

**MINUTES**  
**SOUHEGAN COOPERATIVE SCHOOL DISTRICT**  
**TUESDAY JANUARY 4 2011**  
**SOUHEGAN COOPERATIVE HIGH SCHOOL INFO CENTER**

**Present:**

**Souhegan Cooperative School Board:** Howard Brown, Steve Coughlan, Pim Grondstra, Fran Harrow, Chris Janson, Jeanne Ludt, Mary Lou Mullens

**Administrative Team:** Jon Ingram, Dr. Mary Jennings, Betty Shankel, and Renea Sparks

**Budget Advisory:** John Rizzi, Gail Agens, Peter Stearns, Andrea Baever, and Mary Mahar

**Athletic Department:** Chris Lavoie

**Community Council:** Scott Doyle

**Minutes Recorder:** Melissa Spicer

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Mr. Coughlan called the board meeting to order at 6:05pm.

**I. PUBLIC HEARING**

Dr. Jennings reminded the public that the state adequacy aid money that is to be voted on is money the federal government has sent to the states. The states have taken about half of that money to provide adequacy aid to in the long run help education. She recommended that if this money were accepted, it be used for FY12 budget.

In response to a question from Ms. Ludt, Mr. Coughlan said he did not see a reason anyone would not want to accept the Education Jobs funding.

Ms. Harrow arrived at 6:10.

**Principal's Report**

**II. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Mr. Ingram said he met with Maggie Paul and she sent him a summary to show activities student groups participated in to support the community over the holiday season. He highlighted some of the events. He said Souhegan has a very high percentage of students applying to college very early. He said it was impressive that so many students are looking to attend schools across the country and complimented the guidance department. He also discussed an article published by the art teacher Martha Rives.

### **Community Council Report**

Ms. Ludt gave the community council report and said community council voted to move Fang Fest back because there will be 100 band members missing and the event conflicted with school work since it was scheduled right before February vacation.

Mr. Ingram said this request was brought to the administration and complimented the community council advisors for following the constitution to give students the authority to make this decision. He said they had to be thorough and followed the process perfectly to get this result. He said he thinks that because they did it so well, the critics respected the decision.

### **Committee Reports**

Mr. Coughlan asked if anyone had comments, but no one did.

#### III. PUBLIC TIME

Mr. Coughlan asked if there were any comments from the public, however there were none.

#### IV. CONSENT AGENDA

**The Consent Agenda containing the December 2, 2010 minutes, treasurer's report, manifest, and retirement request was adopted.**

### **FY12 Budget Proposed Budget**

#### V. PRESENTATIONS/REPORTS

Dr. Jennings passed out the agreements reached by Souhegan PPC and the Souhegan Cooperative School Board.

Mr. Coughlan went over each of the agreements.

Dr. Jennings said she had available the agreement that the bargaining team would recommend be adopted. If adopted, it would become part of the budget and warrant articles. She said if the board agrees to this, it is an agreement between the PPC and the board. She also said there are distinct items that would be decided by the public.

Ms. Mullens arrived at 6:22.

Mr Coughlan said the agreements used to be done on an annual basis, and three years ago it started as a three-year agreement. However, after getting legal advice, they decided to do only a two-year agreement in the future

because of changes in health care laws. He said they are only proposing a two-year agreement here.

Mr. Coughlan discussed the agreement:

He explained that item 1 changes payment policies for retirees so a spike will not be present and the district would not be penalized by the state. He said it is in our best interest to prevent spiking from occurring.

Item 2 removes the cap on the number of employees who can put in for special retirement benefits. He said this would have no budgeting impact. Previously, the district had to budget for 5 people. He said if need be, the district could tap the expendable trust fund.

Item 3 offers Souhegan employees a 457 and 403B plan that they may participate in, and under this system, an employee may choose to withhold money and the district matches it up to a certain number. The issue was that the district was only contributing 85% of it. So in this agreement, the policy will be revised so the district will match up to 6.2%.

Item 4 discusses professional development.

Item 5 deals with reimbursement of employees for graduate level courses.

Item 7 places support staff on their own salary matrix. Mr. Coughlan explained that the costs are minimal, \$24,012, to get everyone on the matrix.

Items 7 and 8 are linked in that if item 8 passes, with lower health costs, that salaries will increase. This is the second largest cost to the warrant article.

Mr. Coughlan discussed the changes in the in health plan options. He said this was proposed last year and was rejected by the employees. This would offset the cost of the salary agreement. He said they would like to encourage staff to move to the Health Savings Agreement, which employees could use for health costs. So far there are fewer than 5 people who have moved to this. So the agreement has been reached to deposit the first year contribution in the first 30 days so that employees will have money in the account right away. This is no additional budget cost.

**Ms. Harrow made a motion to approve the agreements reached by Souhegan PPC and the Souhegan Cooperative School Board. The motion was seconded by Mr. Grondstra. The vote was unanimous (7-0-0).**

**Ms. Harrow made a motion to authorize Mr. Coughlan and Dr. Jennings to sign the agreement on behalf of the board. The motion was seconded by Mr. Grondstra. The vote was unanimous (7-0-0).**

Dr. Jennings said this agreement now needs to be taken and explained clearly so that all points of view are heard.

Chris Lavoie presented the FY12 Athletic Budget Proposal to the board. He discussed the quality of the school's athletic programs and the goals of the proposed budget, which are to reduce the amount of fundraising and to provide all necessities for each team.

The budget proposal includes removal of the girls' freshman basketball team and one other freshman team, most likely the freshman lacrosse team, from the budget. He said it may not be lacrosse but there has not been a team for 2 years. There is also \$6,000 removal from equipment.

Mr. Lavoie also went over the additions to the budget, including transportation, dues/fees, coaches, and supplies. He went into more detail about the added coaching positions. He explained that many of these added positions are for safety reasons. He also said that since boys and girls teams are closer in participant numbers, they require equal numbers of coaches.

The approved athletic budget for this year was \$454,073 and the proposed budget for FY12 is \$491,991, a \$37,918 increase. Mr. Lavoie said the increase in the budget would be offset by user fees revenue.

Mr. Lavoie explained the tiered user fee structure to the board. He said there would still be a \$400 family cap, but girls and boys' ice hockey will be excluded from the cap because of the costs of rental time. He explained reasons that the estimated income is only at 87% collection rate, including reasons like family caps, scholarship students, etc.

In response to a question from Mr. Grondstra, Mr. Lavoie explained that bowling user fees are paid at the bowling alley and could be added to Group A if necessary because their only cost would be transportation. The fee could offset the fees at the bowling alley.

Ms. Ludt requested that a very detailed projection be presented to the board before accepting new sports in the future because of unexpected costs from the bowling team.

Mr. Lavoie said the only cost was transportation costs and that that money came from left over transportation money from other teams who did not have full schedules. He said the only added budget expense next year would be the coaching stipend. Also, the bowling team is not on a uniform cycle, so that would not be a future expense.

Ms. Harrow asked that if the bowling coach is added into the budget, that the transportation for the bowling team also be added.

Ms. Mullens suggested being tighter on budgeting for athletics in the future. She suggested taking a program away after a certain number of years of the program not running for a more accurate budget.

In response to a question from Ms. Harrow, Mr. Lavoie said there are additional costs that will require fundraising, but these fundraisers will have to be approved. Fundraising may include raising money for things like warm-up uniforms and banquet costs at the end of the year. He noted that most fundraising would come from concession sales.

Mr. Ingram explained that he would be responsible along with Mr. Lavoie for monitoring fundraising so that coaches will not overlook this.

Ms. Janson suggested that parents also not be responsible for these additional costs for things like warm-up uniforms.

**Mr. Grondstra made a motion to approve the Athletic Tier Structure. The motion was seconded by Ms. Mullens. The vote was unanimous (7-0-0).**

Ms. Shankel went over the adjustments to the budget. The changes include the agreement with the PPC to place support staff on a matrix.

Ms. Shankel also explained that the amount included in the changes for Athletic Salaries & Benefits was already included in Mr. Lavoie's tiered fee structure presentation.

Ms. Shankel pointed out that the numbers for adequate aid and statewide property tax are now correct in the revenue projections. This is a tax rate \$.04 increase for Amherst and \$.43 increase in tax rate for Mont Vernon.

Dr. Jennings explained that Mont Vernon is being negatively affected by the state adequacy aid.

Ms. Shankel handed out the Warrant Article Tax Impact. The Operating Budget amount should read \$18,353,361. She explained each of the tax impacts for the warrant.

The board moved on to the warrant article discussions. Ms. Shankel said she had written new warrant articles.

In response to a question from Mr. Grondstra about Article 4, Mr. Coughlan explained that surplus money is money raised from taxpayers and not spent

on the budget. He noted that this funding article is a way to save money and not affect the tax rate if for some reason there is not enough money in the budget in the future.

Mr. Ingram explained that based on surveys from the community, community council decided that parking lot cameras and lighting should be a priority. He said they also thought this cost should be included in the budget and not as a warrant article. Mr. Ingram said that the second part of the discussion with community council included what was feasible to include in the budget. He said they agreed that parking lot lights and cameras had a better chance of being included in the budget than a lock down system.

Ms. Ludt said she was concerned that by putting a lock down system in a warrant article that it would not pass because it would be too costly.

Ms. Harrow asked if money from this year's budget may be able to cover some of the costs for the parking lot lighting and cameras rather than putting all of it into next year's budget.

Mr. Coughlan said this might be possible to do with the potential surplus money.

Peter Stearns said that he would like a break down of each cost that is included in the estimate for the lock down system.

Ms. Mullens pointed out that the current locks the school has in place need to be replaced and many of the parts are not being made anymore, making them difficult to repair and replace.

Ms. Ludt said that normally things that are valued are placed in the budget and that in this case she thinks it's worth it to pull out the piece on the locks and put it in a warrant article but that the warrant must be explained to voters in great depth so that they can recognize the importance.

Mr. Grondstra suggested that the cameras and lighting be placed in the budget and that the other security options be offered as warrants.

Ms. Mullens said some things on the list from community council may be less expensive security options that could be included in the budget. She asked for a list of security options that are already included in the budget.

Dr. Jennings said that would be a good presentation to the public to show them that the budget does include security measurements.

The board decided to postpone discussion of an annex connection until next year. They agreed they would like to see that if there are surplus funds for parking lot lighting and cameras and that these are a priority this year.

Ms. Harrow suggested adding a category for community interest in security into the budget rather than just grouping these costs into maintenance.

Ms. Mullens said that she believed the public should be given the choice by warrant to install a lock down system.

Mr. Brown said placing the lock down system on a warrant article would show support for community council. Mr. Grodstra agreed.

Mr. Coughlan agreed that it would be respectful to the community to let them vote, but he said this is the year it's guaranteed to fail and would rather not take the risk and go for this in a better economic year. He said this could be harmful to the budget passing.

Ms. Ludt said she believes the district is vulnerable and should trust the voters to make the right choice to support this.

Ms. Janson said she agreed with Ms. Ludt and said the school is a 20-year-old facility and this is what it is going to cost to make this building secure. She said she thinks by putting it off, they are doing a disservice to current students. She said she is very confident in the budget and doesn't think the public wont support the budget because of asking them to support a warrant article.

The general consensus was to have warrant article 5 for \$388,895 presented to the voters.

Ms. Baever proposed that the wording of the warrant article be more specific.

Ms. Shankel said she would update it to accurately describe the system.

Mr. Ingram said he would provide a breakdown of the costs for a lock down system.

### **Vote to present FY12 Budget at Public Hearing**

### VI. ACTION ITEMS

**Ms. Harrow made a motion to present the warrant article at the public hearing with a budget of \$18,358,322. The motion was seconded by Ms. Ludt. The vote was unanimous (7-0-0).**

**Ms. Mullens made a motion to present Warrant Article 3 at the public hearing. The motion was seconded by Ms. Harrow. The vote was unanimous (7-0-0).**

**Ms. Ludt made a motion to present Warrant Article 4 at the public hearing. The motion was seconded by Ms. Mullens. The vote was unanimous (7-0-0).**

**Ms. Mullens made a motion to present Warrant Article 5 for \$388,895 for a lock down system at the public hearing. The motion was seconded by Mr. Grondstra. The vote was unanimous (7-0-0).**

#### **Vote to accept Education Jobs Funding**

**Ms. Harrow made a motion to accept Education Jobs Additional Aid for \$78,805 to be applied to FY12 Revenue. The motion was seconded by Mr. Grondstra. The vote was unanimous (7-0-0).**

#### **Appointment to Instructional Material Committee**

**Ms. Ludt made a motion to nominate Nan Stearns and Vanessa Foley to fill the Instructional Material Committee seats. The motion was seconded by Mr. Brown. The vote was unanimous (7-0-0).**

#### **Policy JKAA- Use of Physical Restraint- 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading**

Dr. Jennings explained that the Amherst School Board revised this policy.

Renea Sparks explained the changes.

**Ms. Mullens made a motion to adopt Policy JKAA – Use of Physical Restraint. The motion was seconded by Mr. Brown. The vote was unanimous (7-0-0).**

#### **Policy JICE- Souhegan High School's Yearbook Policies- 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading**

Ms. Ludt handed out possible revisions to the Redacting Policy.

**Mr. Grondstra made a motion to approve Policy JICE –Souhegan High School Yearbook Policies as proposed, including amendments from Ms. Ludt. The motion was seconded by Ms. Harrow. The vote was unanimous (7-0-0).**

#### VII. DISCUSSION

The board decided to meet at 7pm on Monday, January 10<sup>th</sup> at the Brick School for a working session to rehearse the slides prepared by Ms. Shankel.



VIII. NON-PUBLIC SESSION

**Ms. Harrow motioned to move to a non-public session RSA 91- A:3 II (a) (c) at 9:20pm. The motion was seconded by Ms. Mullens. The vote passed by roll call vote (7-0-0) Mullens: yes, Harrow: yes, Brown: yes, Grondstra: yes, Coughlan: yes, Ludt: yes, Janson: yes.**