

—Slug:.....COMM-0864.opin.letter.000\_hege  
—Contributor..... Rick Hege  
—Contributor email.....rick.hege@gmail.com  
—For section.....Voices/Letters from readers  
—Format..... LETTERS - Opinions - Letters to the Editor  
—Dateline.....Townshend  
—Article Number:.....43572



**Notes from editor (not for publication):**

Thanks, Rick! It got a little repetitive. I had to trim a little, I hope with no loss of tone, meaning, or message. —Jeff



HEADLINE ELEMENTS:

####BEGIN HED####

1 WRED voters: You need to weigh in on your school  
2 budget

####END HED####

####BEGIN SUBHED####

3

####END SUBHED####

4 TEXT BODY:

####BEGIN TEXT####

5 On Wednesday, May 13, the polls will be open in the  
6 towns of Brookline, Jamaica, Newfane, Townshend, and  
7 Windham for the registered voters of those towns to vote on a  
8 revised FY27 budget for the West River Modified Union  
9 Education District, more commonly known as the WRED.

10 This district covers the educational needs for all students  
11 in the listed towns except for elementary expenses in the Town of

12 Windham. The original budget was voted down on April 8 with a  
13 total of 440 votes cast (238 no and 202 yes).

14 The purpose of my communication is not to try tell  
15 people whether they should vote for or against the budget. I urge  
16 people to do a bit of research, talk with your representative(s) on  
17 the board, and develop your own opinion.

18 But I do want to emphasize that you need to vote.

19 School taxes are the majority of your tax bill. While most  
20 people seem to understand this, I have come across too many  
21 people in Townshend, including some former members of the  
22 Selectboard over the years, who really have no idea that the  
23 majority of their tax bill is for the schools.

24 While it does vary by community, in Townshend, last  
25 year, 71% of the amount of property taxes assessed on residential  
26 property was for the schools, leaving 29% for the municipality.  
27 That is simply a statement of fact, not an opinion on the budget  
28 itself.

29 Still, despite the obvious impact, in the original vote for  
30 the FY27 budget, only 10.4% of the voters cast ballots. *Just*  
31 *slightly more than 10% of the registered voters cast ballots.*

32 We really should not have such a small percentage of the  
33 electorate deciding one of the most significant questions put to us  
34 every year.

35 I do understand people's frustrations with elections and  
36 the belief that some may have that their vote just does not count  
37 in federal or state elections. I do not agree, but I do understand  
38 why people might feel that way. In this case, as in individual  
39 town elections, the final results of the vote directly impact each  
40 voter. This is as local as it gets.

41 This is not a difficult election to participate in. You do not  
42 have to attend a meeting to vote from the floor. You may vote  
43 early, you may vote by mail, or you may go the polling place on  
44 Wednesday, May 13 and cast your ballot in person when the  
45 polls are open. Contact your town clerk for ballot options and/or  
46 the times the polls will be open in your town — but do it now.

47 While know it is likely never to happen, I would love to  
48 see that percentage increase to 50% or more this year. But I  
49 would be happy with even 25%.

50 It is easy to vote. Just do it!

####END TEXT####

BIO/COATTAIL:

####BEGIN BIO/COATTAIL####

51

####END BIO/COATTAIL####

*LAST ISSUE IN WHICH THIS FILE CAN BE RUN:*

####BEGIN MAXISSUE####

52

0

####END MAXISSUE####

LINKS:

####BEGIN LINKS####

53

####END LINKS####

VIDEO:

####BEGIN VIDEO####

54

####END VIDEO####

LOGLINE (SOCIAL MEDIA):

####BEGIN LOGLINE####

55

####END LOGLINE####