

1 Souhegan Cooperative Board Meeting

2 Monday, January 6th, 2020

3 Meeting Minutes- Approved 03 02 2020

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6  
7 Attendees:

8  
9 Administrative Team: Adam Steel- Superintendent, and Michele Croteau- SAU #39 Business  
10 Administrator.

11  
12 Souhegan Cooperative Board Members: Jim Manning- Chair, Pim Grondstra- Vice- Chair, Laura  
13 Taylor- Secretary, David Chen, Amy Facey, and Steve Coughlan.

14  
15 Public: Stephanie Grund 5 Colonel Wilkins Road, Amherst NH and Lynn Briggs, 4 Golden Pond  
16 Lane, Amherst NH.

17  
18 I. Call to Order

19  
20 **Chair of the SCSB, Mr. Jim Manning, called the meeting to order at 6:04 PM.**

21  
22 II. Discussion

23  
24 Mr. Manning noted that there are two agenda items:

- 25  
26
  - Address concerns of a citizen regarding communication of the change of location for the  
27 December 17<sup>th</sup>, 2019 SCSB meeting.
  - Review Budget Presentation.28

29  
30 Mr. Chen wanted to know if he could ask questions regarding the motions passed on 12/17/19.  
31 He added that he did not attend that meeting.

32  
33 Superintendent, Mr. Adam Steel, suggested first reaffirming the previous motions passed during  
34 the December meeting. Those motions can then be discussed further at the end of this meeting.

35  
36 Mr. Manning discussed that a concerned citizen questioned the legality of the Dec. 17<sup>th</sup> meeting  
37 due to the location being moved to the Brick School from SHS, without 24 hours' notice.

38  
39 He explained the change in location was because of a Snow Day. He and Mr. Steel waited until  
40 the morning of 12/17 to judge the weather. At 10:00 AM, a joint decision was made to move the  
41 meeting from the high school to the Brick School and announced online. SHS did not have a  
42 posted notice due to being closed and unplowed.

44 He further added that discussions with legal counsel have concluded that the weather justified the  
45 change and the notice was sufficient.

46  
47 Due to the concerns of a citizen, he has decided to reaffirm by a second Board vote, all of the  
48 motions passed at the December 17, 2019 SCSB Meeting.

49  
50 He then read the seven motions being reaffirmed.

51  
52 Consent Agenda Motion:

53  
54 **“Mr. Pim Grondstra motioned to approve the Consent Agenda items 1. 11 18 19 Draft**  
55 **Minutes, 2. NWEA Fall Update, 3. Policy BEDG from 11 18 19 Meeting, and 4. Audit**  
56 **Presentation. Mr. George Torres seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous, motion**  
57 **passed. (6-0)”**

58  
59 Transcript Related Motions:

60 **“Mr. Grondstra motioned to approve a transitional transcript for the class of 2024 and beyond**  
61 **that includes both a competency-based and a traditional grade for each course and to commit**  
62 **to transitioning to a strictly competency-based transcript over time as colleges become more**  
63 **familiar with competency-based grading practices; and that the class of 2023 will continue**  
64 **only the traditional transcript, including weighted GPA’s. Ms. Facey seconded. (6-0) motion**  
65 **passed. “**

66 **“Mr. Grondstra motioned to direct the Superintendent to finalize the transitional transcript for**  
67 **the class of 2024 and beyond, which includes conducting a thorough analysis and alignment**  
68 **to SAU 39 OKR’s and by seeking input from Community Council, the SAU-wide assessment,**  
69 **grading, and reporting committee, the Souhegan Faculty and Administration, and from the**  
70 **Souhegan Cooperative School Board no later than June 1, 2020. Ms. Facey seconded the**  
71 **motion, approved as amended. (6-0) motion passed. “**

72 **“Ms. Taylor motioned that Souhegan should provide semester grades, A, B, C’s and mid-**  
73 **semester grades including A, B, Cs for the Class of 2023. Mr. Grondstra seconded the motion.**  
74 **The vote was unanimous, motion passed.”**

75 Budget Related Motions:

76 **“Mr. Grondstra motioned to approve a proposed budget of \$18,377,407 for public hearing**  
77 **with a default budget calculation of \$18,367,151; Ms. Facey seconded the motion. The vote**  
78 **was unanimous, motion passed. (6-0)”**

79 **“Mr. Grondstra motioned to approve inclusion on the warrant of the long-range capital**  
80 **maintenance fund in the amount of \$100,000, funded through new taxes. Mr. Torres seconded**  
81 **the motion. The vote was unanimous, motion passed. (6-0)”**.

82 PPC Agreement Motions:

83 **“Mr. Grondstra motioned to authorize Mr. Coughlan and Ms. Facey to accept the PPC**  
84 **agreement as written and put the warrant article on the ballot. The vote was unanimous,**  
85 **motion passed.”**

86  
87 **Mr. Pim Grondstra motioned to ratify these 7 motions from the previous 12/17/2019 SCSB**  
88 **meeting. Mr. Steve Coughlan seconded the motion. Motion Passed (5-0), Mr. Chen**  
89 **abstained.**

90  
91 Mr. Chen asked what the \$10,000 budget difference was with the default and proposed.

92  
93 SAU #39 Business Administrator, Ms. Michele Croteau, explained that many things were added  
94 and subtracted by law. The point of the default budget is to get to a bottom line number. There is  
95 a method to get to the number.

96  
97 Mr. Manning asked what was the difference proposed and default, before the additional  
98 \$299,000 out of the budget (from October) following PPC agreement.

99  
100 Ms. Facey added that she thought it was the budget was decreased by \$500,000 before staffing  
101 changes.

102  
103 Superintendent Steel remarked that the staffing changes come out of both default and proposed  
104 budget.

105  
106 Ms. Facey added the PPC is a separate warrant article.

107  
108 Mr. Manning stated the presentation includes PPC agreement. He then suggested that they begin  
109 looking thru presentation handout.

110  
111 Mr. Chen asked if there was a reason stop the warrant article at \$100,000.

112  
113 Ms. Croteau explained the \$100,000 considers the capital needs assessment looks at the  
114 community as a whole. It is \$650,000 approximately for all districts. The Amherst School Board  
115 is asking for \$550,000 this voting year.

116  
117 Mr. Manning then reviewed the first part of the presentation.

118  
119 Superintendent Steel explained that he will review the OECD PISA, Souhegan financial  
120 information and strategic planning, where they are going and then that leads to the budget.

121  
122 Mr. Chen noted that he was hoping that they would talk about how the students are doing  
123 overall. So that they are focusing on balanced SAU.

124  
125 Mr. Steel replied that he believes that the Board needs make those messages.

126  
127 Mr. Chen expressed that the board should think globally.

128

129 Superintendent Steel replied that he would be happy to make those points.  
130  
131 Mr. Coughlan mentioned that they have committed themselves to act in a unified way.  
132  
133 Mr. Steel countered that elected officials should be convincing voters.  
134  
135 Ms. Facey agreed with Mr. Chen. Superintendent Steel should present on the State of the SAU  
136 and guide how SHS fits into it.  
137  
138 Mr. Chen mentioned the Board should show support of the overall SAU. He then commented  
139 that the taxpayers see one number.  
140  
141 Mr. Manning noted that the summary slide should be upfront.  
142  
143 Mr. Chen asked to include the slide showing even tax rate increases.  
144  
145 Mr. Coughlan remarked that the Deliberative Session should include the greater details. By law,  
146 the budget presentation is for one hour.  
147  
148 Superintendent Steel noted that he would be happy to add that in.  
149  
150 Mr. Chen asked which colleges use the OECD PISA.  
151  
152 Mr. Steel replied, none.  
153  
154 Mr. Manning added that a Board goal was for SHS to be a destination high school. The OECD  
155 PISA is an exam for comparing SHS to other countries.  
156  
157 Mr. Chen asked if the public understands the OECD PISA. He then suggested using the SAT  
158 comparison.  
159  
160 Mr. Manning replied that the OECD PISA indicates a global view of performance.  
161  
162 Mr. Chen remarked that the OECD PISA feels distant from the taxpayer.  
163  
164 Ms. Facey added that the metrics can be debated, their PISA scores are showing quality.  
165  
166 Mr. Chen suggested that they should focus on the changes to SAT scores.  
167  
168 Superintendent Steel mentioned that the results show context and a global comparison.  
169  
170 Mr. Manning commented on the SAT.  
171  
172 Ms. Facey added that the SAT's are still really important for many students.  
173  
174 Mr. Steel mentioned that he has both in the presentation.

175  
176 Mr. Manning commented on the global comparisons vs. the SATs. As a school board, they need  
177 to focus on being a global competitor.  
178  
179 Ms. Facey added that showing both is good its more information.  
180  
181 Mr. Manning noted that they should talk about it so they know what it is.  
182  
183 Ms. Taylor suggested starting with SAT and then include PISA after.  
184  
185 Mr. Chen remarked that people are going to ask how the PISA relates to getting into college.  
186  
187 Superintendent Steel expressed that the media portrays U.S. schools as failing. NH schools are  
188 not failing, NH ranks 1-2 top in the country and SHS are top 5 in the State.  
189  
190 Ms. Facey added that the quality of the schools ties into the budget.  
191  
192 Mr. Manning added that he can present budget slides and highlights.  
193  
194 Mr. Coughlan asked if the budget numbers on the slides are up to date.  
195  
196 Superintendent Steel said that he and Ms. Croteau will look into it.  
197  
198 Mr. Chen indicated this is down from previous year's budget. He then suggested that they focus  
199 presentation on making a better school system. He will speak on enrollment, position changes,  
200 Cost Per Pupil and budget calculations.  
201  
202 Mr. Coughlan emphasized that past presentations have been according to what people want.  
203 He then noted that he will present the PPC agreement.  
204  
205 Ms. Facey added that she will present the Capital Maintenance Plan.  
206  
207 Mr. Steel mentioned that the budget would have been down 2.1% without Special Education, but  
208 budget is up 1.5 % with Special Education.  
209  
210 Mr. Chen remarked that they can't know staffing changes until they know Spec Ed enrollment.  
211  
212 Mr. Manning mentioned that Ms. Taylor and Mr. Torres do not need to present due to their  
213 newness to the Board.  
214  
215 Mr. Coughlan asked where the physical location of slides will be for presentations.  
216  
217 Superintendent Steel remarked that he will do a dry run at 3:00PM to make sure everything is  
218 working properly.  
219  
220 Mr. Grondstra can summarize at the end.

221  
222 Ms. Croteau will put summary slide at the beginning and end.  
223  
224 At 6:53PM Superintendent Steel left the meeting for a PTA Meeting.  
225  
226 **Mr. Coughlan motioned to amend the default budget to \$18, 371, 651 from \$18, 367,151. A.**  
227 **Facey seconded the motion. Vote was unanimous, 6-0.**  
228  
229 Ms. Facey mentioned that the SAU has a new Joint Facilities Committee helping Amherst and  
230 SHS to join efforts in educating public about facility needs. Only a limited number of Board  
231 Members can attend to avoid a quorum at Joint Facilities Committee Meetings.  
232  
233 Mr. Grondstra and Ms. Taylor will attend.  
234  
235 Mr. Chen also expressed interest in attending.  
236  
237 Ms. Taylor and Mr. Chen remarked that they can decide at a later time who will attend.  
238  
239 Ms. Facey left the meeting at 6:54 PM.  
240  
241 Mr. Manning opened the meeting for public comment.  
242  
243 III. Public Comment  
244  
245 Ms. Lynn Briggs, 4 Golden Pond Lane, Amherst NH, noted that she is in favor of the SAT  
246 comparison and agrees with Mr. Chen. She believes that the presentation should be simple and  
247 people will want hard facts about what was taken out of the budget.  
248  
249 Mr. Grondstra asked for the slides to be distributed before the meeting.  
250  
251 Mr. Chen commented that they should update the Unexpended Fund Balance from last year on  
252 the slides, \$1.25 million. He then asked if they have a forecast for this school year.  
253  
254 Ms. Croteau replied that they do not have an estimate now. Back in December, approximately  
255 \$284,000 was shared. The \$100,000 will be based on new taxes with Warrant Article #4.  
256  
257 Ms. Taylor inquired about which type of fund is the School Maintenance Expendable Trust  
258 Fund.  
259  
260 Mr. Grondstra left at 7:03 PM.  
261  
262 Mr. Coughlan added the Fund was started years ago and holds around \$49,000 currently.  
263  
264 Mr. Manning mentioned the AFC has not approved new budget numbers. Budget lower than  
265 previously discussed. The Agreement with PPC includes a raise. So, the budget needed to be cut  
266 to accommodate.  
267

268 Mr. Coughlan said AFC cannot ask Board to raise budget, because the budget was passed by the  
269 Board.

270  
271 Mr. Chen commented to mention in the presentation the strategic reasons to only ask \$100,000.

272  
273 Ms. Taylor requested a copy of the Trust Fund purposes.

274  
275 IV. Meeting Adjourned

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277 **Mr. Coughlan motioned to adjourn the meeting at 7:10 PM. Mr. Chen seconded the**  
278 **motion. The vote was unanimous (4-0) motion passed.**

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