in the restoration of programming in the district next year.

However, our work is not done! MSAD 35 has a two-step process for approving the budget. The district budget meeting is only the first step in this process. The Budget Validation Referendum is the important second step and voters must approve the budget at each step for the district to have a finalized budget.

The District Budget Validation Referendum will be held this year on June 13, 2017. If the budget fails the referendum vote, the whole budget process starts all over again and here is how it would work. The Superintendent's office would prepare and present a new budget to the Board. The Board would recommend a new budget to the community at another District Budget Meeting, and the budget approved at this new District Budget Meeting would be sent to another Budget Validation Referendum.

According to state law the School Board must hold additional District Budget Meetings and Budget Validation Referendums until a budget is finally approved by the voters. If the voters do not approve a budget before the beginning of the fiscal year, July 1st, the budget approved at the most recent District Budget Meeting on May 17th is automatically considered the budget for the ensuing year until the voters approve a budget at a Budget Validation Referendum.

Because principals need to staff their classrooms, purchase supplies and have their buildings ready to open in September, operating, even for a short time without a finalized budget, would be a nightmare for the entire District.

The people of Eliot and South Berwick are hard-working people who play by the rules and try to make ends meet. Over the past 50+ years, the people of our community have built and developed a school district that is one of the top performing districts in the state. Let us continue to work together to keep Marshwood strong!

Please remember to vote on June 13, 2017. If you cannot vote in person on June 13, 2017, absentee ballot applications are available at the Superintendent's Office, at each school's office, at each Town Hall Office and online at maine.gov.