

1 Souhegan Cooperative Board Meeting

2 Monday, March 23, 2020

3 Meeting Minutes- Approved 04 13 2020

4 Attendees:

5 Administrative Team: Adam Steel- Superintendent, Christine Landwehrle- Assistant
6 Superintendent, Michele Croteau- SAU #39 Business Administrator, Bill Hagen- Principal SHS,
7 Tony Doucet- Teacher SHS, and Andrew Emerson- Teacher SHS.

8 Souhegan Cooperative School Board: Pim Grondstra- Chair, Amy Facey- Vice Chair, Stephanie
9 Grund- Secretary, Steve Coughlan, Laura Taylor, George Torres and David Chen.

10 Board Minutes: Danae A. Marotta

11 Public: Delaney Facques, SHS Community Council Liaison, Georgia Craven- SHS Student,
12 Michael Berry- SHS Principal Nominee

13 I. Non-Public Session

14 **Mr. Chen motioned to enter into Non-Public Session RSA 91-A:3 II (b) at 5:07 PM. Ms.**
15 **Facey seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous, motion passed.**

16 **Mr. Steel called Roll Call of all the board members: Grondstra- Yes, Facey- Yes, Grund-**
17 **Yes, Coughlan-Yes, Taylor-Yes, Torres-Yes and Chen-Yes.**

18 Other persons present: **Superintendent- Adam Steel, Assistant Superintendent- Christine**
19 **Landwehrle, SAU #39 Business Administrator- Michele Croteau and Michael Berry- SHS**
20 **Principal Nominee**

21 Description of matters discussed and final decisions made: Interview for employment

22 **Mr. Grondstra motioned to leave Non-Public Session and at 5:53PM. Ms. Grund seconded**
23 **the motion. The vote was unanimous, motion passed.**

24 II. Organizational Meeting Call to Order

25 **Superintendent, Mr. Adam Steel, called the Organizational Meeting to order at 6:00 PM.**

26 As Chair of this meeting, I have determined that given the potential health issues associated with
27 the COVID-19 pandemic, the Governor's declared State of Emergency in New Hampshire due to
28 COVID-19, and the public health authorities recommendations for social distancing, quarantine
29 and self-isolation, this meeting constitutes an "emergency" pursuant to RSA 91-A:2 (III)(b) in
30 that "immediate action is imperative and the physical presence of a quorum is not reasonably
31 practical" and the organization needs to conduct its regular meeting to continue to move the
32 business of the organization forward during this pandemic.

33 As a result, members of the public body may participate by phone and a quorum need not be
34 present in the location for which the meeting was noticed. Any actions taken must be by Roll
35 Call vote.

36 For the record, this meeting has been properly noticed for more than 24 hours and the public may
37 attend the meeting at the noticed location 1 School Street, Amherst NH, where the meeting will
38 be audible to the public.

39 **Mr. Steel called Roll Call of all the board members that are present: Grondstra- Yes,**
40 **Facey- Yes, Grund-Yes, Coughlan-Yes, Taylor-Yes, Torres-Yes and Chen-Yes.**

41 He explained the process of electing a Chair. He will first take nominations from the Board and
42 keep a list, close nominations and then vote.

43 Ms. Facey nominated Mr. Pim Grondstra as Chair of the SCSB.

44 Mr. Steel asked for additional nominations.

45 There were no additional nominations and Mr. Steel closed the nominations.

46 Mr. Steel asked Mr. Grondstra if he would be willing to serve if elected.

47 Mr. Grondstra replied, yes.

48 **Mr. Steel called Roll Call of all the board members that are present: Facey- Yes, Grund-**
49 **Yes, Coughlan-Yes, Taylor-Yes, Torres-Yes, Chen-Yes and Grondstra- abstain. (6-0-1)**

50 **Mr. Grondstra was elected Chair of the Souhegan Cooperative School Board.**

51 Mr. Steel noted the election of a Vice Chair.

52 Mr. Torres nominated Ms. Facey as Vice Chair.

53 Mr. Chen nominated Ms. Taylor as Vice Chair.

54 Mr. Grondstra asked for more nominations. There were no more nominations.

55 Mr. Grondstra called a Roll Call with each board member stating their vote for vice chair. **Ms.**
56 **Grund- Ms. Taylor, Mr. Coughlan- Ms. Facey, Mr. Chen- Ms. Taylor, Mr. Torres- Ms.**
57 **Facey, Ms. Taylor- Ms. Taylor, Ms. Facey- Ms. Facey and Mr. Grondstra- Ms. Facey.**

58 **Ms. Facey was elected Vice-Chair of the SCSB.**

59 Mr. Grondstra noted that the Board will also need to elect a Secretary.

60 Ms. Taylor nominated Ms. Grund as SCSB Secretary.

61 Mr. Grondstra called for additional nominations.

62 There were no other nominations and the vote was unanimous (7-0).

63 **Mr. Grondstra called Roll Call: Grondstra- Ms. Grund, Facey- Ms. Grund, Grund-herself,**
64 **Coughlan- Ms. Grund, Taylor- Ms. Grund, Torres- Ms. Grund and Chen- Ms. Grund.**

65 **Ms. Grund was elected Secretary of the SCSB.**

66 Superintendent Steel remarked that they also need to appoint a School District Treasurer,
67 effective July 1st. It is not an elected position by voters and the current Treasurer has filled the
68 position for a number of years.

69 **Mr. Chen nominated Ms. CJ Butler for Souhegan Cooperative School District Treasurer.**
70 **Mr. Grondstra seconded the motion. Motion passed.**

71 **Mr. Grondstra called Roll Call: Grondstra-Yes, Facey- Yes, Grund-Yes, Taylor-Yes,**
72 **Torres-Yes, Chen-Yes and Coughlan-abstain. (6-0-1)**

73 Mr. Steel noted the Board will also need to appoint a School District Clerk, effective
74 immediately.

75 Mr. Grondstra commented that the position is held by Ms. Christine Janson.

76 **Mr. Coughlan motioned to nominate Ms. Christine Janson for Souhegan Cooperative**
77 **School District Clerk. Ms. Facey seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous, motion**
78 **passed.**

79 **Mr. Grondstra called Roll Call: Grondstra-Yes, Facey- Yes, Grund-Yes, Taylor-Yes,**
80 **Torres-Yes, Chen-Yes and Coughlan-Yes. (7-0)**

81 Mr. Steel noted that there were several board appointed positions and can require a vote if
82 needed. He added that the first is Advisory Finance Committee.

83 1. Advisory Finance Committee- Ms. Grund and Mr. Torres.

84 Mr. Chen questioned why there is only one person on the AFC committee.

85 Mr. Steel responded that they can certainly have two.

86 Mr. Torres remarked that he will serve as a second member on the AFC.

87 2. Athletic Liaison Committee - Mr. Chen and Mr. Grondstra

88 3. Capital Improvement Plan Committee- Mr. Coughlan

89 Mr. Chen inquired about working as a single board and commented that there seems to be a
90 contradiction.

91 Mr. Coughlan asked Mr. Chen if he was referring to the CIP Committee.

92 Mr. Chen replied, yes.

93 Mr. Coughlan that the Town picks who they want on the committee. Last year, it was himself,
94 Ms. Terri Behm (ASB Member) and SAU #39 Business Administrator, Ms. Michele Croteau.

95 4. Community Council- Ms. Taylor

96 Ms. Facey noted that she would like to serve on that committee.

97 Ms. Taylor added that she would also like to serve.

98 Mr. Grondstra commented that he would like to put both names down and then circle back.

- 99 5. Expendable Trust Advisory Committee- Mr. Chen and Ms. Grund
100 6. Manifest- Ms. Grund and Ms. Taylor
101 7. Policy Committee- Ms. Taylor and Mr. Coughlan
102 8. PPC- Mr. Coughlan and Mr. Torres (Ms. Facey as an alternate)

103 Mr. Coughlan noted that they have a meeting scheduled for Thursday.

- 104 9. PTSA- Mr. Chen and Ms. Grund
105 10. New Hampshire School Board Association- Ms. Taylor

106 Ms. Facey added that she is already on the Executive Board.

107 Ms. Taylor noted interest in the NHSBA.

- 108 11. Joint Facilities Advisory Committee- Mr. Grondstra, Ms. Facey and Ms. Grund (Ms.
109 Taylor as an alternate)

110 Ms. Steel added that they need to circle back to Community Council.

111 Ms. Facey noted that she would like to serve as CC Liaison.

112 Ms. Taylor remarked that she would prefer to have someone that has children in the school.

113 Mr. Grondstra remarked that he does not feel like that is relevant.

114 Ms. Taylor commented that Ms. Facey is also the Chair of the SAU Board.

115 Mr. Steel suggested a Roll Call vote.

116 Mr. Chen inquired what the role necessitates so that he can come to his own conclusion.

117 Superintendent Steel explained the what the role involves.

118 Mr. Chen questioned why only one school board member.

119 Mr. Steel remarked that it is meant to have consensus.

120 Mr. Chen commented that he believes that it is a weighty principle.

121 Ms. Taylor asked if she can nominate someone else.

122 Mr. Steel requested Ms. Delaney Facques, Community Council Liaison, to add her input.

123 Mr. Grondstra remarked that Ms. Facques can enlighten the Board with her experiences.

124 Ms. Delaney gave her support for Ms. Facey adding that Ms. Facey understands the college
125 admissions process well.

126 Ms. Taylor recommended someone other than herself that has not served.

127 Mr. Torres asked about succession planning.

128 Mr. Grondstra replied that he has not heard of any succession planning but anyone that has
129 interest would naturally get up to speed by being an active member.

130 Mr. Chen added that there are pros for being a past member and having new insight.

131 **Mr. Grondstra called a Roll Call vote Torres-Ms. Facey, Chen-Ms. Taylor, Grund- Ms.**
132 **Taylor, Taylor-herself, Facey-herself, Coughlan-Ms. Facey, and Grondstra-Ms. Facey.**

133 Mr. Steel noted that there are two other committees.

134 12. Communications Committee- Mr. Coughlan and Ms. Facey

135 13. Constitutional Interpretation Committee- Mr. Coughlan

136 The Board thanked Mr. Grondstra.

137 III. Superintendent's Report

138 Nomination for SHS Principal

139 Superintendent Steel noted that he is pleased to put a new SHS Principal into nomination. Over
140 the last several months, Ms. Peggy Silva, has served as Chair of the SHS Principal Search
141 Committee. They have reviewed many resumes and had many applicants which they narrowed
142 down to three. They then conducted a formal interview followed interviews by many different
143 groups.

144 He then noted that there are a few members of the hiring committee that are here to share their
145 thoughts.

146 SHS Teacher, Mr. Andy Anderson, discussed being impressed with Mr. Berry's depth of
147 knowledge with the culture of SHS. He is excited to have him on board.

148 SHS Teacher, Mr. Tony Doucet, commented that he was very impressed by Mr. Berry and
149 believes that he will do a great job leading them in the future.

150 Mr. Steel added that there are also two student representatives that are on the call to give their
151 thoughts.

152 Ms. Facques also gave her support for the nomination.

153 SHS Student, Ms. Georgia Craven, commented that she has agreed with everything the other
154 participants had mentioned earlier. Ms. Craven noted that it would be an honor to have him.

155 Mr. Steel noted that Mr. Berry is on the Zoom call and would be happy to speak.

156 Mr. Berry thanked the Board for having him and that his experiences have led him to this
157 position. As he reflects, it is a school that you can go places with a great teachers, administration
158 and community. He is happy to accept the position at SHS.

159 Mr. Steel nominated Mr. Michael Berry as SHS Principal, with the starting salary of \$135,000,
160 effective July 1st, 2020.

161 **Ms. Facey motioned to approve the nomination of Mr. Michael Berry, with the starting**
162 **salary of \$135,000, effective July 1st, 2020. Mr. Coughlan seconded the motion.**

163 **Mr. Grondstra called Roll Call: Grondstra-Yes, Facey- Yes, Grund-Yes, Taylor-Yes,**
164 **Torres-Yes, Coughlan-Yes and Chen-No (6-1)**

165 Mr. Chen clarified that he is disappointed in the process for selecting the Principal. It is true that
166 Superintendent Steel has the right to nominate the candidate and bring the Board one candidate.
167 They are left with one choice and he has brought it up this issue a number of times.

168 Second, there has been a lot of things that the board could have taken apart of during the
169 selection process. For example, they have not approved of the selection process. The board is
170 responsible for policy and policy would state to you that they would be responsible for finding
171 and selecting a candidate. The fact is that no board input was taken until this moment in time.
172 This decision is a forced decision. Many said yes, because there is no alternative here. That is not
173 the way to conduct the business of the school board and they need to understand that and adjust
174 it.

175 Mr. Grondstra commented that they can look at the process and how it can be improved.

176 Mr. Chen added that they did get an update, but they were snippets and no details. He is
177 disturbed by the way the process went.

178 Mr. Grondstra added that he does not know who the other candidates were and with his limited
179 exposure is confident with moving forward. Mr. Berry will report to Superintendent Steel.

180 Mr. Torres remarked that he replied yes, with his vote not because there was no other choice but
181 that he trusts Superintendent Steel's decision making.

182 Mr. Grondstra echoed Mr. Torres.

183 Mr. Steel emphasized his preference in being transparent as the previous SAU #39 Business
184 Administrator and now Superintendent. He further remarked that when it comes to selecting
185 Principals, Teachers and staff, that is his job and his job alone. If Mr. Berry does not work out as
186 Principal, then they need to hold him accountable. If the board had selected him, then they would
187 be held responsible. In Massachusetts, the board has no say in the selection. He felt that it was
188 important to include the school board, and, in this case, he chose to have a very diversified
189 committee which he did not have to do.

190 He concluded his comments by stating that he understands Mr. Chen's point of view.

191 Mr. Grondstra amended what he mentioned before about revealing the process. He then asked if
192 in the future if Mr. Steel could enlighten the board but only, if he so wishes.

193 Mr. Steel replied, yes.

194 School Board Meeting Calendar

195 He then discussed that this is a draft of the school board calendar, from August to next June. He
196 would like the board members to review and make sure that they are ok. No action is needed at
197 this time.

198 Trello Board

219 Mr. Steel added that on the left-hand side there is a list of the meetings by ordered by date, with
220 the agendas, and minutes. On the right, there is an Organization List with other various items
221 such as Board Assignments, public hearing and Deliberative Session dates. Further to the right,
222 there is also a card where new agenda items can be added. This is the best place to go for board
223 information.

224 Covid-19/Coronavirus Update

225 They have some very important traditions that they need to mindful of. He is hopeful of coming
226 back this school year. They will be thinking of ways of supporting their students and that is
227 something on their minds.

228 He has asked one of their teachers, Mr. Tony Doucet, to speak about how remote learning is
229 going so far. This is now day #3 and it is a monumental shift for their educators.

230 Mr. Tony Doucet, thanked the Administration, it has put them far ahead of other districts. He has
231 had a lot of communication with parents and he has had great discussions with students. He has
232 met his Advisory group twice already and the students have wanted to stay online longer. Work
233 is even coming in from students as a higher rate.

234 Mr. Grondstra thanked Mr. Doucet.

235 Unassigned Fund Balance- Projection for the Year

236 Mr. Steel added that normally they would be very precise with their calculations with the
237 Unassigned Fund Balance at this time but there is great uncertainty due to the funding
238 mechanisms they have in play over the next few months.

239 Ms. Croteau commended the teachers for coming so far with their remote learning. She
240 explained that with the projections regarding the Unreserved Fund Balance there are a lot of
241 questions surrounding when they will to return to school. There are questions with contractual
242 obligations, vendors, athletic programs and it is too soon to tell what is going to happen with
243 some of these things. There are some expenditures that were not planned that are necessary with
244 this new way of teaching.

245 On the Revenue side, in excess of what was budgeted she is expecting \$126,000-127,000.
246 Expenditures are very tight and there is a large range from \$0 up to \$443,000. One example is
247 with coaches and athletic programming that is approx. \$49,000. They have PD that looks
248 different and she does not know how different and then other contractual obligations that are yet
249 to be determined. She is happy to provide more detail.

250 Mr. Steel added that Ms. Croteau will review some end-of-year projects.

251 Ms. Croteau noted that they have a few projects that are currently underway. They include
252 replacing two water tanks at the HS and that was on the Capital Needs Assessment
253 recommendation in 2018. She will confirm that they are underway, but the cost of \$27,500
254 includes a \$2,500 rebate. They are looking at the gas shut off in the kitchen (\$2,700) to isolate
255 appliances from one location. The water heater in the kitchen is, going to tankless system, is
256 \$16,800. That is to replace an existing water heater with a natural gas water heater. If they were

237 to do any of the projects listed, she would have to get firm quotes in order to encumber the funds
238 for this year.

239 Mr. Grondstra asked if these are projects that they are looking at for the end of the year if they
240 have the funds available.

241 Mr. Steel remarked that they also have the science labs that they are looking at with an architect
242 which is not listed but a top priority.

243 Mr. Chen asked about the Chemistry Labs in the main building that are in major disrepair.

244 Mr. Steel replied that he would like to check with the Joint Facilities Advisory Committee and
245 make sure that they are not repeating projects.

246 He reviewed some major projects that they are working on such as Joint Facilities projects,
247 school start times, administrator hiring and a 5-year budget forecast (internally).

248 Mr. Grondstra asked how will the multi-board meetings will work.

249 Mr. Steel explained that that it was a recommendation by the Reconfiguration Committee. The 4
250 Board Chairs discussed and agreed on. The thought was to try it out in April and May, but it is an
251 intentional try to act as one board.

252 Mr. Grondstra commented that they should tread lightly, and they need to ensure that they put in
253 the right amount of time for discussion. He is looking forward to seeing how it works.

254 Mr. Steel remarked that it may not, and they might not have to adjust.

255 Mr. Taylor asked who they should submit their thoughts and ideas to for the SAU Board.

256 Mr. Steel replied that any board member can send their ideas to their respective board chair. The
257 SAU board chair is undefined right now and they will have to re-elect a new chair.

258 Mr. Chen noted that it might be a time to get things done when the students are not in school.

259 Ms. Croteau replied that they are being mindful and taking a lot of things into account.

260 Mr. Chen remarked that it did not seem like the items listed were in order of priority.

261 Ms. Croteau commented that they are not yet in priority order, but she can do that. She added
262 that it is important that they encumber the funds even if the work was done when the restrictions
263 lift.

264 Ms. Grund asked Mr. Steel about the transcripts and reporting and how are they going forward
265 with that.

266 Mr. Steel replied that he does not know yet, this week is when they get back to business with the
267 other items. They will circle back to it and they need to get input from parents.

268 Ms. Grund added that the teachers have been phenomenal and applauded the teachers. She then
269 asked for the expenses that they were not ready to cover due to the Covid-19 pandemic, perhaps
270 a quick summary.

271 Ms. Croteau noted that they are tracking those costs and not all of the costs are in yet. It is
272 something that they thought of and so that they can identify items.

273 Mr. Coughlan mentioned that the sign board out front is a potential item to purchase for end of
274 the year projects. They did get a number of quotes for an electronic sign that would be in the
275 \$24k-25k range. He wants to let the board know now that it is in great disrepair. The
276 Maintenance Department has done a wonderful job keeping it together, but they cannot work
277 miracles forever.

278 Mr. Steel noted that he has put this item in the list on the Trello Board under the Organization
279 List and the card "Potential End of Year Projects".

280 Mr. Chen asked Mr. Steel about the status of competency-based education. He then asked for a
281 summary.

282 Mr. Steel explained how they are a mastery learning center of education. What is hard to
283 implement is that growth in the classroom. They are one of the leaders in the state in regard to
284 CBE. They would not be able to shift their teaching if not for the teachers already working in a
285 Mastery Based System.

286 Mr. Torres asked Ms. Croteau about \$127k increased revenues.

287 Ms. Croteau replied that the Cat Aid, Tuition and Medicaid is higher than projected.

288 Mr. Torres asked about the contracts with busses.

289 Ms. Croteau replied that they have contractual obligations and are yet to be determined. It
290 depends if they will be back in session or not. She will review the contracts.

291 Mr. Chen asked about the education for Vocational education.

292 Mr. Steel replied that SHS Principal, Mr. Bill Hagen, is also on the call.

293 Principal Hagen replied that the vocational personnel have been in contact with Student Services.
294 They are still working remotely where it is possible.

295 Mr. Chen asked how is it possible.

296 Principal Hagen replied with their Science Teachers it may not be possible, and those questions
297 still remain.

298 Ms. Taylor added that she heard that the schedule was going well.

299 Mr. Grondstra remarked that he applauds the staff and his student is doing very well.

300 Mr. Chen added that his children are in other schools and commended the teachers and
301 administration adding that they are way ahead of the game.

302 IV. Committee Updates

303 Ms. Taylor noted that Community Council will be going online for potential meetings.

304 Ms. Facey mentioned that the Joint Facilities Advisory Committee will be meeting this Thursday
305 over Zoom conferencing, and that the Amherst FY'21 budget has passed. They will start looking
306 at their next steps going forward.

307 Mr. Grondstra, also serving on the JFAC, agreed that he was pleased that the ASD budget
308 passed.

309 V. Community Council Update

310 Ms. Delaney Facques, Community Council Liaison, commented that they should be meeting on
311 Zoom sometime starting next week.

312 The Board thanked Ms. Facques.

313 VI. Consent Agenda

314 **Mr. Coughlan motioned to approve the Consent Agenda items 1. Draft Minutes 03 02 2020,**
315 **2. Jan 2020 Treasurer's Report, 3. Feb 2020 Treasurer's Report, 4. Unanticipated Revenue**
316 **\$700, 5. Policy KFA- From 03 02 2020 Meeting and 6. Policy JIC-From 03 02 2020 Meeting.**
317 **Mr. Chen seconded the motion. Motion passed.**

318 **Mr. Grondstra called Roll Call: Grondstra-Yes, Facey- Yes, Grund-Yes, Taylor-Yes,**
319 **Torres-Yes, Coughlan-Yes and Chen-abstain (6-0-1)**

320 VII. First Reading Policies- JLCJ and JFABD

321 Mr. Grondstra noted that policies JLCJ and JFABD are in the packet and the board should have
322 reviewed them already. He asked for board comments or questions.

323 There were no comments or questions.

324 Mr. Steel added that it will then go in the Consent Agenda for next month.

325 VIII. Public Comment

326 Mr. Grondstra congratulated Ms. Grund and Ms. Facey on their elections to the SCSB. He added
327 that they have two choices, to work together or not work together. He would prefer to work
328 together. His role is to be the facilitator of the meetings. Different opinions are always good, and
329 everyone needs to be on the same wavelength to achieve that.

330 He also mentioned that he would prefer to minimize the personal agendas. Each member of the
331 board has their own personal opinions and suggested against resorting to personal attacks. There
332 are some things about mastery learning that they are not going to change. He then advised the
333 Board to concentrate of the things that they can affect.

334 Lastly, he would like to keep track of action items. He asked the Board Secretary, Ms. Grund, to
335 work with the SAU or himself to track the action items. It is important that they keep up with
336 that.

337 Ms. Grund replied that she would be willing to help.

338 IX. Non-Public Session

339 **Ms. Taylor motioned to enter into Non-Public Session RSA 91-A:3, II (a) and (b) at**
340 **8:06PM. Mr. Chen seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous, motion passed.**

341 **Mr. Grondstra called Roll Call of all the board members: Grondstra- Yes, Facey- Yes,**
342 **Grund-Yes, Coughlan-Yes, Taylor-Yes, Torres-Yes and Chen-Yes.**

343 **Other persons present: Superintendent- Adam Steel, Assistant Superintendent- Christine**
344 **Landwehrle, SAU #39 Business Administrator- Michele Croteau**

345 **Description of matters discussed, and final decisions made: Approve the hiring of teacher,**
346 **Nicholas Drinkwater, Column A, Step 0, \$46,334 (prorated) for FY 20 (3/1/2020) to replace**
347 **Michael Facques, who is no longer employed by SAU #39. Accept retirement of Scott Ryan**
348 **and allow him to receive this full retirement payout to recognize his service, end of June**
349 **2020 instead of a reduction in workforce.**

350 **Motion to leave Non-Public Session and return to public session at 8:27PM by Mr. Chen.**
351 **Motion was seconded by Ms. Grund. The vote was unanimous, motion passed.**

352 X. Public Session

353 **Public session reconvened at 8:27PM**

354

355