

Vote No on Act 46 (If You Have Any Doubts at All)

ANTHONY BUSHWAY, ANBRADONCHARTERS@GMAIL.COM, WINDY WOOD ROAD

Act 46 has many, many, details.

I have been trying to get all the facts, for quite sometime now. It has been a slow process for me, with lots of questions and concerns I seek answers to.

I urge fellow Barre Town residents, to vote NO on act 46, if you are still unsure and or have questions.

If it is voted down again, as it was on the original ballot, it will come up again next year.

In that time, folks like myself who are still on the fence will have an opportunity to vote on it again, as I am sure it will continue to come up. Or at least a different version of it.

Your vote counts!

Make sure you are comfortable with your decision, when you mark your ballot.

Thank you for taking the time to read this post!

Anthony Bushway
Barre Town resident

My Rationale for "No" Vote on Act 46

KIM WHITCOMB, KWHITVT@GMAIL.COM, MILL ST

I am writing to explain my rationale for voting "NO" on Article I regarding a proposed Act 46 merger of Barre Town and Barre City schools.

First, I would like to thank those who worked on the committee to explore the proposed merger. I can tell from reading the full report that you spent a significant amount of time and effort to research and assess the proposed merger. I appreciate your efforts. I understand that you were confused when the Barre Town voters rejected the proposed merger. I will attempt to explain why I personally voted "NO" the first time and will vote "NO" again on January 31st.

- I was not uneducated and uninformed when I voted in November. Before any vote, I make sure to do my research. I resent the implication made by some in the media that I was too stupid to vote the way you feel I should have voted. I also very much resent the additional cost you have added for the town taxpayers so that you could hold this revote.

- School budget approval – this was the single biggest issue for me. In 10 years, the town has not defeated a school budget. The same cannot be said for the city. In 2014, just one of the recent years that the city defeated its school budget, it took four tries to pass the school budget. I do not want the schools and our children held hostage while voters repeatedly defeat the budget. I realize that enough town "YES" votes could override city "NO" votes, like they do with the Spaulding budget, but do we really want to subject ourselves to this uncertainty each year?

- I am not voting for Article I because there is no guarantee of what will happen after the first few years:

- 1) Barre Town has a majority of members on the proposed school board for the first three years, then that could change
- 2) The proposed school board (which we already elected) could change the articles of agreement as they wish – not great if the town doesn't have a majority after the first three years
- 3) School buildings can't be closed for the first four years, then that could change
- 4) Total consolidation (single elementary school and single middle school) could not be considered for at least five years, then that could change

- As stated in the report, "The model was created for purposes of comparative illustrations, and under no circumstances should be relied upon to forecast future actual tax rates resulting, if and when a merger occurs or does not occur. The model does not account for, nor is it intended to account for, policy decisions, management decisions and/or changes in any factor reflected in the model, now or over time."

In light of the \$70 million budget deficit this year at the state level, I have zero confidence that we will ever see the estimated tax savings. Our legislature frequently rewrites previous legislation. What guarantee do we have that they will not make "policy decisions" in Montpelier that impact the merged school district and erase any tax savings? None.

- Finally, I am willing to wait until the state makes us consolidate if it comes to that. Let them force us. It just gives us more time to eliminate some of the uncertainty. I would urge all voters to research whether or not their elected officials voted for this intrusive piece of legislation that takes power away from local communities. If you are against it, do your homework and see who voted for Act 46. The information is readily available online. What you find may inform your vote the next time they come up for reelection.

I urge you to vote "NO" on Article I of Act 46 on January 31st.

Vote No to Article 1, Barre Town School Merger Jan. 31

TERRY REIL, HADDIE11@GMAIL.COM, HIGH STREET

From a Jan 23rd article in VTDIGGER by Mark Johnson.

Our new Governor and the guy that helped write Act 46 acknowledge it has problems and is falling short. Does this give you the confidence that approving this merger is the right thing to do? Vote NO on Article 1 on Jan 31st.

"There have been problems with Act 46, Baruth acknowledged..." "Gov. Phil Scott said during the campaign that Act 46 was "falling far short of the cost containment and property tax solution Vermonters are looking for."

Vote No to Article 1, Barre Town School Merger Jan. 31

TERRY REIL, HADDIE11@GMAIL.COM, HIGH STREET

In the mailbox this morning was an orange card in favor of Article 1, Barre Town Merger from the Partners for Barre Area Schools. The card says to get the facts.

The first bullet point, "Article 1 does not merge schools..." I think the simple answer to that is, not now. What prevents the Unified District from merging schools in the future? Nothing. They can't you say? Page 29 of the Barre Town Final Report, Article 7 (A) transfers all real and personal property, including land, buildings, and content to the new District. They go a step further in Article 7(B), where the new District AT ITS DISCRETION can sell the property if it is no longer used for educational purposes. The only roadblock to this is if the new District conveys the property back to the municipality and the municipality uses the property for community and public purposes.

Tell me again how Article 1, merging Barre Town School is in the Barre Town residents best interest? Is transferring ownership of our school really a good idea?

Vote NO to Article 1, Barre Town School Merger, January 31st.