

2016 -- S 3083

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LC006202
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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2016

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A N A C T

RELATING TO THE EXETER-WEST GREENWICH SCHOOL DISTRICT

Introduced By: Senators Morgan, and Gee

Date Introduced: June 14, 2016

Referred To: Senate Finance

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Section 1(G) of Chapter 80 of the Public Laws of 1965, entitled "An Act
2 Approving and Ratifying the Agreement between the Towns of Exeter and West Greenwich,
3 Rhode Island, with Respect to the Formation of a Regional School District," and the several
4 amendments to the same subsequent thereto, are hereby amended to read as follows:

5 (G) Quorum.

6 The quorum for the transaction of business shall ~~be a majority of the committee,~~ require
7 that at least four (4) members of the committee be present and that both towns of the school
8 district be represented, but a number less than the simple majority may adjourn.

9 SECTION 2. Section V of Chapter 80 of the Public Laws of 1965, entitled "An Act
10 Approving and Ratifying the Agreement between the Towns of Exeter and West Greenwich,
11 Rhode Island, with Respect to the Formation of a Regional School District," and the several
12 amendments to the same subsequent thereto, are hereby amended to read as follows:

13 Section V. Annual budget of the regional school district.

14 (A) All day referendum

15 The annual budget of the regional school district as proposed by the school committee
16 shall be voted upon in an all-day referendum in the member towns to be held on the second or
17 third Monday of April each year to be scheduled by the school committee, with approval obtained
18 by a majority vote of the combined total vote of Exeter and West Greenwich.

19 (B) Purpose

1 The all-day referendum shall be the forum for the voters of Exeter and West Greenwich
2 to approve or reject the school committee's proposed budget for the upcoming fiscal year and to
3 approve or reject any warrant items that the school committee may place on the ballot.

4 (C) Eligible voters and voting process

5 All voters qualified to vote for at least 30 days prior to the date of the scheduled all-day
6 referendum or any subsequent referenda shall be eligible to vote at any all-day referendum. The
7 boards of canvassers of the towns of Exeter and West Greenwich shall canvass the respective
8 voting list of said towns prior to any such all-day referendum, and may, the provisions of §17-11-
9 1.1 notwithstanding, conduct the voting at a single polling place in each of Exeter and West
10 Greenwich.

11 (D) Referenda subsequent to vote rejection of the budget

12 In the event that ~~the annual budget proposed by the school committee is rejected, the~~
13 ~~school committee may~~ voters reject the school committee's proposed annual budget, the
14 committee shall, as needed, schedule further subsequent all-day referenda to consider revised
15 annual budgets. Subsequent referenda may be conducted at thirty (30) day intervals and shall be
16 conducted in a manner consistent with Section V(C) above. Prior to any subsequent referenda, the
17 school committee shall meet and adopt a revised budget. The revised budget shall be, at the
18 minimum, in the minimum amount necessary to operate the school district for the next fiscal year
19 in compliance with state and federal mandates and contractual obligations. To gain voter approval
20 of the revised budget, the school committee may advertise the advantages of the revised budget
21 within the towns and may, if the school committee deems necessary, schedule an informational
22 district financial meeting.

23 (E) Failure of referenda to yield an approved annual budget

24 If the school committee is unable to obtain an approved annual budget via the referenda
25 process set forth above before the beginning of the upcoming fiscal year, July 1, then the school
26 committee shall operate the school district in accordance with §16-2-23 and may seek any relief
27 under applicable laws and regulations.

28 SECTION 3. Section VI of Chapter 80 of the Public Laws of 1965, entitled "An Act
29 Approving and Ratifying the Agreement between the Towns of Exeter and West Greenwich,
30 Rhode Island, with Respect to the Formation of a Regional School District," and the several
31 amendments to the same subsequent thereto, are hereby amended to read as follows:

32 (E) Times of payment of apportioned costs.

33 Each member town shall pay to the district in each year its proportionate share, certified
34 as provided in subsection VII (E), of the construction and operating costs. The annual share of

1 each member town shall be paid in such amounts and at such times that at least the following
2 percentages of such annual share shall be paid on or before the dates indicated, respectively:

3 September ~~1~~ 15 25%

4 December ~~1~~ 15 50%

5 ~~February 1~~ March 15 75%

6 ~~May 1~~ June 15 100%

7 SECTION 4. Section VII of Chapter 80 of the Public Laws of 1965, entitled "An Act
8 Approving and Ratifying the Agreement between the Towns of Exeter and West Greenwich,
9 Rhode Island, with Respect to the Formation of a Regional School District," and the several
10 amendments to the same subsequent thereto, are hereby amended to read as follows:

11 Section VII. Procedure for the adoption of the annual budget.

12 (A) Fiscal year.

13 The regional school district fiscal year shall begin on July 1 of each year.

14 (B) Initial budget. [No longer applicable]

15 (C) Tentative maintenance and operating budget.

16 1. Thereafter, [after initial budget] it shall be the duty of the regional school district
17 superintendent or chief administrative officer, to present to the regional district school committee,
18 at its regular meeting in the month of January, a preliminary budget containing his estimates of
19 the amount of money needed to operate the regional school district system for the ensuing fiscal
20 year, including therein provisions for any installment of principal or interest to become due in
21 such year on any bonds or other evidences of indebtedness of the district and any other
22 construction costs to be apportioned to the member towns in such year. The form of the budget
23 shall conform to the account system of the state department of education.

24 2. The regional district school committee shall prepare and approve a budget which it
25 believes will efficiently operate the regional school district for the ensuing year not later than the
26 second Tuesday in March.

27 3. At least seven (7) days before the all-day referendum in which the budget is to be
28 adopted, the regional district school committee shall hold a public hearing on the proposed
29 budget, at which time any citizen entitled to vote at the all-day referendum may be heard. Notice
30 of the date of such hearing, together with a summary of the proposed budget, accompanied by a
31 statement of the amount necessary to be raised by taxation shall be given at least ten (10) days in
32 advance thereof, by publication once in a newspaper of general circulation within the regional
33 school district and published in the State of Rhode Island.

34 4. Within seventy-five (75) days before the all-day referendum at which the budget is to

1 be adopted, the regional district school committee shall hold workshops for the purpose of
2 committee deliberation, public information and public input with respect to the budget. Notice of
3 the dates of such workshops shall be given at least ten (10) days in advance thereof, by
4 publication once in a newspaper of general circulation within the regional school district and
5 published in the State of Rhode Island.

6 ~~5. Motions to increase or decrease the budget.~~
7 ~~Motions to increase or decrease the budget by ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) or more~~
8 ~~may be made by any qualified elector, provided that such motion is submitted to the regional~~
9 ~~school district treasurer not later than thirty (30) days before the date of the all-day referendum.~~
10 ~~The district treasurer shall forward the proposed amendment to the Town Clerks of Exeter and~~
11 ~~West Greenwich for inclusion on the ballot at the all-day referendum.~~

12 (D) Final maintenance and operating budget.

13 No later than the second Tuesday of March in each year, the committee shall adopt the
14 final budget for the regional school district, the budget to include debt and interest charges and
15 any other current construction costs as separate items, and shall apportion the amounts so
16 necessary to be raised in order to meet the budget in accordance with the provisions of subsection
17 VI (D). The final budget, as adopted by the regional district school committee, shall be acted
18 upon at the all-day referendum to be held on the second or third Monday or April of each year as
19 provided by Section V.

20 (E) Notification to member towns.

21 Within ten (10) days subsequent to the adoption of the budget at the all-day referendum,
22 the regional school district treasurer shall certify to the budgeting officers and financial town
23 meeting of the respective towns the amount of money to be raised by taxes in each town as herein
24 provided for the support of the regional school district which amount shall become a part of the
25 budget for each respective town, and shall be appropriated in full by the financial town meeting.

26 (F) Records.

27 The fiscal records of the regional district school committee shall be available to the
28 auditors of the member towns.

29 SECTION 5. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF
A N A C T
RELATING TO THE EXETER-WEST GREENWICH SCHOOL DISTRICT

- 1 This act would amend certain provisions in the agreement forming the Exeter-West
- 2 Greenwich School District regarding the required quorum to transact business, referenda for the
- 3 district's annual budget and timing for the payment of apportioned costs.
- 4 This act would take effect upon passage.

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