

**SOUHEGAN SCHOOL BOARD
FINAL MINUTES
October 22, 2009**

Vice Chair Ludt called the meeting to order at 6:20 p.m.

**I. CALL TO
ORDER**

Present

Souhegan School Board: Vice Chair Jeanne Ludt, Mary Lou Mullens, Christine Janson, Dana Redmond, and Dan Foley.

Administrative Team: Dr. Mary Jennings, Jim Bosman, Elizabeth Shankel, Colleen Meaney, Bob Thompson, Renea Sparks, and Chris Lavoie.

Minutes Recorder: Heather Loewy Nichols

ATTENDANCE

A. Principal's Report

Mr. Bosman introduced Kristen, Heidi, and Molly, members of the Ethics Forum.

**II.
ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Molly explained that every year the Ethics Forum group chooses a charity to focus their donations toward. She stated that last year the donations group focused on supporting Unicef and this year they are going to focus on community outreach. Heidi stated that the main goal of the Forum is to give back to the community and they want to give back to Mont Vernon especially because there are a lot of kids that need positive role models and are scared of High School aged children, so they are delivering 270 decorated pumpkins, one for each child at the school. Also, ten students will hold an assembly and talk about their goals in life, and then the group will stay for the day with the students. Heidi further explained that in the future the Forum will continue focusing on community outreach and they hope to do more such as holding another benefit concert for a local charity. Kristen thanked Lull Farm for donating 200 pumpkins and Amherst Gardens for donating 70 pumpkins.

In response to a question from Ms. Ludt, Kristen stated that an Ethics Seminar is offered to Seniors and the Ethics Forum is a branch of the class that teaches students how to live morally and then take action.

In response to a question from Mr. Foley, Kristen stated that last year the Forum held a benefit concert at the Hampshire Dome. Mr. Foley stated that it is great that the group is reaching out to Mont Vernon.

Mr. Bosman presented, on behalf of the staff and community, the Spirit of Souhegan award to the Ethics Forum in recognition of their outreach to local

communities and beyond.

Mr. Bosman stated that he included his report in the Board's packet and summarized some of the things that have been dealing with the last couple weeks. He stated that it has been emotional and stressful but they are getting back to a more normal routine and people are feeling better. He stated that they continue to monitor staff and students for extraordinary behavior or emotional needs and they have indentified groups of students that the guidance and support staff are checking in with. He also noted that Community Counsel is taking an active role in coordinating the student body in reaching out to others in the school and in Mont Vernon. Mr. Bosman stated that the students have finished NECAP testing and they currently have a group of visitors from Germany. He also noted that they have completed a two year progress report for NEAS&C and he will give this report to the Board at the next meeting, and progress reports are online and accessible to the parents. He also noted that the forum on Monday night was very well attended and he appreciated the participation of community members as they had good suggestions and comments.

In response to a question from Ms. Janson, Mr. Bosman stated that he intends to send a communication to the parents tomorrow via email giving a rough sketch of the action plan and then reconvene the parent support group and hold another Principal coffee. He also stated that he is looking for joint communication between parent groups, the school department, and the police department and he is looking to coordinate through the SAU for a more global approach. He also noted that the staff will be reviewing the advisory training and bullying policies, and reexamining the extent of drug abuse and treatment and the available mental health supports. He further explained that surveys are being sent out to the students via advisors to determine the current comfort level of students. He also noted that the staff is encouraging and supporting student initiatives to reach out to the community and at this point there are a variety of ideas being discussed.

Dr. Jennings stated that the consultants whom she has interviewed have stated that it is important to have a plan and that it will require a lot of listening before they can put together a well thought out plan. She stated that the plan will be brought to the SAU Board and that the administration has been interviewing people who specialize in Crisis Intervention to help the SAU create a good plan that will engage the other sectors of the community.

In response to a question from Ms. Mullens, Mr. Bosman stated that a security evaluation has not been put on the to-do list as they are always evaluating the security procedures and he believes that this is a secure building inside and out. He noted that the district has spent a lot of resources re-evaluating the security procedures over the last few years. He stated that the currently the students and any guests have to go past the office and they will continue to utilize the SRO.

Ms. Janson stated that it would be nice if an effort was put into outreach to the Amherst Middle School.

Mr. Foley noted that the Jazz Ensemble goes to all the lower schools.

Ms. Ludt thanked the SAU and the Souhegan staff and students for being sensitive and proactive in reaction to the terrible event.

In response to a question from Ms. Ludt, Ms. Silva stated that NES&C report included an item regarding the repair of equipment on a regular basis and better storage so they have responded to those comments and they have responded to other items by noting that the district has hired a consultant to do a facilities review.

B. Superintendent's Report

Dr. Jennings commended the staff and teachers for their work behind the scenes to keep everything as normal as possible.

C. Community Counsel Report

Julie, from Community Counsel, stated that the Counsel has mostly been talking about a cell phone proposal brought forward by Mr. Thompson and she noted that currently the cell phone policy states that no phones shall be used from 7 am until 3:30 p.m.

Will, from Community Counsel, stated that the Counsel has been holding Advisory forums and they have asked Ms Silva to write a column so as to create better communication about Community Counsel.

Vice Chair Ludt called for public comment and heard none.

The members of the Finance Committee introduced themselves and Ms. Ludt stated that it is nice to have them all back and that the Board appreciates the work they do.

III. PUBLIC TIME

IV. CONSENT AGENDA

Mr. Foley asked that the minutes of September 15, 2009 be pulled.

A MOTION was made by Ms. Mullens and SECONDED by Ms. Janson to accept the consent agenda as follows:

B. Treasurer's Report

C. Manifest

D. Transfers

Voting: 5 ayes; motion carried unanimously.

A. Minutes of September 15, 2009

A MOTION was made by Mr. Foley and SECONDED by Mr. Redmond to accept the minutes of September 15 as amended.

Voting: 5 ayes; motion carried unanimously.

A. School Goals FY10

Dr Jennings explained that each school sets its goals for the year and this year it was done later than usual so as to allow for the integration of the district wide work and professional development goals created in August. She submitted a grid to the Board showing what the Souhegan's goals are and how they are going to get there.

Mr. Bosman reviewed the goals and associated activities. He stated that these goals were worked on during the summer and by department during the retreat. He explained that the staff revised the Learner Expectations as appropriate and noted that on the most recent progress reports students were assessed on the Learner Expectations and on the next progress reports the students will be assessed with an eye toward growth and then at the end of the year with an expectation of mastery.

Ms. Silva stated that each department has established times of the year when they will examine student work together to allow for realignment. She noted that many of the NES&C recommendations were about aligning school goals with the expectations and that it is nice to see the alignment.

In response to a question from Mr. Foley, Mr. Bosman stated that at progress report time all staff and teachers have to agree to assess students on same learner expectations.

Ms. Silva stated that this assessing will happen all throughout the year.

Mr. Bosman stated that the teachers will all be evaluating students on two

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PRESENTATIONS**

specific ALE's and they will be looking for evidence of growth.

Ms. Silva explained that the parents will be notified of the ALE's online.

Mr. Bosman stated that the progress reports were completed very well and includes very good evidence as to student progress.

Ms. Janson noted that the progress reports were very verbose and she is not sure if all parents will take the time to read everything that was in them. She suggested that maybe some training for the parents might be appropriate as the first thing they look at is the letter grades.

Ms. Silva stated that the district needs to educate the community and she is excited to hear that the reports were verbose as these reports let the parents know what the children is being expected to work on.

Ms. Meaney stated that the content of the progress reports is supposed to help parents know the degree of competency that a student has in a specific area and the child's ability to meet the expectations is more important than the letter grade.

Ms. Mullens stated that she heard a lot of positive feedback, especially from the freshmen.

Mr. Bosman noted that it is not always the case that the staff embraces a goal that impacts practice but this staff has embraced the goal and they appreciate that the goal is tied to learner expectations instead of some outside measure.

B. Budget Assumptions

Dr. Jennings reviewed budget assumptions in the following areas with the Board and asked them to tell the administration if the Board is uncomfortable with any of the assumptions.

- Revenues
- Local Economic Climate
- Enrollments
- Class size/ Student Load
- Staffing Considerations
- Staffing Benefits
- Staffing Contracts and New Hires
- Operations
- Initiatives Affecting Budget

- Expendable Trusts

Ms. Shankel stated that in Concord they impose a bus fee which allows for better planning and security.

Ms. Ludt stated that she would not want to encourage more parking and Ms. Shankel stated that the students will be receiving surveys so the staff can get more information.

Mr. Redmond questioned whether there is a lot of cost for the one child who lives farther down the end of the road.

In response to a question from Marilyn Peterman, Ms. Shankel stated that last year the district put out an RFP and in it was included a bonus if the bus company can reduce the number of buses and they did reduced the schedule by one bus.

In response to a question from Ms. Janson, Ms. Shankel stated that the buss fee allowed Concord to run fewer buses as it allowed for them to plan for the kids who never take the bus.

** In response to a request from Ms. Janson, Ms. Shankel stated that she will get more information as to how the bus fee affected Concord.

Ms. Mullens stated that she would want to make sure that the bus fee is nominal.

Ms. Shankel noted that it is not really about the fee but more about optimization and security.

In response to a question from Ms. Peterman, Dr. Jennings stated that the class load of 70 to 80 students remains the same as previously.

** In response to a question from Ms. Mullens, Dr. Jennings stated that she will get information as to how Souhegan compares to other schools with regard to teacher load although she thinks that a lot of High Schools have student loads of 100.

Mr. Redmond stated that it is also important to note the square footage of the rooms as this can control how many students can fit in a classroom.

**In response to a question from Ms. Ludt, Ms. Sparks stated that she will get information for the Board as to the average case load for guidance counselors

in other High Schools.

In response to a question from Mr. Redmond, Ms. Shankel stated that the Local Government Center is giving a guidance increase for insurance of 22.5% percent but they will not know the actual number until May; well after budget season.

In response to a question from Ms. Peterman, Ms. Shankel stated that due to collective bargaining agreements the coverage is less negotiable than the actual insurance carrier.

In response to a question from Mr. Foley, Ms. Shankel explained that the Local Government Center has given out rates to other districts that are higher and Primex is quoting rates that are similar.

In response to a question from Dr. Jennings, Ms. Shankel stated that this item is close to a \$300,000 increase.

In response to a question from Mr. Redmond, Dr. Jennings stated that there will be only one retirement this year that she knows about.

Ms. Ludt questioned whether there are costs associated with the responding to crisis action plan.

In response to a question from Mr. Foley, Dr. Jennings stated that the district might be able to access additional funding such as the race to the top funds.

Ms. Janson questioned whether the Board wanted to recommend a percentage increase amount to the administration and Mr. Redmond suggested discussing it during a work session.

The Board assigned members to each of the following review committees:

- Regular Education – Mr. Coughlan
- Special Education – Ms. Mullens
- Co-curricular/Athletics – Mr. Redmond
- Facilities – Ms. Ludt
- Food service/Transportation – Ms. Coughlin
- Administrative/Curriculum/ Guidance – Ms. Janson
- Technology/Info Center – Ms. Foley

C. FY10 – 1st Quarter Report

Ms. Shankel reviewed a financial report through September 30th and stated

that the revenue looks to be on track and she is expecting some savings in the regular education budget due to new hire rates and health coverage changes. She noted that she will use some of those health care savings to cover the retirement increase.

A. SAU Budget Advisory Committee appointment

A MOTION was made by Mr. Foley and SECONDED by Mr. Redmond to appoint Howard Brown as the Souhegan representative to the Advisory Finance Committee.

Voting: 5 ayes; motion carried unanimously.

B. Facilities Study Steering Committee

The Board decided that the Facilities Steering Committee will include Mr. Minor, Ms. Ludt, Mr. Bosman, Mr. Redmond, and Ms. Shankel.

C. Policy IHBAA – 2nd Reading

The Board reviewed proposed policy IHBAA.

In response to a question from Ms. Ludt, Ms. Sparks stated this proposal includes a similar eligibility checklist as previously but this is much easier for the team to follow as they are going through the process and it is not more restrictive.

In response to another question from Ms. Ludt, Ms. Sparks stated that all decisions are individually based and she cannot state whether this policy would reduce the amount of students in special education but she did note that it allows the district to use Response To Intervention in a way that was not done before.

There were no objections from the Board to the proposed policy.

A. Athletic Department Funding – Part II

Mr. Lavoie stated that it was a daunting task but he went through every invoice from every team and categorized them, although he noted that his results are not exact. He stated that he also spoke with coaches about fundraising and the overwhelming response was that they do not want to fundraise but they feel they need to fundraise to get the things they need. He explained that he went through with every single coach what they want in their budget what they saw as necessities and he to them spoke about the fundraising being done without prior approval and that prior approval needs to be received. Mr. Lavoie explained that he put transportation and fees for jamborees and two scrimmages per team in the budget and the coaches know

VI. ACTION ITEMS

VII. DISCUSSION

that there is a uniform cycle. He noted that some teams still want uniforms for their sub-varsity teams but in two years everyone will have new uniforms. He also noted that there are new directives coming such as field hockey must have white home jerseys and these would not be included in the cycle. Mr. Lavoie explained that one of the major expenses is ice time and dome time as right now the budget covers about half to three quarters of the cost and teams are left having to raise \$4,000 to \$5,000 for ice time. Mr. Lavoie stated that there will still be a need for fundraising to cover the costs of banquets that are held at the end of the season and for donations to the end of the year senior athletic dinner which costs about \$16,000. He also noted that some teams send students to leadership conferences and a lot of teams fundraise for warm up uniforms.

In response to a question from Mr. Redmond, Mr. Lavoie stated that the gymnastics team used to have three students but last year they had 14 students which cost \$7,000 but they did not have that much in the budget so it was spread out among the parents. He noted that this year there will possibly be 12 students.

In response to a question from Ms. Ludt, Mr. Lavoie stated that the football team has a lot of team dinners on the day before and the day of the game and they also provide dinner for the opposing team.

In response to a question from Ms. Janson, Mr. Lavoie stated that a lot of the money for the football team comes in through advertising in the program.

Ms. Janson questioned whether there are guidelines or rules for fundraising as to what they are allowed to fundraise for and what kinds of fundraisers are acceptable.

Mr. Lavoie explained that he has forms that should be filled out and approved prior to any fundraising activities that include what the money is going to be used for but he noted that a lot of the teams do not have a specific reason for fundraising rather they are working on raising funds for items like dome time.

In response to a question from Ms. Mullens, Mr. Lavoie stated that right now the athletic department is following school guidelines and that some parents could be paying for items such as warm up jackets.

Mr. Redmond stated that he is concerned about the consistency of what the district is funding.

Mr. Lavoie explained that he had every head coach send him a necessity list and then he discussed with the coaches if all the items are all absolutely necessary.

The Board and Mr. Lavoie discussed covering necessities and possible phasing or cycling items in.

Ms. Mullens suggested charging different fees for different sports. Mr. Lavoie stated that he checked with NHIAA and did not find any information regarding who was charging what for athletic fees.

In response to a question from Ms. Ludt, Mr. Lavoie stated that he put in this budget the coaches list of necessities with his justification.

Mr. Bosman suggested that it might be helpful if the sports were categorized and maybe decide how much to spend for each student in all the sports in that category.

In response to a question Ms. Janson, Mr. Lavoie stated that the bowling coaches are volunteers and the team has \$90 per student cost for the year of bowling fees.

In response to a question from Mr. Redmond, Mr. Lavoie stated that a school van would go a long way and save a lot of money for the smaller teams.

In response to a question from Mr. Foley, Ms. Shankel explained that even small vans have to be treated as school buses now unless they are only used for special education purposes.

In response to a question from Mr. Lavoie, Mr. Redmond suggested that the Board look at the budget first and then discuss phasing.

The Board thanked Mr. Lavoie

In response to a question from Mr. Redmond, Ms. Sparks stated that she has been looking at the nurse's report to the state everyday regarding absent students and it seems to be a level. Dr. Jennings noted that the district will be hosting the regular vaccination for the staff in a few weeks.

VIII. OTHER

A MOTION was made by Mr. Foley and SECONDED by Ms. Redmond to adjourn the meeting.

IX. REVIEW OF MEETING/ ADJOURN

Voting: 5 ayes; motion carried unanimously.

Vice Chair Ludt declared the meeting adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

ACTION ITEMS:

1. Ms. Shankel stated that she will get more information as to how the bus fee affected Concord.
2. Dr. Jennings stated that she will get more information as to how Souhegan compares to other schools with regard to teacher load although she thinks that a lot of High Schools have student loads of 100.
3. Ms. Sparks stated that she will get information for the Board as to the average case load for guidance counselors in other High Schools.
4. Ms. Ludt will list of budget committees breakouts to the Finance Committee