

**Amherst & Mont Vernon  
VOTER'S GUIDE  
to the Deliberative Session of the**

**Souhegan Cooperative School District  
(Grades 9-12)**

**May 3, 2021  
7:00 p.m. – Souhegan High School Auditorium**

**Officers and Agents of the School District**

**Souhegan Cooperative School Board**

**Amherst Representatives**

Stephanie Grund, Vice-Chair  
Laura Taylor  
John Glover (interim), Secretary  
Steve Coughlan  
Christine Peters (interim)

**Mont Vernon Representatives**

Pim Grondstra, Chair  
George Torres

**School Board District Moderator**

George Bower

**School District Clerk**

Christine Janson

**School District Treasurer**

Catherine Jo Butler

**Souhegan Advisory Finance Committee**

Joel Gordon – Chair  
Howard Brown  
Peggy Harris -- Alternate  
John Stover  
Mark Vincent

John Bowkett – Alternate  
Jeanne Ludt  
Dan Veilleux  
Charles York  
Stephanie Grund, School Board Rep.

**Office of the Superintendent**

Adam Steel, Superintendent  
Christine Landwehrle, Assistant Superintendent  
Meg Beauchamp, Director of Student Services  
Michele Croteau, Business Administrator

**School Administration**

Michael Berry, Principal  
Kelly Driscoll, Dean of Students  
Bill Hagen, Assistant Dean of Students  
Jenn Huard, Student Services Administrator

## *Message from the Souhegan Cooperative School Board Chair*

The FY2022 Souhegan Cooperative School Board budget seeks to address three main objectives. These include:

1. Pass a budget that continues to support our strategic efforts
2. Pass the Capital Maintenance Plan
3. Pass the addition of funds to the Souhegan Recreation fund (only if available in the unassigned fund balance)

First, with respect to passing a budget that continues to support the strategic efforts of both Souhegan and SAU39, please consider the current strategy for our schools. That strategy is to create a school system that offers a “personal learning pathway for every student”. Reaching this objective will be a multi-year process as we move from a traditional educational model to a Mastery Learning model, which we believe is not only essential to creating personalized learning pathways, but it is also a New Hampshire state regulation. No new major investments are required to support the curriculum component of our plan in FY22, however, as we continue to transition to this new model, we need to ensure that the balance between investing in our teachers and staff and working to achieve greater efficiencies is equitable for potential future investments. We also continue to work closely with the other SAU39 school districts to budget collaboratively, working to balance any budget changes in an attempt to stabilize the overall burden to taxpayers. The overall impact is a budget increase of \$1,095,594, or 5.9%. The biggest increases in our FY22 budget will be in Special Education, 7.76%, and in Facilities, 7.54%. The third largest category is in Curriculum, 5.45%. The increase in Special Education is due to a higher number of students staying in the district as well as an additional 1.0 FTE Special Ed Teacher. Although this increases our budget, the impact to taxes is lessened since the cost of Special Education services by paying tuition to other schools is much more expensive. The increase in Facilities is due to \$325,000 to pay for a remodeled, secure front entrance to the school as well as remodeled locker rooms, which have been in a state of disrepair for many years. The increase to the Curriculum is driven by increases to the NH retirement system, health care costs, and year two of the PPC agreement. Therefore, the board has placed Article 2 on the ballot, recommending a 5.9% budget increase to \$19,772,103. Given we have already made significant cuts in one-time expenditures, the proposed default will be \$19,396,334, or a difference of \$375,769.

Second, as Souhegan High School continues to age, so too does its infrastructure. The Superintendent and the SAU39 Facilities Director have developed a long-range Capital Maintenance Plan to stay ahead of any planned and unplanned capital expenditures. The analysis showed that a yearly input of ~\$650,000 will be required for the schools in the Amherst School District and Souhegan Cooperative School District to support the maintenance plan in an effort to level load the tax impact resulting in more consistent and predictable taxes. We currently have \$352,400 in the Souhegan Capital Maintenance Fund and recommend a contribution of \$163,000 be added this year in anticipation of future capital maintenance expenditures, including expected expenditures of approximately \$252,000 in FY22. As noted last year, these funds are not part of the proposed Souhegan 2.0 Project.

Lastly, we are asking for support to add up to \$85,000 to the Souhegan Recreation Revolving Fund to be earmarked for turf replacement. The turf at Calvetti Field, installed in 2016, was meant to last ten years and will need replacement in 2026. Plans to raise funds through field rentals have fallen short mainly due to increased competition as turf fields have become more common over the past five years. This amount will not be raised from any additional taxation, coming instead from the June 30, 2021 unassigned fund balance, if available.

As always, the Souhegan Cooperative School Board, with guidance and oversight from the Advisory Finance Committee, sought to present a budget that is fair and equitable to all stakeholders in our communities at large. We also realize that your vote matters, and that without support from the communities of Amherst and Mont Vernon, the Souhegan Cooperative High School and the young people it serves, cannot thrive. Souhegan has served as a distinctive point of pride in this community for over 25 years and represents one of our biggest investments. We believe this budget respectfully and responsibly reflects those considerations.

Respectfully submitted,  
Pim Grondstra  
Chair, Souhegan Cooperative School Board

## **SOUHEGAN COOPERATIVE SCHOOL BOARD**

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### **Amherst Representatives**

Stephanie Grund – [sgrund@sau39.org](mailto:sgrund@sau39.org)  
Laura Taylor – [ltaylor@sau39.org](mailto:ltaylor@sau39.org)  
John Glover - [jglover@sau39.org](mailto:jglover@sau39.org)  
Steve Coughlan – [scoughlan@sau39.org](mailto:scoughlan@sau39.org)  
Christine Peters – [cpeters@sau39.org](mailto:cpeters@sau39.org)

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### **Mont Vernon Representatives**

Pim Grondstra – [pgrondstra@sau39.org](mailto:pgrondstra@sau39.org)  
George Torres – [gtorres@sau39.org](mailto:gtorres@sau39.org)

# Two-Part Voting Procedure for Souhegan Cooperative School District Annual Meeting

The Senate Bill 2 official ballot voting procedure is in effect for the Souhegan Cooperative School District.

Voting to adopt or amend Souhegan Cooperative School District warrant articles takes place at the May 3, 2021 Deliberative Session. Final ballot voting on the articles that emerge from the Deliberative Session takes place at the polls on Election Day, June 8, 2021 as show below.

## Voting is a Two-Step Process

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### **Deliberative Session – May 3, 2021**

7:00 p.m.  
SHS Auditorium

### **Ballot Vote – June 8, 2021**

6:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m.  
SHS Gymnasium  
*for Amherst Voters*

7:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m.  
Mont Vernon Village School  
*for Mont Vernon Voters*

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In many ways, the Deliberative Session resembles District Meetings of years past, but with one fundamental difference. Discussions and voting at this meeting will focus on the *wording* of the questions to be placed on the June 8<sup>th</sup> ballot, *not* on voting whether the budget, bond, or other warrant articles pass or fail. The wording of a warrant article can be amended to change the dollar amount and/or the wording; this is important to know. In recent years, towns and school districts have seen warrant articles amended at the Deliberative Session to \$0.00, thereby defeating the original intent of the article. In other instances, the wording of an article has been amended to completely reverse the petitioner's intent. Simply state, it is important to attend the Deliberative Session and vote on Election Day for the full effect of your vote to be felt.

The following pages contain the wording of the warrant articles, which will be presented at the Deliberative Session, plus school board commentary (noted in italics). A detailed report of recommendations by the Advisory Finance Committee follows these articles and commentaries.

**Souhegan Cooperative School District**

**Notice of Postponement of Deliberative Session  
And Official Ballot Voting Day**

**And**

**Notice of New Dates for the Deliberative Session and  
Official Ballot Voting Day**

NOTICE is hereby given that the first session of the Annual Meeting (Deliberative Session) which had been scheduled and noticed for Monday the 1st of February 2021 at 7:00 p.m. at the Souhegan High School in said district has been postponed. **The first session of the Annual Meeting (Deliberative Session) will now take place on Monday the 3rd day of May. The Time and Location of the Deliberative Session will be Posted promptly after it is set by the Governing Body after consultation with the Moderator and Clerk.**

IN ADDITION, the official balloting day, which had been scheduled for Tuesday, March 9, 2021 between the hours of 6:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. at Souhegan High School for Amherst residents and between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. at Mont Vernon Village School for Mont Vernon residents, to vote for the Election of Officers and to vote by official ballot on the warrant articles proposed by the Souhegan Cooperative School District **has been postponed to Tuesday, June 8, 2021 between the hours of 6:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. at Souhegan High School for Amherst residents and 7:00 a.m. and 7:00 for at Mont Vernon Village School for Mont Vernon residents.**

An additional posting as to the time and location of the Deliberative Session and the second session of the Annual Meeting (official ballot voting) will be given and posted at least 14 days prior to the first session of the Annual Meeting (Deliberative Session) date.

By way of information, the Selectmen of the Town(s) of Amherst have taken similar action such that its second session (the official ballot voting day) shall also take place on Tuesday, June 8, 2021. Please be advised that the candidate filing window for School District officers remains unchanged and closes this Friday, January 29, 2021 at 5:00 p.m. Existing School Board member terms are extended by this action until after the election in June and such time as new School Board members have been sworn in.

This postponement decision has been made in accord with the Governor's Emergency Order No. 83, after consultation with the moderator and the clerk and has been made on the basis that concern exists for conducting both the Deliberative Session and official ballot voting during the current COVID-19 health emergency.

Date: 1/27/2021

*Piia Groudstra*

For the Souhegan Cooperative School District

**Souhegan Cooperative School District**  
**Annual Meeting Warrant**  
**February 1, 2021 and March 9, 2021**  
**Amherst and Mont Vernon, New Hampshire**

To the inhabitants of the Souhegan School District, consisting of the towns of Amherst and Mont Vernon, in the County of Hillsborough, and State of New Hampshire qualified to vote in District affairs:

You are hereby notified of the following Annual School District Meeting schedule:

First Session of Annual Meeting (Deliberative)

You are hereby notified to meet at the Souhegan High School in said District on the 1st day of February 2021 at 7:00 p.m. This session shall consist of explanation, discussion, and debate of warrant articles 1 through 4. Warrant articles may be amended subject to the following limitations: (a) warrant articles whose wording is prescribed by law shall not be amended, (b) warrant articles that are amended shall be placed on the official ballot for a final vote on the main motion, as amended, and (c) no warrant article shall be amended to eliminate the subject matter of the article. An amendment that changes the dollar amount of an appropriation in a warrant article does not violate this provision.

Second Session of Annual Meeting (Official Ballot Voting)

You are hereby notified to meet on Tuesday, March 9, 2021 for official ballot voting on warrant articles numbered 1 through 4. The polls for official ballot voting will be open as follows:

- Voting for Amherst residents: Souhegan High School from 6:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m.
- Voting for Mont Vernon residents: Village School from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.

Article 1. Election of Officers (voting by official ballot March 9, 2021) To the following school district offices:

- a. To choose one (1) School Board member for the ensuing three (3) years;

Article 2. Shall the Souhegan Cooperative School District raise and appropriate as an operating budget, not including appropriations by special warrant articles and other appropriations voted separately, the amounts set forth on the budget posted with the warrant or as amended by vote of the first session, for the purposes set forth therein, totaling nineteen million seven hundred seventy-two thousand one hundred three dollars (\$19,772,103)? Should this article be defeated, the default budget shall be nineteen million three hundred ninety-six thousand three hundred thirty four dollars (\$19,396,334) which is the same as last year, with certain adjustments required by previous action of the Souhegan Cooperative School District or by law; or the governing body may hold one special meeting, in accordance with RSA 40: 13, X and XVI, to take up the issue of a revised operating budget only? **Majority vote required.**

Recommended by the Souhegan Cooperative School Board (7-0)  
Recommended by the Souhegan Cooperative School District Advisory Finance Committee (5-1)

**Estimated tax impact of passing this article is: \$0.34 per thousand for Amherst and -\$0.03 per thousand for Mont Vernon.**

**Estimated tax impact of not passing this article is: \$0.16 per thousand for Amherst and -\$0.22 per thousand for Mont Vernon.**

\*NOTE: Warrant Article 2 (operating budget) does not include appropriations proposed in any other warrant articles.

**Article 3.** Shall the Souhegan Cooperative School District raise and appropriate the sum of one hundred sixty-three thousand dollars (\$163,000) to be added to the Souhegan School Maintenance Expendable Trust Fund previously established in March 2005?

Recommended by the Souhegan Cooperative School Board (7-0)  
Recommended by the Souhegan Cooperative School District Finance Committee (6-0)

**Estimated tax impact of passing this article is: \$0.08 per thousand for Amherst and \$0.08 per thousand for Mont Vernon.**

**Article 4.** Shall the Souhegan Cooperative School District raise and appropriate the sum of up to eighty-five thousand dollars (\$85,000) to be added to the Souhegan Recreation Revolving Fund previously established in March 2016. This sum to come from the June 30, 2021 unassigned fund balance available for transfer on July 1, 2021. No amount to be raised from new taxation.

Recommended by the Souhegan Cooperative School Board (7-0)  
Recommended by the Souhegan Cooperative School District Finance Committee (6-0)

**Estimated tax impact of passing this article is: \$0.00 per thousand for Amherst and \$0.00 per thousand for Mont Vernon.**

**Estimated tax impact of not passing this article is: -\$0.04 per thousand for Amherst and -\$0.04 per thousand for Mont Vernon.**

Given under our hands as said Amherst, New Hampshire, on the 22<sup>nd</sup> day of January 2021.

*Pim Grondstra*

Pim Grondstra

Laura Taylor

John Glover

# Souhegan Advisory Finance Committee

## Budget Review for the Fiscal Year 2022 SHS Budget

February 1, 2021

The Souhegan Advisory Finance Committee is comprised of seven volunteer representatives from the Towns of Amherst and Mont Vernon and two alternate members who participate in all matters but are not voting members. Members are selected by the School District Moderator generally for three-year terms. This year, a member of the SCSB was appointed as an ex-officio member to enhance communications between the SCSB and the SAFC.

The SAFC met as a group on seven separate occasions and participated in joint meetings with the SCSB twice. The Souhegan High School proposed budget is divided into seven budget categories and each member is assigned a specific area. Each SAFC member participated in a subcommittee meeting reviewing their assigned area of the budget along with the SCSB designated member and with district and school administrators. SAFC members shared their findings with all SAFC members and individual reports are available on the SAU39 website under FY22 Reports at <https://www.sau39.org/Page/2558>. The complete recommendation by the SAFC can also be found at this link.

### Souhegan Advisory Finance Committee Votes:

- On the FY 2022 Operating Budget, the SAFC voted to recommend approving this budget by a vote of 5 in Favor, 1 Opposed.
- On the Warrant Article to transfer up to \$85,000 from the Unassigned Fund Balance to the Turf Field Replacement Revolving Fund the SAFC voted to recommend approving this article by a vote of 6 in Favor, 0 Opposed.
  - This item had been a key recommendation by the SAFC for the past two years.
- On the Warrant Article to raise and appropriate \$163,000 to be added to the Capital Maintenance Fund the board voted to recommend approving this article by a vote of 6 in Favor, 0 Opposed.

### Souhegan Advisory Finance Committee Findings:

- Continued articulation of the SAU strategic direction should be incorporated into the budgeting process such that readers can make the connection on how the proposed budget implements the strategic plan.
  - Would better connect future programming goals with staffing requirements and qualifications.
- The SAFC believes that a high-level, multi-year forecast is critical in assessing the current year budget and informing voters on the adequacy of the current year budget.
  - A multi-year plan would provide a tool to evaluate the follow-through on stated prior year priorities.
  - A multi-year plan would allow for the scheduling of salary growth under the PPC, and the cost of transitioning qualification of teaching staff envisioned under the strategic plan.
- A comprehensive set of metrics should be developed and applied over time to be able to focus on, manage, and report on services provided. (i.e.: student/teacher ratios, etc.)
- The SAFC is concerned that without the master schedule in place as part of budgeting process, the need for teacher staffing is not transparent and fully supportable, especially in a declining enrollment environment.
- In response to the significant increase in NH Retirement obligations, the SAFC recommends that a multi-year assessment be prepared to inform votes as to the potential future impact of the retirement obligations over time, as well consider actions that would mitigate the growth in this line item.



- The SAFC recommends that the SCSB address the approximately \$400k funding shortfall needed to replace the turf field within the next 4-5 remaining years of its useful life.
- The SAFC supports the use of the professional development budget for certifications required of the food service staff.
- The SAFC supports the proposed Administration Department restructuring.
- The SAFC process, supported by the SAU, the SCS Board, and the Administration improved this year. We acknowledge and appreciate the active participation by members of the SCSB during this process.

Respectfully Submitted:

Joel Gordon -Amherst, Chair SAFC FY 2022

John Bowkett - Amherst

Howard Brown – Mont Vernon

Peggie Harris - Amherst

Jeanne Ludt - Amherst

John Stover - Amherst

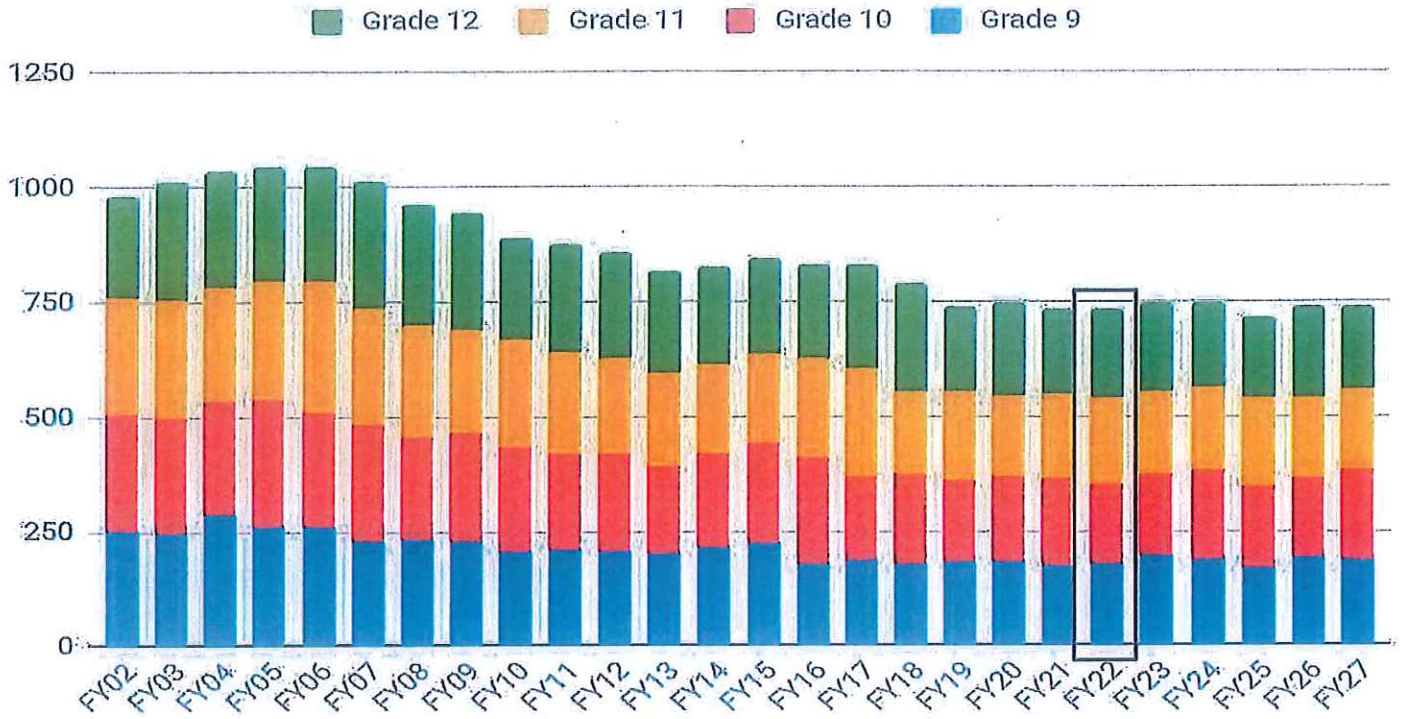
Mark Vincent – Amherst

Dan Veilleux – Amherst

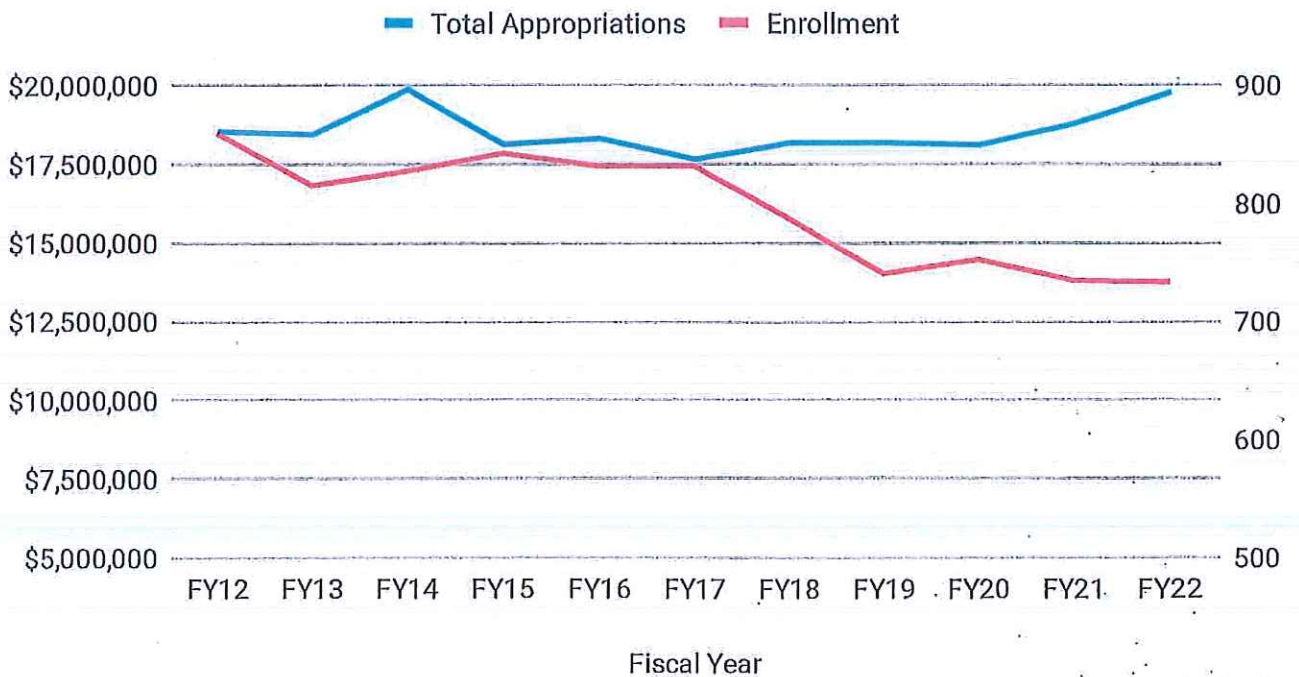
Charlie York – Mont Vernon

Stephanie Grund – SCSB & Ex-Officio

# ENROLLMENT: STABILIZED



## Total Appropriations and Enrollment



## Proposed Operating Budget

### Budget by AFC Category

<u>Sub-Committee</u>	<u>FY21 Budget *</u>	<u>FY22 Proposed</u>	<u>Change</u>
Curriculum	\$7,188,539	\$7,580,497	\$391,958
Special Education	\$4,534,779	\$4,886,512	\$351,733
Athletics	\$729,623	\$754,355	\$24,732
Administration	\$2,746,955	\$2,856,752	\$109,797
Technology	\$801,727	\$790,781	-\$10,946
Facilities	\$1,565,481	\$1,683,508	\$118,027
Food/Transportation	\$1,209,405	\$1,219,698	\$10,293
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$18,776,509</b>	<b>\$19,772,103</b>	<b>\$995,594</b>

\* Includes Special Warrant Article for \$100,000 to Maintenance Expendable Trust Fund

## Budget Calculations

<b>FY21 Budget</b>	<b>\$18,776,509</b>	
NHRS Rate Increase	307,940	1.6%
Salaries per Agreement	206,626	1.1%
Special Education Expenses	327,987	1.7%
Other Employee Benefits	49,555	0.3%
Special Education Transportation	76,000	0.4%
Grant Fund	10,250	0.1%
SAU Apportionment	10,795	0.1%
Food Service Fund	-26,946	-0.1%
Regular Education Transportation	-33,235	-0.2%
Remove One-Time Items	-50,000	-0.3%
Remove Special Warrant Article	-100,000	-0.5%
Bond Principal & Interest Reduction	-159,147	-0.8%
<b>Total Changes to default:</b>	<b>619,825</b>	<b>3.3%</b>
<b>FY22 Default Budget</b>	<b>\$19,396,334</b>	

<b>FY22 Default Budget</b>	<b>\$19,396,334</b>	
Locker replacement for locker rooms	75,000	0.4%
Main Entrance Renovation	250,000	1.3%
Facility Related Expenditures	98,213	0.5%
Technology Plan	13,848	0.1%
Other	-61,292	-0.3%
<b>Total Changes Default to Proposed</b>	<b>375,769</b>	<b>2.0%</b>
<b>FY22 Proposed</b>	<b>\$19,772,103</b>	<b>5.3%</b>

**SOUHEGAN COOPERATIVE SCHOOL DISTRICT**  
**DELIBERATIVE SESSION 2021**  
Amherst and Mont Vernon, New Hampshire  
May 3, 2021 - 7:00 p.m.

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**SPECIAL RULES OF ORDER PURSUANT TO EMERGENCY ORDER 83**

1. **These Special Rules of Order have been adopted by the Moderator to ensure public health and safety during the declared pandemic and apply only to the Souhegan Cooperative School District 2021 Deliberative Session.**
2. **The Deliberative Session will be held with all participants social distancing and wearing proper face coverings throughout the meeting.**
3. **The theater will be ventilated with ambient air to reduce exposure to potential virus particles.**
4. **Any individual who wishes to participate, but does not agree to wear a mask in the meeting room, will be directed to a separate room in the building reserved for non-mask wearing participants. The room will have a video feed of the meeting and an assistant moderator to manage voting by the registered voters in attendance.**
5. **The Deliberative Session is being broadcast via Zoom and the public is invited to observe the proceedings in real-time or via streaming/rebroadcast.**
6. **There are no provisions in the RSA's or the Governor's Executive Orders to allow remote voting, thus, only registered voters in attendance will be eligible to vote on the warrant articles.**

**RULES OF ORDER**

1. Smoking is prohibited on school property.
2. Every resident who wishes to vote must have checked in with the Supervisors of the Checklist outside the auditorium door, and have a color-coded ID dot visible on their clothing.
3. Each voter will be given a color-coded note card. At the call for any votes required, please hold up your card and indicate your aye or nay vote, respectively.
4. **This meeting is subject to the state Right to Know law (RSA 91-A) and as such we are required to maintain a complete and accurate record of all actions of the meeting. To ensure the accuracy of the record, each speaker is required to begin any and all comments by stating their name and address. Each member of the meeting making a motion must begin by stating their name and address and each member seconding a motion must do the same. This procedure will enable the moderator and clerk to maintain an accurate record and for viewers of the live or recorded broadcast to follow the actions of the meeting.**
5. There are two microphones on the floor – no speaking from your seat, please. **Please remember to get close to the microphone and state your NAME & ADDRESS.** Either microphone may be used to discuss the article and/or to amend the articles, call the question, etc.

6. **All motions must be presented in writing to the Moderator and must include the name and address of the voter making the motion.**
7. The moderator will not accept amendments to amendments. The meeting will vote on one amendment at a time. All amendments must be submitted in writing.
8. There will be a three minute time limit to state your opinion at the microphone.
9. The Moderator will recognize District employees who might not be residents to speak on matters of their expertise at the request of the Board. All other non-residents may only speak with the consent of the body.
10. No one may speak a second time until all who wish to speak a FIRST time have done so.
11. **Any Motion from the floor to call the question.....will be recognized ONLY after those at the microphone at the time of motion have had their turn to speak...or if they wish, of their own volition, to relinquish the right to speak.**
12. If there is an approved request for a vote by secret ballot (RSA 40:4-a), voters will proceed to the lobby. The voter will then present the Assistant Moderator on duty with the voter card given to them when they initially checked in. The Assistant Moderator will provide a ballot and mark the voter card to indicate that the voter has received a ballot. The voter will then vote and deposit the paper ballot in the voting box and return to their seat. This same procedure will be followed for each secret ballot vote taken during the evening.
13. At the close of discussion and voting for each warrant article, the moderator will put the warrant on the ballot and accept a motion to "Restrict Reconsideration of the WORDING of that article". This is for your protection. After you restrict reconsideration, should someone request reconsideration at a later hour of an article whose wording was previously approved, it cannot come up again.
14. The moderator will ask the meeting to revisit "Where we are" insofar as finishing the agenda at 10:45pm and based on the will of the body, accept a motion to recess or continue until completion.

## NOTES