

**Amherst & Mont Vernon  
VOTERS' GUIDE**  
to the

**Deliberative Session**

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

**February 5, 2018**

**7:00 p.m. – Souhegan High School Auditorium**

**Officers and Agents of the School District**

**Souhegan Cooperative School Board**

**Amherst Representatives**

**James Manning, Vice-Chair**

**David Chen**

**Stephen Coughlan**

**Amy Facey**

**Dwayne Purvis**

**Mont Vernon Representatives**

**Howard Brown, Chair**

**Pim Grondstra**

**School District Moderator**

Nate Jensen-Appointed

**School District Clerk**

Christine Janson

**School District Treasurer**

Catherine Jo Butler

**Souhegan Finance Committee**

Lisa Eastland, Chair

Suzanne Birchard

Ian Corcoran

Martin Goulet

Ellen Grudzien

Peg Harris

Jane King

**Office of the Superintendent**

Peter Warburton, Superintendent of Schools

Adam Steel, Associate Superintendent

Meg Beauchamp, Director of Student Services

Christine Landwehrle, Director of Curriculum & Professional Development

**School Administration**

Rob Scully, Principal

Natalie Berger, Dean of Faculty

Kathy White, Dean of Faculty

Kelly Driscoll, Dean of Students

## *A Message from the School Board Chair*

Walking the halls of Souhegan Cooperative High School, one can certainly feel the pride and joy that radiates from this school. The students continue to impress me with their diligent engagement in furthering their education, pursuing athletic excellence, and embracing democracy. Although my children would not give all the credit for their collegiate successes to Souhegan and its exceptional staff, both would readily concede that this school prepared them well for college and made them better students. As a proud parent and a school board member, this demonstrates to me that we serve as a foundation for a lifetime of learning.

This school continues to be a model school – not just within our State or even within the New England Region – but within the nation - and even beyond. We are international - proud to have other educators and representatives visit our school to observe our methods and study our unique Souhegan traditions. With visitors from as near as Hanover High School and as far away as Brazil, this year has been no exception. The group of students from Hanover High School were interested in understanding how our advisory program works and in experiencing the Souhegan Community Council firsthand. The Brazilian education group, associated with a program entitled “Secondary Schools and Curriculum Flexibility”, chose to visit our school. They were interested to hear about how Souhegan places more responsibility on students for managing their own learning than do traditional schools, making learning a more collaborative effort. The participants from this group included the Program Director for the Ministry of Education; the State Secretaries of Education, representing three different regions of Brazil; the President of the State Council of Education; and the Director of Education and Technology. Souhegan has been firmly committed to exchanging their challenging and transformational educational experiences with peer organizations. **Souhegan, job well done!**

Since its very inception, Souhegan has continued to accumulate awards, achievements, and accolades. This year was no exception and I'd like to share a few examples. One of our students was recognized with a National American Visions Award for her artwork as part of the Scholastic Art Program, another was recognized by the Sociedad Honoraria Hispánica (SHH) with the Joseph Adams Senior Scholarship Award. At Souhegan, it isn't just our students earning these accolades. We also had two teachers recognized as outstanding and aspiring teacher leaders in New Hampshire and our girls' soccer coach was named the 2017 New England High School Coach of the Year by the United Soccer Coaches.

### **Proposed Budget**

The goal of this Board is to always present a budget that is fair and equitable to all stakeholders. The board members are tax payers and increases affect us, as they do you. The SAU39 Board members and administration have been diligently working on creating a new strategic plan that will be in place next year as we meet to review the proposed 2019 budget. This strategic plan will have budget implications and will no doubt have an effect on both daily and long-term operations at Souhegan. As we continue

the lengthy process of developing and finalizing the strategic plan, this Board thought it would be prudent to present an overall budget (including Warrant Articles 2, 3 and 4) that is essentially equal to last year's overall budget. As we move forward with implementation of the strategic plan, we will systematically analyze all aspects of our budget as we plan for future years.

This year's proposed operating budget (Warrant Article 2) is actually 2% lower than last year's operating budget and should Article 2 be defeated, the district's default budget would be lower by an additional 0.9%. The Board was able to achieve these reductions through staffing reductions, transportation savings, and grant funding. These savings offset several budget line item increases like health insurance and special education.

In addition to the operating budget (Warrant Article 2), our board also has two additional warrant articles on this ballot. These are explained further in this guidance document. The Board realizes that your vote matters and without your support we cannot do our jobs. Schools are one of the biggest investments in any town, and in our children's lives.

Respectfully submitted,

Howard Brown  
Chair, Souhegan Cooperative School Board

**Please take the time to vote on Tuesday, March 13, at Souhegan High School, 6:00 am - 8:00 pm for Amherst residents. Mont Vernon residents vote at Mont Vernon Village School, 7 am - 7 pm.**

**SOUHEGAN COOPERATIVE SCHOOL BOARD**

**Amherst Representatives**

**Mont Vernon Representatives**

David Chen                    dchen@sprise.com  
Stephen Coughlan            scoughlan@sprise.com  
Amy Facey                    afacey@sprise.com  
James Manning                jmanning@sprise.com  
Dwayne Purvis                dpurvis@sprise.com

Howard Brown                hbrown@sprise.com  
Pim Grondstra                pgrondstra@sprise.com

## **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 February 5<sup>th</sup> Deliberative Session. Final ballot voting on the articles that emerge from the Deliberative Session takes place at the polls on Election Day, March 13<sup>th</sup>, as shown below.

### **Voting is a Two-Step Process**

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<b>Deliberative Session</b>	February 5 <sup>th</sup>
7:00 p.m.	
SHS Auditorium	

<b>Ballot Vote</b>	March 13 <sup>th</sup>
6:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m.	
SHS Gymnasium	
<i>for Amherst Voters</i>	

7:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m.	
Mont Vernon Village School	
<i>for Mont Vernon Voters</i>	

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In many ways the Deliberative Session resembles District Meetings of years past, but with one fundamental difference. Discussion and voting at this meeting will focus on the *wording* of the questions to be placed on the March 13<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 stated, it is important to attend the Deliberative Session and vote on Election Day for the full effect of your vote to be felt.

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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.

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**Souhegan Cooperative School District  
Annual Meeting Warrant  
February 5, 2018 and March 13, 2018  
Amherst and Mont Vernon, New Hampshire**

To the inhabitants of the Souhegan Cooperative 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 5th day of February, 2018 at 6:00 p.m. This session shall consist of explanation, discussion, and debate of warrant articles 2 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.

**Second Session of Annual Meeting (Official Ballot Voting)**

You are hereby notified to meet on Tuesday, March 13, 2018 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. to 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 13, 2018)

To the following school district offices:

- a. To choose one (1) school board member from Amherst for the ensuing three (3) years; and,
- b. To choose one (1) school district moderator for a one year unexpired term.

**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 seventeen million, eight hundred and nine thousand, three hundred and one dollars (\$17,809,301)? Should this article be defeated, the default budget shall be seventeen million, six hundred and fifty- two thousand, eight hundred and ninety-seven dollars (\$17,652,897), 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 (5-2)  
Recommended by the Souhegan Cooperative School District Advisory Finance  
Committee (7-0)

Estimated tax impact of passing this article is: \$0.26 per thousand for Amherst and \$0.23 per  
thousand for Mont Vernon.

Estimated tax impact of not passing this article is: \$0.18 per thousand for Amherst and  
\$0.13 per thousand for Mont Vernon.

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

***Souhegan Cooperative School Board Commentary:*** *The proposed budget is 2% lower than last  
year’s adopted budget, reflecting staff decreases and operating savings, primarily in  
transportation. Modest increased investments in security equipment and facilities maintenance, as  
well as small increases in contracted and mandated costs offset some of the savings.*

**Article 3.** “Shall the Souhegan Cooperative School District vote to approve the costs included  
in the agreement between the Souhegan Cooperative School Board and the professional and  
support staff of Souhegan Cooperative High School which calls for the following increases in  
salaries and benefits at current staffing levels:

<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>Estimated Increase</u>
2018-2019	\$225,671
2019-2020	\$168,053

and further to raise and appropriate the sum two hundred and twenty-five thousand, six  
hundred and seventy-one dollars (\$225,671) for the 2018-2019 fiscal year, such sum  
representing the additional costs attributable to the increase in salaries and benefits over those  
that would be paid at current staffing levels?” Majority vote required.

Recommended by the Souhegan Cooperative School Board (6-1)  
Recommended by the Souhegan Cooperative School District Advisory Finance  
Committee (7-0)

Estimated tax impact of passing this article is: \$0.06 per thousand for Amherst and \$0.09 per  
thousand for Mont Vernon.

***Souhegan Cooperative School Board Commentary:*** *This negotiated two-year agreement provides  
for cost of living increases in each year, places upper bounds on career growth salary increases,  
enables more flexibility in teacher class assignments by redefining the teacher workload, and  
provides for greater payroll stability for hourly staff, as well as other no-cost changes to benefits.*

**Article 4.** Shall the Souhegan Cooperative School District raise and appropriate one hundred and fifty thousand dollars (\$150,000) for architectural and engineering fees to upgrade the learning environment and to increase the energy efficiency at Souhegan High School including the HVAC systems, lighting, building finishes, security, and classroom design?” Majority vote required.

Recommended by the Souhegan Cooperative School Board (6-1)

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

Estimated tax impact of passing this article is: \$0.07 per thousand for Amherst and \$0.10 per thousand for Mont Vernon.

***Souhegan Cooperative School Board Commentary:*** *This article asks for funding for a complete architectural and engineering plan to address the school’s unreliable and inefficient energy systems, the aging and outdated learning environment, and flexibility needed to adapt to changing educational practices. The result of this work will provide guidance to the board, administration, and taxpayers for budget and capital improvement plans going forward.*

**Souhegan Cooperative High School Advisory Finance Committee  
Report to the Souhegan Cooperative School District  
FY19 Budget Deliberative Session**

**Advisory Finance Committee Members: Sue Birchard, Ian Corcoran (MV), Lisa Eastland, Martin Goulet, Ellen Grudzien, Peg Harris, and Jane King (MV)**

**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 seventeen million, eight hundred and nine thousand, three hundred and one dollars (\$17,809,301)? Should this article be defeated, the default budget shall be seventeen million, six hundred and fifty-two thousand, eight hundred and ninety-seven dollars (\$17,652,897), 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

**Advisory Finance Committee Vote: Supported 7-0**

**Commentary:** The Souhegan Finance Advisory Committee unanimously recommends the budget as presented. We believe this budget responsibly balances the Souhegan commitment to a high standard of education with the containment of costs impacting Amherst and Mont Vernon tax payers. We appreciate the transparency of the Souhegan officials who met with committee members as we reviewed and recommended changes and we applaud those officials for identifying savings for a total decrease of 2.0% over FY18.

**Article #3** "Shall the Souhegan Cooperative School District vote to approve the costs included in the agreement between the Souhegan Cooperative School Board and the professional and support staff of Souhegan Cooperative High School which calls for the following increases in salaries and benefits at current staffing levels: Fiscal Year Estimated Increase 2018-2019 \$225,671 2019-2020 \$168,053 and further to raise and appropriate the sum two hundred and twenty five thousand, six hundred and seventy-one dollars (\$225,671) for the 2018-2019 fiscal year, such sum representing the additional costs attributable to the increase in salaries and benefits over those that would be paid at current staffing levels?" Majority vote required.

**AFC Vote: Supported 7-0**

**Commentary:** When taking into consideration the varying levels of pay, the AFC realized, for many teachers, this raise will be below the national inflation level. In the future, we do strongly recommend the SCSB research comparative, like-for-like pay scales for SHS and other NH teaching professionals to better evaluate future salary increase proposals.



**Article #4**

Shall the Souhegan Cooperative School District raise and appropriate one hundred and fifty thousand dollars (\$150,000) for architectural and engineering fees to upgrade the learning environment and to increase the energy efficiency at Souhegan High School including the HVAC systems, lighting, building finishes, security and classroom design?" Majority vote required.

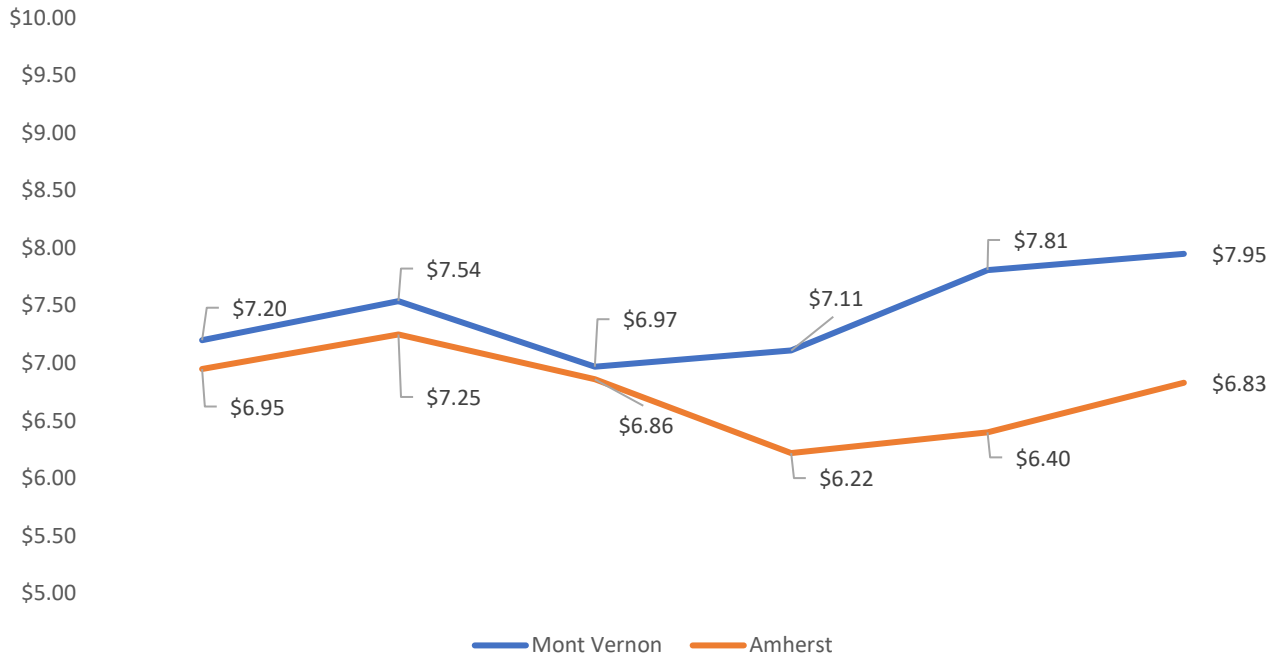
**AFC Vote: Supported Unanimously 7-0**

**Commentary:** The AFC recognizes there are many aspects of an education that lie outside the purview of teaching. Included in this is the condition of the classrooms, in terms of air quality, environment, and design. We find it to be prudent to receive a well-thought out blueprint to use moving forward so we can spend our money judiciously and effectively.

**FY 19 SCSD PROPOSED BUDGET**  
**Budget Overview by Function**

Function	FY18 Budget	Increase (Decrease)	FY19 Budget
Regular Education	\$6,994,482	\$20,260	\$7,014,742
Special Education	\$3,576,993	-\$225,135	\$3,351,858
Vocational Education	\$18,000	\$0	\$18,000
Interscholastic & Athletics	\$649,433	\$22,016	\$671,449
Student Related Services	\$1,044,376	\$5,806	\$1,050,182
Staff Professional Development	\$291,581	-\$26,242	\$265,339
Services	\$31,725	-\$6,000	\$25,725
SAU	\$811,191	\$18,024	\$829,215
Administration	\$1,002,468	\$19,497	\$1,021,965
Facilities & Grounds	\$1,300,794	-\$49,803	\$1,250,991
Student Transportation	\$919,996	\$(167,200)	\$752,796
Information Technology	\$908,571	\$28,530	\$937,101
Food Service	\$425,359	\$9,041	\$434,400
Debt Service	\$184,218	-\$8,680	\$175,538
Transfers	\$15,000	-\$5,000	\$10,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$18,174,187</b>	<b>(\$364,886)</b>	<b>\$17,809,301</b>

Souhegan Cooperative School District Tax Rate History



### Estimated Tax Impact of the FY19 SCSD Budget

Article	AMHERST				MONT VERNON			
	FY18 Tax Impact	FY19 Estimate	Difference	Avg Home	FY 18 Tax Impact	FY19 Estimate	Difference	Avg Home
Budget	\$6.35	\$6.65	\$0.30	\$105.60	\$7.75	\$7.70	-\$0.05	-\$15.00
PPC Contract	\$0.05	\$0.11	\$0.06	\$21.00	\$0.06	\$0.15	\$0.09	\$27.00
Souhegan 2.0	-	\$0.07	\$0.07	\$24.50	-	\$0.10	\$0.10	\$30.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$6.40</b>	<b>\$6.83</b>	<b>\$0.43</b>	<b>\$151.10</b>	<b>\$7.81</b>	<b>\$7.95</b>	<b>\$0.14</b>	<b>\$42.00</b>

**Souhegan Cooperative School District Enrollment History**

	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Projected	889	848	860	813	839	815	813	775	740
Actual	876	859	811	828	842	829	831	788	

**FY19 SCSD Projected Revenues – Adequacy**

	FY18			FY19			Increase (Decrease)
	SWEPT	Adequacy	Total	SWEPT	Adequacy	Total	
<b>Amherst</b>	\$1,398,616	\$1,245,752	\$2,644,368	\$1,292,779	\$1,155,163	\$2,447,942	<b>(\$196,426)</b>
<b>Mont Vernon</b>	\$241,956	\$500,307	\$742,263	\$240,941	\$506,460	\$747,401	<b>\$5,138</b>

**FY19 SCSD Default Budget Analysis**

<b>FY18 ADOPTED BUDGET</b>	<b>\$18,174,186</b>	
Remove Warrant Article	(-\$65,000)	-0.4%
Staffing Changes	(-\$527,866)	-2.9%
Transportation Savings	(-\$173,949)	-1.0%
Technology	(-\$58,469)	-0.3%
Athletics (Stipends)	(-\$19,908)	-0.1%
Regular Education (PPC Step)	\$103,358	0.6%
Facilities (Maintenance)	\$65,675	0.4%
Health Insurance	\$55,351	0.3%
SAU #39 Assessment	\$18,024	0.1%
NEASC Visit	\$14,150	0.1%
Everything Else	\$7,194	0.0%
<b><u>FY19 Default Budget Calculation</u></b>	<b><u>\$17,652,897</u></b>	<b><u>-2.9%</u></b>

# NOTES

# MODERATOR'S RULES OF PROCEDURE

## Souhegan Cooperative School District Deliberative Session

1. The Moderator will not follow Robert's Rules. The Moderator will use the following general rules of procedure, whose main purpose is keep things moving, and not get bogged down in procedural quagmires.
2. Non-voters will be permitted in the auditorium only if room permits after meeting has begun.
3. The Moderator will take Articles in the order they appear on Warrant unless the Moderator announces the intent to take Articles out of order.
4. Motions to amend must be made in writing and will be voted separately. Amendments will not be allowed to accumulate.
5. Each speaker shall state name and limit his or her time at the microphone to three minutes. No individual will be allowed to speak a second time until all others wishing to speak for the first time have done so.
6. Speakers wishing to address the meeting should form a line at either of the two standing microphones (one labeled "For" and one labeled "Against"). The moderator will attempt to alternate pro and con points.
7. The moderator will only accept a motion made at a microphone.
8. No motion to call the question shall be accepted by the moderator until there has been sufficient debate on the article.
9. A motion to restrict reconsideration in accordance with RSA 40 Section 10 should be made immediately following the announcement of the vote on that article.
10. The moderator will dispense with reading the warrant at this time; however, each warrant article will be read when it is moved to the floor for deliberation and action. The warrant is also printed in the Voters' Guide. The Annual Report and Voters' Guide to Official Ballot Voting will be sent to all residents prior to March 13<sup>th</sup>.

Nate Jensen  
Amherst School District Moderator