

Souhegan Cooperative School District
Thursday, October 6th 2011

Present

Souhegan Cooperative School Board: Howard Brown, Steve Coughlan, Chair
Chris Janson, Jeanne Ludt, Mary Lou Mullens, Fran Harrow (arrived at 5:35),
and Pim Grondstra (arrived at 5:45pm and left at 9pm)

Administrative Team: Karen Chininis, Nicole Heimarck, Jon Ingram, Colleen
Meaney, Gigi Klippa, Betty Shankel, Renea Sparks, Bob Thompson, Ken Bigley
and Peter Warburton

Community Council: Scott Doyle

Minute Taker: Beth Penney

Call to Order

Call to Order

Ms. Janson called the meeting to order at 5:35pm.

Interviews for Community Council Representatives

**Interviews for
Community Council**

Ms. Mullens stated that they were electing one member for Amherst and one
member for Mont Vernon.

Each candidate introduced themselves to the board. The following candidates
were at the meeting Jane Pollio (Amherst), Olivia Kibbie (Mont Vernon), Jane
Nilles (Mont Vernon), Jayne Young (Amherst), and Nan Stearns (Amherst).

Ms. Mullens introduced the 6th candidate, Debbie Bender from Amherst, who
could not be at the meeting.

Ms. Mullens stated that the board needed to re-nominate two candidates from
Amherst and one from Mont Vernon, Rick Katzenberg, Carol Gravel, and Leslie
Formby.

**Ms. Mullens nominated Rick Katzenberg, Carol Gravel, and Leslie Formby
for reappointment to Community Council. Mr. Brown seconded the motion
and the vote was unanimous.**

Ms. Janson thanked all of the candidates and asked them to volunteer for other
committees or the Task forces.

Mr. Ingram discussed the task forces.

47 Mr. Warburton discussed a Community Connections committee that people could
48 volunteer for as well.

49
50 Ms. Ludt and Ms. Mullens discussed the time commitment for Community
51 Council and reminded all of the candidates of this.

Non-Public Session

52
53 **Ms. Mullens made a motion to go into Non-Public Session under**
54 **RSA 91:A:3c at 5:49pm. Ms. Harrow seconded the motion and all board**
55 **members answered yes to the roll call.**

56
57 Ms. Janson called the meeting back to order at 6:04pm.

Call to Order

58
59 **Mr. Grondstra made a motion to appoint Jane Nilles as the Mont Vernon**
60 **member on the Community Council. Mr. Coughlan seconded the motion**
61 **and the vote was unanimous.**

62
63 **Ms. Harrow made a motion to nominate Nan Sterns as the Amherst member**
64 **on the Community Council. Ms. Mullens seconded the motion and the vote**
65 **was unanimous.**

66
67 Ms. Janson thanked all of the applicants again and asked them to volunteer for
68 other committees.

69
70 **Announcements** **Announcements**

71
72 **Principal's Report**

73
74 Mr. Ingram discussed a piece on NPR about the Food service program and food
75 service director at SHS. He stated that he would put a link to the piece on SHS
76 website. He also discussed the Wintercession offerings this year and the
77 Wintercession parent's night. He also stated that President Obama was honoring
78 early Career Scientists including the SHS 1998 graduate Gail Willis who received
79 the award. She is one of 34 recipients. He stated congratulations to Gail.

80
81 Ms. Mullens discussed the junior who was recognized as a National Merit
82 Scholarship out of 1.5 million students.

83
84 **Community Council Report**

85
86 Scott Doyle stated that they elected the at large members and are working to
87 acclimate the council to the procedures. Proposals are coming in next few
88 weeks.

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90 **Committee Reports**

91
92 There were no Committee Reports.

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Souhegan Advisory Finance Committee

Cynthia Dokmo, the moderator of the Souhegan Cooperative School District introduced the finance committee to the board including Marilyn Peterman, Peter Sterns, Gail Agans, Julie Livingston, Dan Foley, Tom Silvia, and Laurie Hayes.

The board’s liaison to finance committee is Fran Harrow.

Public Time

Public Time

Rick Katzenberg addressed the board discussing intramural offering at SHS. He stated that the program is underfunded and needs a good deal of addressing to have real success. Currently, there are two programs flag football and basketball. There are 85 kids in flag football this year and only a few of them are girls. There are no yoga, dance, or aerobics offerings for woman. They need to get woman more integrated into this exercise program. The board needs to fund the intramural coach and the program needs equipment to broaden the program.

The board discussed how the intermural program is communicated to the students and that the program can interfere with clubs because it meets from 2:15-3pm.

Consent Agenda

Consent Agenda

Ms. Janson pulled the minutes of September 1st.

Ms. Harrow made a motion to accept the consent agenda containing the August 2011 treasurer’s report, the unanticipated revenue for the Student Activity Fund in the amount of \$625.71, the budget transfers and the Student Activity report. Ms. Mullens seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous.

Ms. Janson asked to change the word appeal to over turned on page 13 of the agenda packet. At the bottom of page 13, change Chris to Mary Lou who referenced Sect. 4 Article 2. Add Fran Harrow to the attendance because she was at the meeting.

Ms. Mullens made a motion to accept the minutes of September 1st. Ms. Harrow seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous.

Presentations/Reports

Presentations and Reports

Souhegan High School Profile

138 Ms. Janson reviewed what the board asked the guidance department to do on
139 the school's profile since the elimination of decile system and its impact on
140 admissions and scholarships.

141
142 Ms. Chininis, head of the guidance department, discussed the survey of 93
143 colleges and universities that was done since the elimination of the decile
144 system. She discussed the types of colleges and universities the department
145 surveyed and that all questions were asked in person or over the phone.

146
147 Ms. Chininis discussed the specific questions asked and the answers:

148
149 Is Rank a requirement: 9 stated no for merit scholarships, 93 stated that it is not
150 mandatory requirement or condition for scholarship.

151
152 How many students come from unranked schools: 75 stated under 50%, 4
153 reported 50%, and the rest stated 60%.

154
155 What is the criteria for Merit Scholarships: All stated Grades, GPA and Rigor of
156 classes; 60 included SAT and or ACT scores; 14 include Rank as a factor if
157 provided by school; 8 included other like writing samples, activities, etc.

158
159 How are students evaluated for scholarships from unranked schools: 1 uses
160 interview and GPA; 2 use writing samples; and all would contact the high
161 school's counselor for more information.

162
163 All of the schools reported that students have the same opportunity if they are
164 coming from ranked or unranked school.

165
166 Advantages for students from unranked schools: 32 included positive
167 advantages, 2 reported disadvantages.

168
169 Does the college or University recalculate GPAs: 56 do recalculate; 28 do not
170 and others did not respond; 5 prefer weighted grades; 11 prefer not weighted and
171 others had no preference.

172
173 Ms. Chininis stated that the SHS counselors are committed in providing any
174 information requested by colleges, universities, and scholarship foundations.

175
176 Mr. Ingram thanked Ms. Chininis and guidance for their hard work and thought.
177 He reminded the board and the public that this work was done in addition to
178 meeting the needs of all of the students. Mr. Ingram discussed the process of
179 editing the school profile.

180
181 Mr. Ingram restated that Souhegan would provide any information to colleges,
182 universities and scholarship foundations when requested.

183

184 Mr. Warburton discussed his discussions with 20 of the best colleges and
185 universities about ranked and unranked students. He discussed how his findings
186 were very similar to Ms. Chininis. He also stated that schools are starting to see
187 more high schools become unranked and that it is becoming a national trend.

188
189 Maria Heaney of 10 Georgetown Dr. Thanked the board for allowing the public to
190 speak after the profile presentation. Ms. Heaney discussed research she did
191 about scholarship opportunities for students from unranked schools vs. ranked
192 schools. She also discussed an article about Seaton Hall that was in the NY
193 Times. She stated that students who are coming from unranked schools are
194 missing out on full scholarships and larger scholarships. She gave some
195 examples of schools where this could happen. She also discussed that all of
196 SHS competing high schools still rank their student except Bedford. She stated
197 that she was disappointed to see that the bar graph on the profile was
198 unchanged and that the intervals are 0.5 until the last bar. She stated that this
199 makes the school look poor because the graph is poorly made.

200
201 Amy Facey of 4 Parker Farm Ln. in Amherst stated that she has spoken to
202 students, guidance, the Community Council, and administration. She discussed
203 reasons and support for eliminating the decile ranking system. She stated that
204 juniors and sophomores have been treated unfairly and they will not be
205 recognized for their academic achievement. She discussed the graph and issues
206 with graph and feels a detailed graph is needed on the student profile to help all
207 students.

208
209 Scott Gowell and the board discussed colleges and universities calling SHS and
210 asking for rank of the applying student. Ms. Chininis made it very clear that the
211 guidance department always provides any and all requested information. They
212 agreed to put a statement on the profile indicating that more information would be
213 provided for each student if requested.

214
215 Mr. Gowell asked for a better breakout on the graph that is on the profile. Mr.
216 Gowell also stated that the top decile of students had their photo in the paper and
217 that SHS needs to come up with another way to recognize students at the end of
218 their graduating year. The board agreed that they would later discuss this idea.

219
220 Mike Heaney of Amherst thanked the board for the time they put in as volunteers.
221 He then asked the board a series of questions to consider discussing the school
222 profile as compared to being a member of the Coalition of Essential Schools. He
223 also asked questions concerning the Souhegan Six and ideas from the NH
224 department of Education and family partnership.

225
226 Kathleen Maynard of 2 Cobbler Ln. in Amherst stated that she is a true believer
227 in SHS and its principles. She is a counselor in neighboring district. She
228 discussed her own effort in looking at removing rank. She stated she is proud of

229 the students for bringing this proposal forward. She stated that SHS has a good
230 profile.

231

232 Michael Johnson of Amherst stated that he has a freshman at SHS. He
233 discussed the roles of the Community Council, the school board and the
234 administration. He would like to see more accountability from the School Board
235 and the administration over the Community Council. He would like the
236 Community Council to be more democratic and take into consideration the
237 opinions of other stakeholders. He feels the School Board, Administration, and
238 Community Council need to actively involve more parent, community, and
239 taxpayer's feedback.

240

241 Jeff Wesson of 25 Storybrook Ln. in Amherst stated he is relieved to hear that
242 students who care about decile ranking will be able to get that information. He
243 proposed to provide clarity to the grade distribution to use GPA to mark the
244 deciles.

245

246 Ms. Janson thanked Karen and the others faculty for their work on the profile and
247 stated that it is a relief to parents to hear that information will be given if
248 requested.

249

250 Ms. Ludt discussed an article about schools in Chicago who have removed the
251 ranking system. She had recently contacted one of those schools to find out the
252 impact removing decile ranking has had. She found it has gotten more students
253 accepted to some colleges. She stated this is anecdotal evidence for this
254 change.

255

256 Ms. Janson thanked the parents and community members for their involvement.
257 She stated it was good to have the participation and that the board and
258 community will not always agree.

259

260 First Robotics Coach Bill Price

261

262 Mr. Price discussed, passionately, what First Robotics is and the importance of
263 this program. He explained how there are scholarship opportunities for many
264 students, how the program leads to internships with companies like BAE, and to
265 job opportunities for many students. He discussed how the Team operates with
266 the help of 14-16 professional volunteers and the free use of Monarch
267 Instruments facility. He discussed the cost of the program and entering the
268 competitions. In the past he has gotten large corporate donations and the
269 students have done some fundraising. He asked the board for \$5,000 this year
270 and \$10,000 for future years.

271

272 The board and Mr. Price discussed students getting school credits for this work,
273 how this program helped to start the engineering courses at SHS, and about the

274 Lego league being the farm team. The board also thanked Monarch Instruments
275 for the donation of their facility.

276

277 10Y Grading pilot

278

279 Jenny Deenik, Andy Emerson, and Sean Whalen discussed the grading system
280 they used last year and are currently using. They did this to have a more
281 authentic way to measure student growth and to have the students better
282 prepared for their Division One presentations. The grading system used a five-
283 point scale using rubrics. A sample rubric and log sheet was passed out to the
284 board. They discussed that they felt they had outstanding working relationships
285 with their students. They had students keep track of their strengths and
286 weaknesses on a log so they could easily look at where they needed to improve.
287 This was a better way for students to see mastery of skills and where they need
288 to work harder rather than receiving a 92%. They discussed what students
289 would have told the board about the transition to this system and how it was
290 difficult but then they loved it. They discussed specific examples of how the
291 grade system worked even on a multiple-choice exam. All students were able to
292 revise all work at any time. This system allowed students not to get marked
293 down for what they did not know, but to get credit for what they did know. They
294 stated that this system was excellent for IEP students because they are given the
295 time they need to grow. They discussed their initial concerns. They discussed
296 that students could learn and grow from reading the feedback and they no longer
297 compared grades. Parents struggled at first till they got a full explanation of the
298 system. They also discussed how all of the feedback is turned into letter grades
299 at the end of the year. There was some discussion of other pockets within SHS
300 that have similar grading models.

301

302 The board and the 10Y teachers discussed the success of Mr. Brown's son and
303 how he enjoyed this new system. This new system matches the ideas in the 21st
304 century learning models. All of last year's students did well, there were no No
305 Credits given and many students received higher grades than expected.
306 Students were no longer focused on being a "B" student and the typical "C"
307 student could not be comfortable with just a "C" because they were not getting
308 grades. The students now have a better understanding of what an "A" is. They
309 discussed the time it takes to grade and give all of the feedback. The teachers
310 discussed how they have become more efficient and the extra work is worth it to
311 better know their students and to see the growth of their students. The board
312 discussed how they wished the public had stayed to see this presentation
313 because it supports removing the decile ranking system, especially since
314 students better understand skills and skills are what go on resumes. The board
315 also discussed the work of the Grading and Assessment Task Force and the
316 work that was done this summer by teachers who are using similar models to this
317 grading system. They discussed how the teachers have gotten parents on board
318 both last year and this year. They are still working on better communicating to
319 the parents how the new system works and discussed how students can help

320 parents understand by bringing homework with the rubrics home to show
321 parents.

322
323 The board was extremely pleased with the work of the 10Y teachers, this
324 presentation, and the new grading system. They felt this is the direction the
325 school should be headed in. They wished the public had stayed to hear this
326 presentation.

327
328 Wellness Center update

329
330 Mr. Bigley discussed several items as summarized below with the board.

331
332 Stipends for Coaching and Activities:

333
334 SHS is at the low end for stipends and is losing good educators. Mr. Bigley
335 showed that new coaches could make more being an official for less of a time
336 commitment and work. He discussed the step increments currently in place for
337 stipends and then showed the board a new model for stipends based on length
338 of the season, including an annual increase. He would like to see an increase in
339 pay over the next two years, which would be a total budget increase of \$30,000.

340
341 Fitness Facility:

342
343 He discussed the need and commitment to that new space. He discussed how
344 different ideas may look and showed pictures. He then discussed a proposed
345 plan to meet all the needs of the school. He proposed phasing in the equipment
346 over 3 years in the following way: Weight training costing about \$36,000, Nautilus
347 machines costing \$22,000, and Cardio equipment costing \$26,000.

348
349 Outdoor Facilities:

350
351 He discussed the poor condition and multitude of storage facilities, seating
352 issues, and the shape of the locker rooms. He discussed the Gale report
353 recommendations, but that this recommendation has three outdoor spaces. He
354 showed a proposed layout for a centralized outdoor facility to consolidate
355 seating, press boxes, and storage. He discussed the need for cubby lockers,
356 daily towel laundry service and having team rooms.

357
358 The board and Mr. Bigley discussed estimated costs, which Mr. Bigley did not
359 have yet. The board asked him to have some initial costs for a later meeting.
360 They discussed turfing fields and the need to have a turf field. They also
361 discussed if there was money left over in the current budget for an increase in
362 stipends. The board made their concern about the new fitness facility being a
363 glorified weight room clear to Mr. Bigley. Mr. Bigley explained the multiple ways
364 to use the different equipment and also discussed ideas for having women's
365 fitness classes. The board discussed the use of this space by the theater

366 program for staging and building sets. Mr. Bigley expressed his concern over
367 investing money in that space and then see it used for other purposes. Mr.
368 Ingram discussed ideas of adding a storage space to the back of the theater to
369 remove the three unsafe trailers and that this space could be used for staging
370 and for set building. They discussed that the Policy and Personnel committee
371 would look at the stipend issue. They also discussed where the money was
372 going to come from for the fitness facility and that the board thought there would
373 be some donation and grant money used. The board thanked Mr. Bigley for his
374 ideas.

375

376 1st Quarter Financial Summary

377

378 Ms. Shankel discussed the adjustments made to accommodate the change in
379 NH retirement. The district is looking at a \$148,000 in surplus due to savings
380 from NH retirement. She discussed the savings in building and maintenance
381 personnel and that there will be a need for more substitute teachers late in the
382 year for women having babies.

383

384 Security

385

386 Ms. Shankel discussed the two possible options for spending the \$148,000
387 surplus. Option 1 would be for Wellness equipment and the exterior locking
388 equipment system and option 2 would be for Wellness equipment, parking
389 cameras and lights, and the remaining two locker clusters.

390

391 The board had a lengthy discussion about the pros and cons of both options and
392 other ideas for combining the options. They discussed the commitment made to
393 the voters to spend the money on security. Mr. Miner stated that the parking
394 cameras and lights could be done quickly, but the locking system may not be
395 able to be done till summer. The board discussed protecting people vs. property.
396 They discussed that the interior locks are not a concern for at least another two
397 years. They discussed the lack of remote locking of the exterior doors and how
398 this is a concern. The board discussed the options with Mr. Thompson who
399 recommended financing the parking lot cameras and lights. The board
400 discussed the cost of this and the need for cameras in all of the parking areas.
401 They questioned this proposal from the community council and that not all
402 members were in favor of having parking lot cameras and lights.

403

404 **Mr. Coughlan made a motion to use the surplus money for Option 2:**
405 **Wellness equipment, parking lot cameras and light and locker clusters. Mr.**
406 **Brown seconded the motion.**

407

408 The board discussed the locker clusters and the installation of them. The board
409 discussed financing the exterior lock using the Expendable Trust. The board and
410 Ms. Shankel discussed the ramifications of this idea. They also discussed need
411 to leave some of the surplus money as a buffer.

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Ms. Janson asked Mr. Brown to call a meeting of the Expendable Trust Committee to pay for the exterior locking doors.

The vote was unanimous.

FY13 Budget Assumptions

Ms. Shankel discussed each assumption and the projected increases or decreases as in the presentation.

Ms. Mullens asked to make it clearer that the student fee of \$400 is a cap, but it excludes Hockey.

Ms. Shankel discussed the high increases in health care and NH retirement. She showed the board the increases since 2007. She discussed operation increase indexes from 3.1% to 3.8%. She also discussed the technology replacement schedules and the items that need to be replaced.

Ms. Ludt asked about the digital signage.

Mr. Ingram explained that this is \$15,000 for the start up for 3 screens and software. This would cover both buildings and the signage could be used for announcements, photos, and videos.

Ms. Shankel discussed Buildings and Grounds, the transportation contract, the food service operation, and capital funding including bond repayment and building aide.

Ms. Shankel discussed the Capital refurbishment and prioritized the projects: Roof, HVAC, Paving, Athletic Facilities, Masonry, Covered walkway & Fire Access. The smaller items have already been put into budget in other areas. The total cost is estimated to be \$5,960,000. Ms. Shankel discussed the two options of bonding or putting the money in the budget. She discussed the side-by-side costs for the following years budgets for each of the two options.

Ms. Shankel discussed the initiatives affecting the budget including curriculum review and task force recommendations. She discussed the expendable trust, unfunded liabilities and special education.

The board and Ms. Shankel discussed the theater issue, which there is no estimate for yet, bond repayment schedules, and the reduction of the custodial staff putting a strain on getting the work done.

Discussion

Discussion

458 Changes and Expectations for High School Task Forces

459

460 Mr. Warburton asked Mr. Ingram to put this in writing and give it to the board.

461

462 Board staff appreciation proposed dates

463

464 Nov. 2nd or 16th, Dec. 7th and 21st

465

466 The board discussed whether they should continue to do these because they are
467 not well attended. The board discussed making them celebratory, going into the
468 division centers or into advisories. The board decided to go into the division
469 centers with food on a single block day the 1st week in December.

470

471 NWEA comparative study cost

472

473 Moved to the next meeting.

474

475 **Action Items**

Action Items

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477 Draft Template for Action Items

478

479 Moved to the next meeting.

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481 Appointment of Citizen to SAU Finance Board

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483 The board decided to allow Ms. Janson to go ahead and appoint someone.

484

485 Ms. Angans told the board that the finance committee would like to know about
486 any warrant article by the November meeting.

487

Adjourn

488 **Mr. Coughlan made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:37pm. Mr.**

489 **Brown seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous.**