

MINUTES
SOUHEGAN SCHOOL BOARD MEETING MINUTES
November 20, 2008
Souhegan High School Annex, Room 222

Chairman Steve Coughlan called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Present

Souhegan School Board: Chairman Steve Coughlan, Jeanne Ludt, Mary Lou Mullens, Pam Coughlin, and Dan Foley

Administrative Team: Kris Gallo, Scott Prescott, Colleen Meaney, Rob Thompson, Dr. Mary Jennings, Elizabeth Shankel, Nicole Heimarck and Renee Sparks.

Budget Advisory Committee: Gail Agans, Andrea Bayer, Fran Harrow, Marilyn Peterman, John Rizzi, and Pete Stearns

Minutes Recorder: Lyn Jennings

ATTENDANCE

A. Principal's Report

The Principal's Report was included in the board packet prior to the board meeting.

Board members were given the opportunity to ask questions about the report.

Jeanne Ludt questioned why the Divisional Championship was played in the rain. She asked if something different could have been done so the fields don't get so damaged.

Scott Prescott said he would need to speak with Chris Lavoie to get more information however, he did know that the other school was contacted to see if the game could be changed to Sunday however, Scott thought the other team would not change the day. Scott said he would get back to the board, through e-mail once he knows the specifics.

Jeanne said they should make sure the procedure that is in place is followed since it is very expensive to fix the fields.

II. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Final Minutes of November 20, 2008 Souhegan School Board Meeting
 Approved January 6, 2009.

Jeanne Ludt questioned why the district laid off two Food Service employees. Jeanne asked why the board wasn't notified prior to the lay off.

Betty Shankel said she told board members at the last SAU 39 meeting, they were reviewing the Food Service programs in the Amherst and Souhegan districts to see if any savings could be realized. Betty said after reviewing the Souhegan Food Service program, it was determined due to a decline in enrollment in the current year and in the future, as well as food sales being down dramatically this year, layoffs needed to occur.

B. Community Council Report - Board members received a copy of the Community Council Report in their board packets.

Mary Lou Mullens told board members the last couple of Community Council Meetings have involved reviewing the by laws. There have been no new proposals since the school board last met.

The Community Council is also working on the Semi-Formal, which is on December 6, 2008.

C. Later Start Committee

Mary Lou Mullens told board members the Committee will be meeting soon to go over all the results of the surveys. Mary Lou said they would also be meeting with the Athletic Director and Scott Prescott soon.

Steve Coughlan asked if the committee received a good response from the surveys. Mary Lou said they received a lot of responses except from the students. Jeanne Ludt said they would be sending the survey out to the students again to try to get them to respond. Scott Prescott asked that a hard copy of the survey be given to the Advisors. Scott said the advisors would tally the responses given by the students and provide the

information to members of the Later Start Committee, Mary Lou Mullens and Jeanne Ludt.

D. Fall Forum

Colleen Meaney said it is always great to attend Fall Forum, the national gathering of the coalition of schools. Colleen said nine people from Souhegan attended the Fall Forum.

Colleen said she was very proud of our presenters and from others across the US as well.

Jeanne Ludt asked if they share what they have learned at Fall Forum with others.

Colleen said yes, they do, they help lead CFG's across the schools. Also, teachers are adjusting their own practices and sharing.

Jeanne asked if we are way ahead of other districts.

Colleen said there are a number of areas where we outshine other districts and some areas where we need to grow.

Mary Lou Mullens said she really enjoyed Fall Forum. She said there was a lot of sharing of information. Mary Lou said she felt ahead of other districts in a lot of ways. Mary Lou said she thought the Forum was very beneficial.

Dr. Jennings congratulated the district because they had some of the Souhegan Board members attend the forum.

Steve Coughlan said the coalition is expanding their focus towards K-8 schools. Steve said he has tried to get Amherst and Mont Vernon Board members to go to the Fall Forum, but with no success. He hopes some day they will attend.

E. PPC Update

Dr. Jennings told board members they hope to increase employees 403B offerings significantly. They also plan on making revisions to the prescription plan, which would be mutually advantageous to the districts and their employees, as well as decreasing health insurance costs to the employees and the SAU.

Renee Sparks told board members she had applied for a

Special Education Grant from Link Abilities, which is a Medicaid Infrastructure Grant. Renee said they submitted a pilot transition program, which would transition students out into the workforce. Renee said they applied for a van to transport the students into the community. Renee said they got the Grant. Renee said she hoped to have a letter for the board to accept the Grant at a meeting in the near future.

Steve Coughlan asked if anyone from the public had any comments however, there were none.

III. PUBLIC TIME

The A. Minutes 1. October 16, 2008 and 2. October 20, 2008 (Board of Selectman meeting) were pulled from the Consent Agenda.

V. CONSENT AGENDA

The board adopted Consent Agenda Item B. Budget 1. Treasurer's Report, a. October 2008 and 2. Manifest a. October 2008.

A motion was made by Mary Lou Mullens to approve Consent Agenda Item A. Minutes 1. October 16, 2008, as amended. Pam Coughlin seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with one abstention, Chris Janson. (4-0-1)

A motion was made by Dan Foley to approve Consent Agenda Item A. Minutes 2. October 20, 2008, (Board of Selectman Meeting) as amended by the Amherst School Board. Mary Lou Mullens seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with one abstention, Pam Coughlin. (4-0-1)

A. FY10 Budget – 1st Draft

V. PRESENTATIONS

Scott Prescott presented the Souhegan High School Budget Presentation FY10 November 2008.

Scott reviewed the Current Budget (FY09) –
 - Adequately supports curriculum needs.

Final Minutes of November 20, 2008 Souhegan School Board Meeting
 Approved January 6, 2009.

- Adequately supports school/SAU educational goals
- Supports salary increases.
- Supports professional and support personnel as required by IEPs.
- Adequately supports required related services.
- Supports teaching loads of 80 to 1.

Scott told board members in 08-09 the Souhegan enrollment decreased to 943 from the previous year of 971. Scott said there is an anticipated decrease of 36 students in 09-10.

Scott said they anticipate a leveling in student enrollment in following years based on current AMS numbers. Scott said they believe the enrollment figures will remain fairly steady for a number of years.

Scott presented Educational Programming for the Proposed Budget as follows:

- Technology – Includes funding outlined in our five-year technology plan.
- Special Education: Continued support for required educational programming.
- Literacy Initiative – Continues support of SAU 5-year literacy initiative.
- Curriculum Revision: Continues support of SAU curriculum revision cycle.
- Assessment: Includes an increase in funding for assessment of students individual progress (NWEA)

Scott highlighted the Other Programs:

- Interscholastic: Includes funding for coaches (3% increase), supplies, and transportation. Scott told board members Chris Lavoie, Athletic Director continues to consolidate trips because of the cost.
- Facilities: Continues support of

- replacement cycle of carpets and furniture.
- Benefits: Project increase
- Food Services: Continuing to reduce deficit
- Transportation: Increase due to energy cost
- Prof Development and Curriculum Development – maintain current funding.

Scott presented the Technology Budget figures as follows:

Actual 07-08 – Total \$210,116

Actual 08-09 – Total \$222,482

Proposed 09-10 – Total \$236,175

Scott said the Technology Budget is 1.32% of the total proposed budget for 09-10 as compared to 1.28% of the actual budget in 08-09 and 1.26% of the actual budget in 07-08. Scott said they are trying to remain as flat as they can.

Scott presented budget information regarding Interscholastics – 1400 as follows:

- Coaches and Activity Stipends – increased by 3% per agreement with PPC.
- Supplies – includes an increase in ice time contribution, pool time contribution, and increase in dues and fees as mandated by the state. Scott said Chris Lavoie has done a really good job at keeping these costs from increasing.
- Reductions in supplies based on limiting quantities.
- Transportation – increase due to fuel costs, but limiting travel to maximize increase.

Scott presented budget information with regards to Special Education – 1200 –

- Decrease in professional staff
- Decreased paraprofessional support

Final Minutes of November 20, 2008 Souhegan School Board Meeting
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- Additional support for new out of district placements – new students to district

Scott said the decrease in staff is not associated with any specific positions as of yet. Scott said they would analyze and project into next year. However, they are committed to these numbers and in the weeks and months to follow they will determine which positions will be eliminated.

Scott provided a Professional Staff Comparison:

FY09 figures were as follows:

- Administration – 4
- Counselors & Sped Director – 6.5
- Information Specialist – 1
- Regular Ed – 78.1
- Special Ed – 16.5
- Other Professionals – 7.8

FY10 figures are proposed as follows:

- Administration – 4
- Counselors & Sped Director – 6
- Information Specialist – 1
- Regular Ed – 75.1
- Special Ed 14.5
- Other Professionals – 7.8

Scott explained they felt it was necessary to reduce staff due to the reduced enrollment, and to keep the budget as low as possible so as to keep the increase as minimal as possible.

Scott said based on the Professional Staff Comparison there would be a reduction of .5 in Counselors and Special Ed Director, 3 in Regular Ed, and 2 in Special Ed making the total reduction in professional staff 5.5.

Scott presented a comparison of the Non-Certified Staffing

FY09 figures were as follows:

- Special Ed Aides – 22.5
- Custodial/Building and Grounds – 10
- Clerical Support – 11.2
- Library Support – 3
- Food Service – 8.3
- Tech, Campus, Theater – 4.75

FY10 figures proposed are as follows:

- Special Ed Aides – 21
- Custodial/Building and Grounds – 10
- Clerical Support – 11.2
- Library Support – 3
- Food Service – 6.9
- Tech, Campus, Theater – 4.75

There will be a reduction of 1.5 in Special Ed Aides in FY10.

Betty explained they are currently operating with 6.9 employees in Food Service so this is what they are budgeting for in FY10 as well.

Scott provided a Budget Summary:

- Overall proposed increase of 2.6%
- Primary areas driving the increase:
 - Special Ed out of District Expenses
 - Salaries and Benefits
 - Transportation

Scott said when the budget was originally created, the budget represented between a 7.6% - 7.7% increase.

Dr. Jennings said Scott Prescott and Renee Sparks did an excellent job balancing the budgetary numbers between Regular Education and Special Education. Dr. Jennings

complimented them for all their hard work.

Board members were given the opportunity to ask questions with regards to Draft 1 of the budget as presented.

Mary Lou questioned the \$300,000 increase in line 67 - Out of District Placement. Scott Prescott said this increase involves students that never come into the school and are at a variety of schools who get services through the district.

Pam Coughlan said she did not have any questions at the moment.

Dan Foley asked what was driving the increase in Technology (2800 series) this year? Bruce told Dan this increase is mainly in the infrastructure and services areas this year. Scott said the budget increased \$14,000 as compared to last year.

Dan asked if there was any chance we could decrease the Transportation Services budget since the cost of fuel has been going down over the past few months. Betty said there is a possibility they could decrease the transportation services budget due to the decrease in fuel costs.

Betty said the Special Education Transportation costs would be going down if the board awards the bid to The Provider.

Betty said the Regular Transportation Services budget as presented represents a 3.25 increase. Betty said all district budgets include \$5,000 in order to perform route optimization by an outside source. This could be eliminated if the board chooses to eliminate it.

Jeanne Ludt asked if the Food Service budget as presented tonight represents the recent reduction of two employees. Betty said yes, it does, and they were let go due to the fact that sales have been down dramatically this year.

Jeanne Ludt said she was given a proposal as to how the district could improve food service. Jeanne asked who should receive the proposal. Betty said she could give it to Franceen Lupa, Food Service Director as well as herself.

Jeanne said she noticed *Connections* (line 162) was eliminated from the budget. Scott Prescott said they are proposing this publication be done electronically. Scott said Hampshire Hills is not supporting the funding of this publication this year. Scott said he realizes the paper version is very popular however; it costs several thousand dollars to produce it a year.

Jeanne asked how the district planned on handling the proposed staff reductions for next year. Scott said they would try to make the reductions through retirement first. Scott said before this budget was presented to the board, he met with staff to make them of the budget that was being presented along with the proposed staff reductions.

Chris Janson said it is pretty tough to ask for anything in this economy.

Chris asked if they could bring in an outside company to provide the food service to the high school. Betty said they could use an outside service, however; there are pros and cons to using one.

Marilyn Peterman said she was surprised to see a proposed increase in the budget. Marilyn said she is not sure what the tax impact will be therefore, doesn't have an opinion on the budget as presented yet.

Steve Coughlin asked if the board had any guidance for Mary, Scott and Betty for the next pass at the budget.

Dan said he thought the administration did a great job, however he feels they need to do even better. Dan said he would like to see the bottom line impact to the taxpayer.

Dr. Jennings agreed to get the revenue figures out to the board prior to the next meeting so board members will have an idea as to what the impact will be to the taxpayer.

Jeanne Ludt said it would be even better if they could reduce the budget even more prior to determining what the impact to the taxpayers would be.

Betty explained some of the increases to the budget, which are out of the administrations control – salaries negotiated a year ago, increase of 20% to teacher’s pensions, and a guaranteed maximum health insurance rate of 10%.

Jeanne Ludt suggested the staff come back with some suggestions as to how they can decrease the budget even further.

Dr. Jennings suggested the administration come back before the board with a list of priorities as to what could possibly get cut in priority order. Dr. Jennings emphasized they do not want to cut other items from the budget however; if the board wishes to reduce the budget further, this list could be used to determine the cuts in priority order.

The board discussed warrant articles.

Steve Coughlan said the board doesn’t want any new warrant articles. Steve said they have three expendable trust funds. The first is the Special Education Fund, which is to be used for unforeseen special education costs. The balance in this account is \$226,000. The second is the Facilities Maintenance Fund, which has a balance of \$45,000, and the third is the Unfunded Liabilities for Retirees, which is the newest fund and it has a balance of \$25,000.

Steve suggested if the board chooses to put money in any of these expendable trust fund accounts, it be contingent on

a surplus.

Steve asked the administration to prepare two warrant articles, one for the Facilities Maintenance Fund, and one for the Unfunded Liabilities for Retirees.

Steve suggested draft warrants be prepared leaving the numbers blank so that the board can decide what the dollar amounts will be at the next meeting.

- A. **Award of Transportation Bid** - Betty Shankel told board members the RFP for regular education was sent out to eleven companies and two companies ended up bidding, Goffstown Trucking and First Student.

VI. ACTION ITEMS

Board members received the Bid Specifications from First Student and Goffstown Trucking in their agenda packets. The cost per bus per day from First Student for 2009-2010 was \$209.61 versus a cost of \$260 per bus by Goffstown Trucking. Betty said the rate differential was significant.

Betty recommended they choose First Student as their transportation provider for Regular Education.

Betty told board members they received three bids for Special Education transportation. Board members received Bid Specifications from Goffstown Trucking, First Student and The Provider. Betty said the cost per bus per day from Goffstown Trucking was \$277.65, First Student was \$223.84, and The Provider was \$195.00.

Betty said they are currently paying \$207 per day per bus. The \$195 quote received from The Provider per bus per day is a decrease of 11%.

Betty told board members the Provider is out of Fremont, NH, and they provide transportation for Special Education services only. Betty said she has had experience with the Provider and believes they can do the job.

Betty said the Special Education Transportation is a combined bid with Amherst, Mont Vernon, Souhegan and Milford. Betty explained they ride share with the Milford School District.

Betty said she is recommending they use the Provider for Special Education transportation.

Dan Foley questioned the cost per gallon of fuel used at bid time because it was significantly higher as compared to current fuel prices. Dan asked if they are covered for both upside and downside as it relates to fuel costs. Betty said yes, they are covered.

Jeanne Ludt asked whether First Student would be responsible for optimizing the bus routes as requested be done in the past but not to date.

Betty said they would like the routes optimized since they have seen enrollments go down, but to date, First Student has not provided this service to the districts as requested.

Betty explained First Student is purchasing new route optimization software, (Edge Log) but what they do with the software remains to be seen.

Betty explained in the past First Student was told they would be given \$5,000 if they optimized the routes however; it was never done.

Jeanne Ludt asked if they could offer more money to First Student via the contract to see if they would optimize the routes during this new contract period.

Betty said in the past they did not know how to use the software and they have yet to determine how motivated they are to using the new software they are purchasing.

A motion was made by Mary Lou Mullens to award a five-

year contract for transportation services for Special Education to the Provider and Regular Education transportation to First Student. Pam Coughlin seconded the motion. All board members voted in favor of the motion and the motion passed unanimously. (5-0)

- A. Non-Resident Tuition Policy – Steve Coughlan explained they have access to twelve representatives, which they can approach to change the law to be what they want it to be. Steve said they want to be able to enforce the law.

VIII. DISCUSSION ITEMS

Steve Coughlan, Betty Shankel and Jeanne Ludt agreed, the sending district should be responsible for the costs associated with a non-resident student and it needs to be enforced.

Renee said nothing trumps the Federal Law and right now, the law states the sending district is responsible for the costs associated with a non-resident student.

Steve Coughlan will appoint a board member to lobby our legislators to help with our concerns.

- B. Space Availability – Jeanne Ludt provided board members with a handout entitled Proposal for the Establishment of a Souhegan Space Needs/Usage Committee. Jeanne provided the rationale for forming the committee as well as the proposed committee make-up and the committee's tasks.

Mary Lou thought the formation of this committee was a good idea for the short term.

Dan Foley said by forming this committee, it could look at closing the Annex in the summer, which would save approximately \$5,000.

Steve suggested the board take some time to review Jeanne's proposal. Steve told board members they would

put this item on December's agenda.

Steve told board members they do not have a School District Clerk.

IX. OTHER

Dr. Jennings said they would run an advertisement for a Clerk in the Milford Cabinet.

Board members also had a couple of suggestions as to who could serve as School District Clerk. It was agreed they would approach these individuals to see if they would be interested in serving as the Clerk for the year.

A motion was made by Pam Coughlin to adjourn the meeting. Mary Lou Mullens seconded the motion. All board members voted in favor of the motion and the meeting adjourned at 8:50 p.m. (5-0)

X. REVIEW OF MEETING/ADJOURN