

SAU #39 Board Meeting

Tuesday, October 22nd, 2019

Meeting Minutes- Approved 11 14 19

Attendees:

Administrative Team: Adam Steel- Superintendent, and Christine Landwehrle- Assistant Superintendent

Amherst School Board: Elizabeth Kuzsma- Chair, Terri Behm- Vice Chair, John Glover- Secretary, Ellen Grudzien and Tom Gauthier.

Souhegan Cooperative School Board: Jim Manning- Chair, Laura Taylor- Secretary, Steve Coughlan, Amy Facey and David Chen.

Mont Vernon School Board: Sarah Lawrence- Chair, Peter Eckhoff- Vice-Chair, Stephen O'Keefe and Tom Driscoll

Board Minutes: Danae A. Marotta

SHS Student Videographer: Shannon Hargreaves

Public: Shannon Gascoyne, Amherst NH, Stephanie Grund, 5 Colonel Wilkins Road, Amherst NH, Kathleen Peal, Esq. Wadleigh, Starr & Peters, P.L.L.C., Manchester, NH 03101 and Community Members

I. Call to Order

Chair of the SAU #39 Board, Ms. Amy Facey called the meeting to order at 6:04 PM.

II. Public Input I of II

No Public Comment

III. Superintendent's Report

Superintendent's Report Card

Superintendent, Mr. Adam Steel, remarked that they updated the Superintendent's Report Card with the help from Ms. Galen Tremblay, SAU #39 Data Coordinator. The idea is that this will be a visualization on their website and members of the public can drill down and review data. They plan on adding this to the website in rudimentary form for the beginning.

SAU #39 Budget for FY'21

He then noted that he wanted the Board to get a first look before this goes to the SAU Budget Committee. There is an increase of 3.1% or \$73K, with a shift in the Data Coordinator position from Souhegan to the SAU (\$31K), salary and benefit adjustments (\$34K), software increases (\$13K) and other adjustments (-\$5K).

The total proposed budget is \$2,411,359.

34 Their next step is the SAU Budget Committee meeting and review then the November public
35 hearing.

36 One thing to note, is that there is a shift because of enrollment and it moves an additional 3.8%
37 of additional weight to Amherst.

38 Mr. Gauthier asked if it has been already included in the Amherst budget.

39 Mr. Steel replied that he is not sure what SAU #39 Business Administrator, Ms. Michele
40 Croteau, has added as a place holder but it will be approx. \$100K.

41 Strategic Planning Meetings

42 As the Board may remember, these are meetings with him speaking to groups about the Strategic
43 Vision. These are meetings that are completed or scheduled and have been very positive. He then
44 encouraged the Board to let him know if they have any other suggested groups that he should
45 meet with.

46 Mr. Driscoll asked about recording the meetings and posting them.

47 Mr. Steel replied that he was thinking after all the meetings are complete he would post a short
48 video.

49 Mr. Eckhoff asked where are the meetings posted.

50 Mr. Steel replied that the individual groups are posting them.

51 Mr. O'Keefe asked about the SAU #39 Budget Committee.

52 Mr. Steel asked if each of the individual boards have assigned their representatives.

53 Discussion ensued.

54 Ms. Taylor asked if Superintendent Steel has presented it to parents.

55 Mr. Steel replied, not yet, but he is favorable to anything.

56 The Board thanked Superintendent Steel.

57 IV. Individual Board Reports

58 Ms. Sarah Lawrence, Chair of the MVSB, mentioned that their Year of Math has kicked off very
59 well. They are having lighting issues with higher than expected electric bills but are working to
60 resolve them.

61 Ms. Elizabeth Kuzsma, Chair of the ASB, noted that they already started their budget process. At
62 C/W this week, the PTA is doing an amazing fundraiser, The Fun Run. Every day in the
63 classrooms they are doing character building, with themes such as being respect, kindness,
64 generosity, and truthfulness. Everyone is so excited about it and they exceeded their original goal
65 of \$20K. The new goal is \$40K and as of right now they are at \$31K.

66 Mr. Jim Manning, Chair of the SCSB, noted that interim SHS Principal, Mr. Bill Hagen, has
67 been doing an excellent job. They have a Principal's Search Committee that is well under way

68 with Ms. Peggy Silva as Chair. As of right now, it is a launch committee and they will start to
 69 hear from candidates. He noted that they are starting to get Letters of Interest and that is exciting.

70 The Board thanked Ms. Lawrence, Ms. Kuzsma and Mr. Manning.

71 V. Consent Agenda

72 **Mr. Glover motioned to accept the Consent Agenda 1. Draft Minutes Sept 19th, 2019, 2.**
 73 **Sept 2019 Treasurer's Report, 3. Policies from Sept 2019 Meeting- Policy Packet**
 74 **BBAB/BDB, BBBH-R, BDC, BDD, BEB, BEDA, BEDB, BGA, BGC, DKC, and**
 75 **GBEC/ADB. Mr. Coughlan seconded the motion.**

76 Ms. Facey asked for Board comments or questions.

77 Ms. Taylor asked about Policy BGA on page 30. She added that it is her understanding that
 78 NHSBA is a company.

79 Superintendent Steel replied that the New Hampshire School Board Association, is just defining
 80 where the codifying system came from.

81 Mr. Coughlan added that the they have three paid staff and the rest is school board.

82 Ms. Facey remarked that she believes that they have 4 paid staff.

83 Mr. Coughlan noted that each of the three boards here, chooses to keep in the system and use the
 84 NHSBA.

85 Ms. Taylor added that she is not questioning the usage but believes that they should have free
 86 choice.

87 Mr. Chen asked for clarification, and noted that she has a valid point.

88 Ms. Kuzsma mentioned that this policy is about how they create policies and she views it as
 89 citing a source.

90 Ms. Facey suggested that they pull out policy BGA and send it back to the Policy Committee.

91 Mr. Manning disagreed and added that it serves as a general guideline. He then suggested that
 92 they move forward with the meeting.

93 **Mr. Coughlan motioned to accept the Consent Agenda items 1. Draft Minutes Sept 19th,**
 94 **2019, 2. Sept 2019 Treasurer's Report, 3. Policies from Sept 2019 Meeting- Policy Packet**
 95 **BBAB/BDB, BBBH-R, BDC, BDD, BEB, BEDA, BEDB, BGC, DKC, and GBEC/ADB. Mr.**
 96 **Manning seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous, motion passed.**

97 **Ms. Kuzsma motioned to pass Policy BGA. Mr. Coughlan seconded the motion. 13 in favor,**
 98 **Ms. Taylor opposed. Motion passed.**

99 VI. Policies for SAU-First Reading

100 Assistant Superintendent Landwehrle explained that the wrong policy got added to the packet,
 101 there were two versions, and this is the correct one. The old one discussed a Minutes Book and
 102 they want it to reflect the current practice.

103 Ms. Facey asked for discussion on Policy BEDG-Minutes.

104 There was no discussion.

105 VII. Policies for SAU- Motion to Review and Move to Individual Boards

106 **Ms. Kuzsma motioned to move BEDG-Minutes to the individual boards. Mr. Glover**
 107 **seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous, motion passed.**

108 VIII. School Start Time Recommendation

109 Superintendent Steel discussed that they have been talking about school start time for a while
 110 and figuring out what is best for their students.

111 He then reviewed the timeline:

- 112 • Feb 2018: Public Survey where 2/3 of parents supported change to 7:55am/8:30am
- 113 • Dec 4, 2018: Public Forum about later start times for all
- 114 • Jan 24, 2019: Board Motion for recommendation by 11/30 (after two public forums on
 115 the topic)
- 116 • October 22, 2019: Board Discussion
- 117 • Public Forums: Will be scheduled with board input
- 118 • November 14th 2019: Final Decision

119 He then read the three options:

- 120 • Option 1: Move start times to 8:00AM and 8:45am for Sept, 2020
- 121 • Option 2: Commit to the move for Sept, 2021
- 122 • Option 3: Move all schedules back 10-15 minutes

123 He then reviewed the considerations: An additional bus for MV is needed in any scenario, a flip
 124 may require an additional bus in Amherst, after-school childcare must be formalized for
 125 elementary students, additional bus transportation options must be considered (early arrival, late
 126 busses), athletic schedules will need to be adjusted, where possible, AMS schedules will be
 127 changed in FY 21 regardless of change, SHS schedule cannot waterfall due to CTE and other
 128 issues, but schedule change is likely to occur anyway that would help with time change, and SHS
 129 has other issues related to CTE, after-school jobs, etc.

130 Ms. Grudzien asked what the acronym CTE stands for.

131 Mr. Steel replied, Career and Technical Education.

132 He added that they are all in agreement that the school schedule should match the sleep schedule.
 133 Additionally, California has made later start times mandatory. He is looking to gather feedback.

- 134 He then explained that there might be unintended consequences that they are not prepared for,
135 for example, fewer parents driving their children means additional busses.
- 136 Ms. Grudzien asked Mr. Steel for his thoughts.
- 137 Mr. Steel replied that he supports what is best for the children. He has several children in the
138 schools and it will impact each one differently. It is not a question of “if” but “when”.
- 139 Ms. Grudzien remarked that it does not make sense to keep putting it off.
- 140 Ms. Kuzsma mentioned that she served on the committee and they know that this is best for their
141 students. The delay gives them time to smooth out the nuances.
- 142 Mr. Glover noted that the budget is currently under review. He suggested to have it properly
143 planned and budgeted.
- 144 Mr. Manning asked what Superintendent Steel is asking.
- 145 Mr. Steel replied that he is looking for Board feedback.
- 146 Mr. Gauthier asked about the additional bus in Amherst and MV.
- 147 Ms. Lawrence asked about the cost of a bus.
- 148 Mr. Steel replied approx. \$60K a bus. Additionally, the elementary school students need longer
149 to get on and off a bus.
- 150 Ms. Lawrence noted that she is more in line with what Ms. Grudzien is thinking.
- 151 Ms. Kuzsma mentioned that she has heard from parents and they want concrete answers.
- 152 Mr. Coughlan suggested that they pick a date of 2021 and have the public forums. It is going to
153 happen unless they explicitly stop.
- 154 Ms. Facey noted that she cannot agree to just figure it out for next year. Additionally,
155 club/activity time is important.
- 156 Mr. Driscoll remarked that classroom time is very important.
- 157 Mr. Gauthier commented that he believes that it will be more expensive than they think. He
158 added that even a 6-8-month notice is short and a longer time will be more palatable.
- 159 Mr. O’Keefe remarked that inaction is really the true problem here. If they have a public forum,
160 have it in November. Parents do want this but there are a lot of obstacles, CTE, after-school
161 athletics, clubs, etc. If they are not going to make the change, in September, then they are kicking
162 the can.
- 163 Mr. Taylor remarked that the system now has served her children well. She then commented that
164 her daughter would stay up till 11:00 at night to finish her AP school work.
- 165 Ms. Behm added that she wants to do it right and not poorly, either commit or don’t. This year
166 they worked to change the bus routes and made moves in the right direction. She emphasized
167 that she feels strongly about it and is committed.

168 Ms. Grudzien mentioned that the feedback she has heard from parents is that people want to
 169 plan. She added that a public forum should probably be informational. You are not going to
 170 please everyone. They need to vote on the 2021 or they dissolve it.

171 Ms. Taylor remarked that it seems like they have two different issues.

172 Mr. Steel clarified Option 3, move all schedules back 10- 15 minutes.

173 Ms. Taylor added that with the Strategic Vision they are looking at students taking college
 174 courses, which means that they will staying up later.

175 Mr. Manning noted that he is already hearing a plan.

176 Mr. Gauthier added that they have 3 months to figure out the budgetary concerns. He then noted
 177 that their window is a lot shorter than they think.

178 IX. Public Input II of II

179 Ms. Shannon Gascoyne, Amherst NH, remarked that the public was surveyed and there were
 180 forums were held. She agreed with Ms. Grudzien and Mr. Manning. This meeting being live
 181 streamed is a step in the right direction.

182 This change will clearly affect her family life. They (administration) do not ask the public when
 183 they make curriculum changes, and believe that it is best thing for their learners. They have the
 184 opportunity to lead their region and this Board to be a leader.

185 Ms. Stephanie Grund, 5 Colonel Wilkins Road, Amherst NH, remarked that she has differing
 186 opinions from Ms. Gascoyne. She then discussed that as great as it is to push back the school day
 187 it will have an impact on the students at night. For the high school, they have an hour for
 188 activities, then sports and then have to eat and do their homework. No one has asked the students
 189 their opinions. She wishes there can be a happy medium but is not sure there is.

190 Ms. Facey asked if the Committee or Superintendent Steel is asking for a vote tonight.

191 Mr. Steel replied that he was looking for board feedback. He will be coming back with a
 192 recommendation targeting the Fall of 2021 and that they are committed. It will give them time to
 193 connect with afterschool care providers, and empower the high school to address their scheduling
 194 issues. They have surveyed the students and can certainly do it again. If at any time they find a
 195 road block they can stop.

196 Ms. Kuzsma added as a member of the subcommittee, they had a lot of brain storming ideas.
 197 She then asked if they can keep the committee intact.

198 Mr. Steel replied, yes, and noted that they did complete a comprehensive report.

199 **Mr. O'Keefe motioned to effectively endorse the Superintendent's recommendation for**
 200 **later start time starting in FY' 21 and do all the things needed on the path to do so. Ms.**
 201 **Grudzien seconded the motion. 13 in favor, motion passed. Ms. Taylor opposed.**

202 The Board thanked Ms. Gascoyne and Ms. Grund for their comments.

203 X. SAU Board Goals

204 Ms. Facey noted that Board Goals are completed at an individual board level. They have given
205 direction to Superintendent Steel on a number of issues/ items and now that they have a Strategic
206 Vision it makes sense to formalize the process. They are trying to act as one with their Strategic
207 Vision.

208 Mr. Coughlan discussed that they need to set some goals for the Superintendent and the biggest
209 issue with this timeline is that the Board changes each March. He is advocating that they set
210 large multi-year goals for the Superintendent. He would like to set in place a process that gets the
211 goal setting going, next month. This Board reaches some semi conclusions and allows for the
212 March reset. He is confident with the day to day operations in the SAU #39 and suggested that
213 they keep going with the larger goals.

214 He added that the problem with individual board goals is that each board does not hire or fire the
215 Superintendent or decide his compensation. Only all of them together, are able to impact him and
216 his compensation.

217 Mr. Gauthier replied that the individual board goals are imperative, they need to have short
218 focused goals that can be measured and not going to change potentially every six months.

219 Mr. Coughlan replied that what they have fits this model now. He added that it is one system.

220 Mr. Chen added that one thing that he thought was missing was a point of entry for
221 Superintendent Steel to submit his goals and they can comment on that.

222 Ms. Facey mentioned that she agrees that this is part of the complication of where they are with
223 three districts and an SAU. She recommended that they start the process and to see if that makes
224 sense. Perhaps they can discuss this at the 4 Chairs Meeting and make a plan to have this on the
225 agendas moving forward.

226 The Board thanked Mr. Coughlan.

227 XI. Reconfiguration Subcommittee Recommendations

228 Ms. Sarah Lawrence, Chair of the Reconfiguration Subcommittee discussed that they reviewed
229 three different options, K-12, 5/6-12 and the Streamlined model.

230 She then explained that the three models require trust and an aligned commitment to the quality
231 education and community that SAU 39 posits in their Mission and Vision. The K-12 Cooperative
232 model offers opportunity for equity of education/experience, fully aligned curriculum and the
233 flexibility to address space and staffing, both now and in the future, so that taxes may be more
234 stable.

235 There are risks and benefits for taxpayers in both communities that may trigger fear. Shifting into
236 a K-12 model would require a huge effort in both communities as well as significant
237 negotiations. The 5/6-12 is a moderate step, but the gains are small for the effort required and the
238 added Union complexity.

239 Continued Streamlining is the model recommended by the majority of the Sub-Committee with
240 the acknowledgement that the benefits of K-12 is the ideal they are striving to reach.

241 Ms. Kuzsma commented that she is confused with the Union situation.

242 Ms. Kathleen Peal Esq. Wadleigh, Starr & Peters, Manchester, NH, explained that if you
243 embarked on the K-12 model you would be bringing all of the employees from your existing
244 elementary schools, middle school and high school, into to one single employer.

245 Right now, you have each with their own employer. If you brought everyone into a K-12, it will
246 simplify your labor relations with one employer with one bargaining unit, and probably one for
247 support staff. There would also be issues with Souhegan as they are not unionized. They might
248 also need an election if they want to be represented. They did not get too far in looking at the
249 Souhegan as the committee was more focused on the 5/6- 12 model.

250 Under the 5/6-12 model, it would be terribly complicated. Amherst would continue to exist but
251 you would be taking your middle school staff and they would be employed by Souhegan. The
252 unions would have to figure out if they would remain separate or combine. You have one
253 employer and half of the employees are unionized and half that are not.

254 It is very complicated to move just part of the existing Amherst bargaining unit to a new
255 employer that does not have a bargaining unit. The K-12 has some issues, but it is simpler
256 because it is one employer with all employees.

257 Mr. Coughlan mentioned that he does the Souhegan negotiations with the PPC.

258 Ms. Peal replied that she has had conversations with the Executive Director of the PELRB and
259 even he was perplexed. This is a unique situation.

260 Before you embark on this, the Board Reps should have conversations with the Union rep about
261 what the consolidation plan looks like and what direction the Union would intend. You would
262 want to have those discussions with the Union to know what they want to do and see if the
263 parties are aligned. It would be those kinds of preliminary discussions that you would need to
264 have.

265 Ms. Kuzsma asked what if they had members of the middle school staff that wanted to join the
266 PPC.

267 Ms. Peal remarked that it would not be possible, they are not employees of the high school.

268 Mr. Glover asked about the functional difference between the two options.

269 Ms. Peal replied under the option of the K-12 you would no longer have the employers of
270 Amherst and Mont Vernon School Districts. They would be absorbed by the Souhegan
271 Cooperative District. The end result is either there is one Union or no Union and it would have to
272 have an election.

273 Mr. Glover asked about existing rights.

274 Ms. Peal replied that under the 5/6-12 model the elementary staff keep their rights as is. Under
 275 the K-12 everyone is moving to one single employer. She is thinking that the PLERB will say
 276 that they need to have an election. The K-6 model will leave you with three employers.

277 Ms. Taylor asked about the majority under the K-12 model.

278 Ms. Peal replied that everyone would get a vote K-12.

279 She then stated that even if all of the high school teachers voted against having a union that in the
 consolidated (district) they would still be unionized if the other school teachers voted for it.

280 Ms. Lawrence added that is why they came to option number three. They are still continuing
 281 with the good work that they are doing and if there is something that they are working towards it
 282 would be that K-12 full consolidation.

Mr. O'Keefe mentioned that it is not insurmountable and can be negotiated through contracts. He
 283 then noted that they are not ready to do everything but will continue with streamlining.

284 Mr. Glover recommended that they do everything they possibly can to investigate and move
 285 forward to a full consolidation. So that you can present a real plan to the community.

286 Ms. Lawrence added that she too would vote for the full consolidation and is looking at what is
 287 best for the kids.

288 Ms. Behm applauded the committee and Ms. Peal, adding that this is helpful and comprehensive.

289 Ms. Kuzsma asked about putting the buildings in the ownership of the Town.

290 Ms. Peal, replied, yes, if it was a K-12. It is possible to do that.

291 Mr. Gauthier asked if there were Town Reps that were involved with these meetings.

292 Ms. Grudzien replied, no. This was very late in their committee discussions.

293 Discussion ensued.

294 Mr. Glover added that they would have to figure out what to do with the tuition for the middle
 295 school and high schools.

296 Ms. Kuzsma asked if they need motions tonight.

297 Ms. Grudzien asked about getting the MV 6th grade to AMS for equity of experience.

298 Mr. Steel replied that he believes that they would both be amiable to that option but that would
 299 be very expensive for Mont Vernon taxpayers.

300 He then explained that there is nothing that is precluding them to streamlining. He noted that
 301 they already act as if they are one school system, in the sense that it is reasonable and rational,
 302 and see how that goes. Additionally, this all boils down to two tax rates.

303 Mr. Chen motioned to adopt the committee recommendation of continued streamlining
304 process as the default at least until they have something else that they want to consider.
305 Mr. Glover seconded the motion.

306 Ms. Facey asked for discussion.

307 Mr. Glover mentioned that he would like to see the financial impact.

308 Mr. Steel replied that two years ago he did a proforma. At that time it adjusted about \$350,000 in
309 MV's favor. It was partially due to removing the MV Tuition.

310 Mr. Glover asked about having administrative efficiencies.

311 Mr. Steel replied that the biggest issue is the impact on labor. They will not know until they
312 actually go through the process.

313 Mr. Glover asked about the employee protections. He then asked if they, as an employer, can
314 build a new agreement from scratch.

315 Ms. Peal replied, if everyone comes over to one employer and there is an election, then yes.
316 There is no existing bargaining agreement in Souhegan.

317 Mr. Coughlan thanked the committee and suggested that they dissolve the committee. He then
318 added a special thanks to Chair of the Committee, Ms. Lawrence.

319 **Mr. Chen motioned to adopt the Committee's recommendation of continued streamlining**
320 **and to dissolve the current Reconfiguration Subcommittee. Ms. Behm seconded the motion.**
321 **13 in favor, motion passed. Mr. Glover opposed.**

322 Ms. Facey added that it sounds like what is in the best interest of students is K-12. She agrees
323 that there is work to be continued and agreed with Superintendent Steel that they can create more
324 efficiencies.

325 Ms. Behm suggested that they start with individual Board Chairs to look at the first steps.

326 Mr. Glover added that they should continue to work on streamlining and iron out the details.

327 Ms. Facey remarked that they will add this to the 4 Chairs Agenda.

328 **Mr. Glover motioned to develop a committee to continue investigating a consolidation Pre-**
329 **K- Grade 12. Mr. Chen seconded the motion.**

330 Ms. Facey asked for Board discussion.

331 Mr. O'Keefe suggested that they take it one step at a time.

332 **Mr. O'Keefe motioned to table the discussion on developing a committee to continue**
333 **investigating a consolidation Pre-K- Grade 12. Ms. Kuzsma seconded. 13 in favor, motion**
334 **passed. Mr. Glover opposed.**

335 XII. Public Input II of II

336 No Public Comment

337 XIII. Non-Public Session RSA 91-A:3 II (a)

338 **Ms. Kuzsma motioned to enter into Non-Public Session RSA 91-A:3 II (a) at 8:45 PM. Ms.**
339 **Lawrence seconded the motion.**

340 Ms. Facey called a Roll Call: Facey-Yes, Coughlan- Yes, Chen-Yes, Taylor-Yes, Kuzsma-
341 Yes, Behm-Yes, Glover-Yes, Gauthier-Yes, Grudzien-Yes, Lawrence- Yes, Eckhoff-Yes,
342 Driscoll-Yes and O’Keefe-Yes.

343 Other persons present during Non-Public Session: None

344 Description of matters discussed and final decisions made: Superintendent Evaluation

345 **Mr. Chen motioned to leave Non-Public Session. Ms. Kuzsma seconded the motion. The**
346 **vote was unanimous, motion passed.**

347 Public session reconvened at 9:32PM.

348 **Mr. O’Keefe motioned to establish a salary increase pool for FY’ 21 of \$40,000. Ms. Taylor**
349 **seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous, motion passed.**