

1  
2 Souhegan Cooperative School Board  
3 Thursday, October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2015  
4 Meeting Minutes  
5

6 Attendees:

7 Administrative Team: Peter Warburton – Superintendent, Betty Shankel – Business  
8 Administrator, Meg Beauchamp - Director of Student Services, Rob Scully- Principal SHS,  
9 Peter Gagnon- Dean of Students at SHS, Kathy White- Dean of Faculty at SHS, Addie  
10 Hutchinson- Moderator of the Souhegan Cooperative School District

11  
12 Souhegan School Board- Chair- Mary Lou Mullens, Vice Chair- Howard Brown, Jeanne Ludt,  
13 Christine Janson, Steve Coughlan, Pim Grondstra

14  
15 Minute Taker: Danae Marotta

16  
17 Public Present: Mr. Mike Akillian-10 Old Mont Vernon Road, Amherst. Ms. Rosie Garvey-  
18 Student SHS

19  
20 I. CALL TO ORDER

21  
22 Ms. Mary Lou Mullens called the meeting to order at 6:05 pm

23  
24 II. ANNOUNCEMENTS

25  
26 Ms. Marylou Mullens welcomed all attendees.

27  
28 A. Principal's Report-

29  
30 Mr. Rob Scully thanked Ms. Lisa Eastland for helping to reenergize the PTA group.

31  
32 He stated that Back to School Night was on September 24<sup>th</sup> and it was great for the parents to see  
33 their child's schedule and meet their teachers.

34  
35 Mr. Scully stated that SHS student enrollment is at 829, which is right around that 830 mark.

36  
37 He also noted a few SHS teacher accomplishments, Ms. Kim Paniagua-English, Ms. Julianne  
38 Mueller-Northcott for Science, she has been published in The Science Teacher and Ms. Jenny  
39 Deenik for science. He noted the article about Ms. Deenik in Edweek and thanked all of the  
40 teachers for their hard work.

41  
42 Ms. Mullens thanked Mr. Scully for his report.

43  
44 B. Community Council Report  
45

46 Ms. Rosie Garvey stated that Mr. Danny Tiso was not able to attend the Board meeting and she  
47 is here in his place.

48  
49 Ms. Rosie Garvey discussed that there was a retreat for members to get to know each other, and  
50 they are focused on Homecoming at the end of October.

51  
52 Ms. Janson mentioned that the funds that had been previously needed in the amount of \$700.00  
53 had been transferred to the Community Council.

54  
55 Ms. Rosie Garvey thanked the Board.

### 56 57 C. Committee Reports

#### 58 59 1. Approval of brick design for Turf Field fundraiser-

60  
61 Ms. Shankel showed the Board a rendering of the brick design concept. She stated that the brick  
62 tiles would sell for \$200 each. She noted that there might be some special recognition on either  
63 side.

64  
65 She stated that this is the plan and would like the Board's approval.

66  
67 Mr. Pim Grondstra stated that it is a brick tile.

68  
69 Ms. Mullens asked Ms. Shankel if there would be names engraved on the brick tiles. Ms.  
70 Shankel replied, yes, we are receiving donations now.

71  
72 Mr. Grondstra noted that it is possible to engrave three lines, but will have limitations on the  
73 number of characters that will fit on the tile.

74  
75 Discussion ensued.

76  
77 **Mr. Steve Coughlan made a motion to approve the placement of brick tiles on the external**  
78 **restroom walls, by the stadium, Mr. Pim Grondsta seconded, the vote was unanimous,**  
79 **motion passed.**

#### 80 81 2. Policy Committee

82  
83 Mr. Howard Brown stated that the next policy meeting is next week.

84  
85 Mr. Peter Warburton stated that they will be auditing policies. He discussed that they are online  
86 and it will be easier to audit.

87  
88 Ms. Marylou Mullens thanked Mr. Howard Brown and Ms. Jeanne Ludt.

89

90 Mr. Steve Coughlan discussed the Personnel Policies Committee and possibly changing the  
91 incentive for going on to a spouse's health plan. They would like to survey teachers to gain  
92 feedback.

93  
94 III. PUBLIC COMMENT

95  
96 Mr. Mike Akillian thanked the Board for their time at the previous meetings and now would like  
97 to discuss his Key Proposed Goals for Amherst Schools. He stated that these thoughts are from  
98 the "Working for Great Schools" citizens group.

99  
100 He stated that that the Group has three specific goals, two of the goals have to do with academic  
101 quality and the third one has to do with cost.

102  
103 He stated that he is looking for a mix of qualitative and quantitative goals.

104  
105 He first discussed that by February 2016, Amherst Schools (ASD and SHS) should have  
106 established multi-year goals for academic outcomes. He stated that this is an academic quality  
107 goal.

108  
109 He went further to discuss that these are specific, measurable, challenging and achievable goals.  
110 He stated that progress is being tracked using quantitative measures that allow for comparison  
111 with other similar communities.

112  
113 Second, Mr. Akillian discussed that by FY 19' the Amherst School System (elementary, middle  
114 and high school) should be rated as one of the top two school systems in NH. This is another  
115 academic quality goal.

116  
117 He discussed that these ratings are based on municipal comparisons of widely accepted  
118 quantitative and qualitative information used by nationally recognized authorities.

119  
120 Lastly, Mr. Akillian stated that by FY'19, Amherst elementary and middle school costs (on a  
121 cost per pupil basis) are equal to those of comparable, high achieving communities and the SHS  
122 cost per pupil is no more than 10% over high comparable, high achieving communities. He  
123 stated that this is a cost goal.

124  
125 He added that the completion of this goal would be reflected in the proposed budget of March  
126 18'. He stated that significant progress in cost reduction is evident in the intervening years.

127  
128 Ms. Mullens thanked Mr. Akillian for his time and involvement. She also stated that the Board  
129 has similar goals as well.

130  
131 Ms. Christine Janson thanked SHS for their involvement in collecting 450 lbs. of food for the  
132 Share Food Pantry.

133  
134 IV. CONSENT AGENDA

135

136  
137 **Mr. Steve Coughlan made a motion to accept the consent agenda items A. Minutes from**  
138 **September, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2015, B. August 2015 Treasurer's Report, C. Unanticipated Revenue**  
139 **relating to Market Velocity in the amount of \$3,104.00 and D. Audit Engagement Letter**  
140 **authorization, Ms. Jeanne Ludt seconded, the vote was unanimous, motion passed.**

141  
142 Ms. Christine Janson noted several changes to the September 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2015 minutes

143  
144 Line 25- changed "*last year's*" to "*this year's*"  
145 Line 47- Remove "*also known as*" and remove "*He stated that*"  
146 Public Comment- change "*there were no public present*" to "*No public comment*"  
147 Line 182- Change "*SAU*" to "*Souhegan*"  
148 Line 49- Add "*And the State will pay to administer the test*".

149  
150 V. PRESENTATION

151  
152 A. FY17 Advisory Finance Committee introduction

153  
154 Ms. Addie Hutchinson discussed having problems attracting people that live in Mont Vernon for  
155 the Advisory Finance Committee. She gave a list of the AFC members for the current year to the  
156 Board but did not introduce the members as there were not in attendance. She stated that as of  
157 now there are 4 confirmed members. She asked for volunteers and if they are interested in  
158 joining the AFC.

159  
160 Ms. Marylou Mullens also stated that the Committee had trouble last year securing new  
161 members.

162  
163 B. FY 17' Budget Assumptions

164  
165 Ms. Betty Shankel discussed the budgeting process and wanted to clarify that the District uses  
166 zero based budgeting. She gave several examples such as staffing, transportation and Special  
167 Education. First she stated that staffing is based on student enrollment  
168 projections, as are materials, texts, testing. Additionally she stated that each staff member's  
169 actual salary and benefits are individually calculated for the budget. Then she noted that  
170 transportation is calculated each year on routing requirements, and contracted pricing.  
171 Lastly she stated that Special Education requirements are based on actual students coming into  
172 our system with consideration to actual students leaving the system.

173  
174 Ms. Shankel then discussed revenues and does not expect to have a lot of change. She stated that  
175 State aid numbers are down a little bit but not a big change. She discussed that the Catastrophic  
176 aid projection will be made on current year projected expenditures. She then stated that Cat Aid  
177 will be paid out at approximately 75%.

178  
179 She then discussed the unassigned fund balance, and stated that the District did a good job of  
180 curtailing expenses whenever possible.

181

182 She stated that there are no change in student fees and is under the assumption of keeping the  
183 fees the same

184  
185 She then discussed enrollments. She stated the projection of enrollment is the most important  
186 number and tied to supplies, materials, educational initiatives and staffing. She discussed that the  
187 actual student enrollment is 829, and doesn't include homeschool students.

188  
189  
190 Mr. Rob Scully then discussed the student load based on coalition common principles. He  
191 discussed that every student will have a personalized learning plan.

192  
193 He stated that currently teachers have direct responsibility for 80-90 students not including  
194 advisory.

195  
196 Mr. Scully discussed the class size/ student load. He remarked that students are still finishing  
197 with add and drops.

198  
199 Ms. Mullens stated that this would be great to have this information in this format.

200  
201 Mr. Scully stated that this helps us build the student experience.

202  
203 He then discussed the school Counselors and school psychologists. He noted that 4 million  
204 children suffer mental health issue and that this is a serious concern.

205  
206 Ms. Betty Shankel discussed staffing costs and stated that a lot of the budget is staffing costs.  
207 She stated that health care costs have risen by 6.5 %, she added that there is no dental insurance  
208 increase.

209  
210 She stated that NH retirement for non-certified staff usually an increase every two years, will  
211 remain at 11.17% for FY 17'. She added that retirement for certified staff will remain at 15.67%.

212  
213 She then discussed health insurance cost containment, and stated that it is a very serious issue.  
214 She added a few examples of how they are reducing costs by eliminating the JY plan, and  
215 reducing the RX benefits and dental benefits. She stated that she would like to create a  
216 committee with the three districts and work together to find ways that they can reduce health care  
217 costs.

218  
219 She then discussed the historical cost of health insurance, and mentioned that FY 14' was the  
220 highest.

221  
222 Ms. Shankel then discussed the summary of the combined benefit costs. She stated that for FY  
223 16 the budgeted cost of NH retirement and health insurance is \$2.7 million which is 15.3% of the  
224 budget

225  
226 She then discussed staffing costs based on the contract FY17'. She stated that there was a new  
227 agreement negotiated for teachers and support staff with a 0% COLA

228  
229 She discussed the new hires/reductions in teaching staff and stated that the average teaching  
230 salary is \$68,576  
231  
232 Mr. Rob Scully spoke about the four different areas of technology they are looking at when they  
233 are building the budget and how they can interrelate. He discussed the infrastructure, facilities,  
234 instructional, and operations  
235  
236 Ms. Shankel discussed the topic of operations and stated that they look at the employment cost  
237 index (ECI) and the consumer price index (CPI).  
238  
239 She discussed the building and grounds, and mentioned a few of the FY 16' items completed.  
240 She stated that they replaced the SHS stadium field track among other items completed.  
241  
242 She discussed operations further and the FY 17' budget items. She discussed replacing the 2008  
243 field mower and the 2004 Toro workman cart and retreading the interior and exterior stairway  
244 treads to the locker rooms.  
245  
246 Ms. Shankel discussed transportation and for FY 16' there is a 5 year contract to Butler Bussing  
247 she stated that this is the second year of the contract.  
248  
249 She then discussed food service and that they are operating close to breaking even other than  
250 aging capital equipment.  
251  
252 She then stated that the next budget meeting date has been changed to November 10<sup>th</sup>,  
253  
254 Ms. Marylou Mullens thanked Ms. Shankel and Mr. Scully for their report.  
255  
256 VI. INFORMATIONAL  
257  
258 A. FY16 Quarterly Report-  
259  
260 Ms. Betty Shankel stated that at this time of year they don't have a revenue budget set, they are  
261 looking right now at salaries and benefits. She stated that at this time it is early in the year. At the  
262 end of September they look at salaries and benefits. She added that there are a few positions they  
263 did not hire for and overall, they are saving \$198,500 in the salaries and benefits area.  
264  
265 B. Computer Science update-  
266  
267 Mr. Scully stated that one of the main objectives to build a rigorous and robust STEM. He stated  
268 that they are looking for professional development in that area. He discussed that community  
269 members have reached out and have been very supportive  
270  
271 C. Foreign Language overview-  
272

273 Mr. Scully stated that they want to support world language for the 7<sup>th</sup> -12<sup>th</sup> grade experience in  
274 competency based education.

275  
276 Ms. Jeanne Ludt asked Mr. Scully if there was there an attempt to determine what language they  
277 should be teaching.

278  
279 Ms. Mullens asked Mr. Scully if it would be possible to give the Board an update on the  
280 languages offered at the next meeting.

281  
282 VII. DISCUSSION

283  
284 A. Agenda setting process-

285  
286 Ms. Marylou Mullens stated that what she wants to send out the agenda items by email to the  
287 Administration and Board members. She then asked them to email her directly with any items  
288 they want to add to the agenda.

289  
290 VIII. ACTION ITEMS

291  
292 A. Field trips

293  
294 Mr. Peter Gagnon stated that there are 4 field trips for the Board to review. He also wanted to  
295 give the Board some information regarding the policies on chaperones and open the discussion  
296 on chaperone background checks.

297  
298 He discussed the point that all chaperones for school trips/excursions must have updated  
299 background checks. He then stated that the policy does not define a chaperone as a District  
300 employee but it does state they have to have an updated background check.

301  
302 He then discussed the April 2017 Music Trip, and answer any of the questions the Board may  
303 have. He noted that the Board needed more information to make a decision on this trip. He then  
304 discussed the cost, date of travel and the itinerary. He also stated that the students would have 4  
305 opportunities for performing while on this trip

306  
307 Ms. Mullens then asked Mr. Gagnon if this was the trip that the Board had questions as far as the  
308 chaperone policy.

309  
310 Mr. Gagnon replied, yes.

311  
312 Ms. Marylou Mullens then stated that right now as the School Board policy stands it is allowed  
313 for non-District employees to be chaperones as long as they have a background check.

314  
315 Mr. Peter Gagnon stated that the trip organizer would be comfortable with whatever the Board  
316 determines as parameters for chaperones on this trip. He stated that in the past that the spouse of  
317 organizer has functioned as a chaperone.

318

319 He then stated to the Board that this is a great opportunity for students and that he feels that the  
320 Board should approve this trip.

321  
322 Mr. Peter Warburton stated that the District has only done one level of background check in the  
323 past. He then added that what the State has done typically in the past is look for any violation or  
324 felony relating to behavior with children.

325  
326 Mr. Pim Grondstra stated that chaperone background checks should be consistent with staff  
327 background checks.

328  
329 Mr. Warburton stated that he would feel comfortable with that because it has worked for the  
330 District in the past.

331  
332 Mr. Steve Coughlan made the point that you cannot be totally up to date with background  
333 checks.

334  
335 Mr. Steve Coughlan asked Mr. Warburton if volunteers at the elementary level if they do  
336 background checks. Mr. Warburton replied, no, they are volunteers and they are with a teacher  
337 so there is no need to do background checks.

338  
339 Discussion ensued about background checks.

340  
341  
342 **Mr. Steve Coughlan made a motion to approve the Music Europe Trip 2017, Mr. Howard**  
343 **Brown seconded, the vote was unanimous, motion passed.**

344  
345 **Mr. Howard Brown made a motion to approve the NYC 2016 trip, Mr. Steve Coughlan**  
346 **seconded, vote was unanimous, motion passed.**

347  
348 **Mr. Pim Grondstra made a motion to approve the Germany trip for April 2016 with only**  
349 **two days of school missed, Ms. Jeanne Ludt seconded, the vote was unanimous, motion**  
350 **passed**

351  
352 **Mr. Steve Coughlan made a motion to approve the Namibia Trip April 2017, with the**  
353 **stipulation of excluding high risk activities as deemed by the Dean of Students and have a**  
354 **current safety update of Namibia. Mr. Howard Brown seconded, the vote was unanimous,**  
355 **motion passed.**

356  
357 **Ms. Jeanne Ludt made a motion to enter into Non-Public Session RSA 91-A: 3 II (a, c, and**  
358 **d) Mr. Pim Grondstra seconded, the vote was unanimous, motion passed.**

359  
360 Ms. Marylou Mullens asked a roll call, Ludt-yes, Grondstra-yes, Janson-yes, Brown-yes, and  
361 Coughlan-yes.

362  
363 The Board discussed these items:

364 1. Negotiations with the Town of Amherst



- 365 2. A personnel matter  
366 3. A student matter

367

368 **Mr. Pim Grondstra made a motion to exit Non-Public Session at 10:06 p.m. and Mr.**  
369 **Howard Brown seconded, the vote was unanimous, motion passed.**

370

371 **Ms Chris Janson made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:07 p.m. and Mr. Steve**  
372 **Coughlan seconded, the vote was unanimous, meeting adjourned.**

373