

Town of Lincoln
62 Quaker Street, Lincoln, Vermont 05443

October 5, 2021

Dear Bristol, Monkton, New Haven and Starksboro Selectboards,

After nearly ten months of intense discussion and careful analysis, on August 24 Lincoln voted by a margin of 575 – 172 to withdraw from the Mount Abraham Unified School District (MAUSD). The vote was a response to a proposal by the MAUSD administration that would effectively close the elementary schools in Lincoln, New Haven and Starksboro. Additionally, we are concerned that the ANWSD-MAUSD Merger Committee may eliminate a town’s opportunity to vote on whether to close its school.

Lincoln’s vote was the first step in a process defined by statute (16 V.S.A § 724) that includes these additional steps:

1. **All the other towns in the district (Bristol, Monkton, New Haven and Starksboro) must vote to ratify the Lincoln vote.** There is no requirement that this vote is within 90 days of the Secretary of State’s notifying the towns that Lincoln voted to withdraw from MAUSD. However, this is the spirit of another section of the law (16 V.S.A § 721). The Secretary of State’s notification was September 1, 2021.

The statute does not describe how the towns coordinate voting on the same day or what entity has the responsibility to coordinate the vote. If you would like our help, we are willing to coordinate the date for voting. The article to vote on is:

Shall the Town of _____ ratify the Town of Lincoln’s vote of August 24, 2021 to withdraw from the Mount Abraham Unified School District (MAUSD)?

2. The State Board of Education (SBE) decides whether or not to give Lincoln a conditional approval including negotiating and signing an exit agreement with MAUSD.
3. **All towns in the district must vote to approve the exit agreement signed by MAUSD and Lincoln.**
4. After the Lincoln successfully completes the requirements of the SBE conditional approval, then the SBE decides whether or not to grant final approval.
5. If SBE approves Lincoln’s withdrawal from MAUSD, our school district would then become operational.

The Lincoln Selectboard requests the following from the Selectboards of Bristol, Monkton New Haven and Starksboro:

- Establish a date to vote to ratify Lincoln's vote to withdraw. This date will need to be coordinated with the other MAUSD towns. We encourage you to schedule a vote in the November-December timeframe. 16 V.S.A. § 724(b) specifies the vote must be by Australian ballot.
- Schedule an informational meeting in your town that provides Lincoln with an opportunity to inform voters on Lincoln's desire to withdraw, the tax impact to towns and how this fits into the context of other MAUSD Board activities. We have a presentation we would be happy to share.

Please feel free to contact me if you would like to discuss in more detail. Thank you for your consideration of these requests.

Sincerely,

Paul Forlenza

Paul Forlenza, Vice Chair
Lincoln Selectboard
802-989-1070
pforlenza@lincolnvermont.org