



## Board of Selectmen Town of Gilmanton, New Hampshire

### SB2 PUBLIC HEARING

Meeting

February 19, 2015

6:00 pm. – Gilmanton Elementary School

**Present:** Chairman Brett Currier, Selectmen Donald Guarino and Stephen McCormack, Town Administrator Arthur Capello, Administrative Assistant Stephanie Fogg. Also present Dick DeSeve, Sue Hale-DeSeve and Gayle Ober (Laconia Daily Sun).

Chairman Currier opened the meeting and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

#### SB2 Public Hearing –

Chairman Currier opened the Public Hearing. Chairman Currier said this is a Public Hearing for the Petition Warrant Article to repeal SB2. Chairman Currier asked the attending public if there were any comments?

Dick DeSeve said this is the perfect example with what is wrong with SB2. "Attendance at the first Deliberative Session three years ago was 120 people, second year 80, and this year was 50, that is disgraceful. This is supposed to be a democratic process where we get together and we discuss things, and we even argue about things, neighbors can express differences of opinion and work things out. Then we vote on things. Not always necessarily pleasant, and sometimes confrontational, but at the end of the day, we come to a resolution, still as neighbors and friends." Now what we have on voting day is a reasonably uninformed electorate, voting on things they don't really understand. Numbers don't really make any difference if people don't understand and discuss. Just really disappointing to see how the Deliberative Session for the School Session was even worse, just 15 people attending this year. I am absolutely in support of getting rid of SB2 and getting back to Town Meeting.

Selectman McCormack said he moved to this Town in 1987, we had Town Meeting then that would go to 11:00 pm to midnight back then. Selectman McCormack said he signed the petition to go back to Town Meeting. The question is how do you increase turnout. Really disheartened after the turn out for the education session. That was one of the main complaints of Town Meeting because no one ever turned out for the School Session. After being a Selectman and seeing how the Budget Committee works, I think that with the Town portion of it, there is at least more opportunity to have discussions, and alterations. Selectman McCormack said I'm not sure if either way is better than the other, what he would like to see is, no matter what the vote is, how do we increase the turnout? Whether it is SB2 or Town Meeting it is a sad state of affairs when you can't get more people out for these issues. Recently there was a Public Hearing where the

1 Academy Building was packed, because it was an issue where people wanted to have a say.  
2 How do we get people out for the bigger issues, like tax issues and making the Town better. The  
3 only good thing with SB2 is everyone gets to vote.  
4

5 Vinnie Biachetti said we cannot force people to vote. The only way to do that is to change the  
6 form of government. Last year at the School District meeting, someone who wanted to cut the  
7 School District, which would have been devastating because it would have gone back to a default  
8 budget, after we had a contract for transportation. It would have cut services and people here in  
9 Gilmanon. I read your article Brett and thought it was well written, but I disagree. Regardless  
10 of how you do it, your agenda, my agenda, for the people who do not get to Town Meeting to  
11 hear it from the "horses mouth", there is going to be uninformed voters. They are going to hear  
12 what you have to say, or what I have to say because I am their friend. With our right to vote,  
13 also comes the responsibility to be informed. The only way to truly be informed is to go to the  
14 Deliberative Session or go to Town Meeting and be able to talk to the Department Heads, the  
15 Selectmen and the Budget Committee.  
16

17 Chairman Currier said if we had 500 or 600 people show up at Town Meeting I would be with  
18 you. I will tell you where this really started, why we went to SB2, because people would go to  
19 Town Meeting, 30 years we would attend, then all of a sudden people would call their buddies  
20 for an hour to come vote. They would come for one vote and then leave. Vinnie said on both  
21 sides though. Chairman Currier said I'm not picking sides, but that is what happened. People  
22 were disgusted with that, as they sat on benches for hours and hours, and said are you kidding  
23 me? Chairman Currier said he was not certain who started the SB2 Petition originally, but he  
24 thinks it is a tough sell to go back. You are as informed as a Board of Selectmen, a Department  
25 Head or the Budget Committee or whoever tells you the information. There is very little time to  
26 get informed. If you are my friend and you believe me, and I'm a Department Head, it might be  
27 fictitious, but you are going to vote my way and believe me. Vinnie said people have their  
28 agendas obviously. Chairman Currier said we don't have a lot of time, so we are believing  
29 everything we are told, and vote that way.  
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31 Chairman Currier said in Gilmanon, I do not see a lot of things that we are lacking. I see it as a  
32 Selectman, when people come in here behind closed doors, and they are in tears because they  
33 cannot pay their taxes.  
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35 It was said that with SB2 everyone votes.  
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37 Chairman Currier said that the people who cannot get to Town Meeting, like the elderly, have no  
38 say. Vinnie said some of them will vote out of fear, not all of them. Some will be informed by  
39 the people they trust, but so will the younger people. Chairman Currier said if you do not have  
40 an absentee ballot, you are denied the ability to vote if you do not make that Saturday Town  
41 Meeting.  
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43 Mr. DeSeve said you may be right, there may be some way to amend the Town Meeting to allow  
44 an absentee ballot, because I agree. Town Meeting has changed my mind at times. Even you  
45 and I Brett, we have not always agreed, but one thing I have wanted to say to you is that I  
46 appreciate your service as a Selectman. Chairman Currier said Thank you. Finding a way to get  
47 people more involved in your Town is a difficult issue.  
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1 Mrs. Hale-DeSeve said she believes it is easier to vote directly at a Town Meeting, than to try to  
2 remember weeks later.

3  
4 Selectman McCormack said to address this level of service, the Town needs to be involved. The  
5 School side, people feel their hands are tied, which is not true, it is educational matters that need  
6 to be brought forward.

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8 Mr. DeSeve said turn out is the biggest issue. The Town needs to attract businesses for a better  
9 economic base.

10  
11 Chairman Currier asked about the SB2 Petition, and where are the people who signed this  
12 Petition? If there is 25 or more people on this Petition to repeal SB2, and they are not here, it is  
13 not a good representation for SB2.

14  
15 Vinnie said this is a procedural issue, it really doesn't matter what happens at the end of this  
16 hearing. No matter how many showed up tonight the result is going to be the same.

17  
18 Selectman McCormack said we are growing as a bedroom community, we need to work on  
19 infrastructure, Roads, Planning, Zoning. If you look into the Town Report, you will see some of  
20 the issues the Selectmen have worked on in 2014.

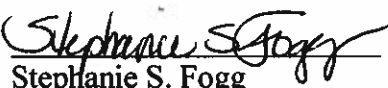
21  
22 Mr. DeSeve said thank you for holding the hearing.

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24 Arthur Capello said that the Town of Gilmanon was listed on a report as the 21<sup>st</sup> safest Town to  
25 live in, in New Hampshire.

26  
27 6:25 pm Chairman Currier closed the Public Hearing on SB2.

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29 **Adjournment:** On a motion by Selectmen Guarino, seconded by Selectman McCormack it was  
30 voted unanimously to adjourn at 6:25 pm. (3-0)

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32 Respectfully Submitted,

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35 Stephanie S. Fogg  
36 Administrative Assistant

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39 **Approved by the Board of Selectmen**

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43 Chairman Brett A. Currier

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47 Selectman Donald J. Guarino

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