

## SOUHEGAN SCHOOL BOARD

### Final Minutes

February 19, 2009

Chairman Coughlan called the public hearing to order at 6:06 p.m.

#### I. PUBLIC HEARING

Ms. Sparks explained that the district has received \$19,957 in grant money from Gateway Community Services, formerly known as Area Agency, for the purpose of purchasing a van that can transport Special Education students into the community. In response to questions from Mr. Coughlan, Ms. Sparks explained that the operating costs of the van for this year are included in the grant and have been included in next year's budget. She also explained that the van would be used primarily for Special Education transition transportation and they will be looking for a seven passenger van that could accommodate a wheelchair. In response to a question from Mr. Coughlan, Ms. Sparks stated that since it will be a seven passenger van anyone with the proper school permission will be able to drive it.

Chairman Coughlan called for public comment and heard none.

Chairman Coughlan closed the public hearing at 6:10 p.m.

Chairman Steve Coughlan called the meeting to order at 6:11 p.m.

#### II. CALL TO ORDER

#### Present

Souhegan School Board: Chairman Steve Coughlan, Jeanne Ludt, Mary Lou Mullens, Christine Janson, Pam Coughlin, and Dan Foley.

Administrative Team: Scott Prescott, Colleen Meaney, Dr. Mary Jennings, Elizabeth Shankel, Renee Sparks, and Nicole Heimarck.

Minutes Recorder: Heather Loewy Nichols

#### ATTENDANCE

Chairman Coughlan called for public comments and heard none.

#### III. PUBLIC TIME

#### A. Principal's Report

Chairman Coughlan noted that the Board received the principal's reports in their packets and asked if Mr. Prescott had anything to add. Mr. Prescott noted that Souhegan is being recognized this year for the Seaman's Award of Advanced Placement. He explained that this award primarily focuses on math and science achievement and that one school from each state is chosen to receive a \$1,000 grant. He also noted that the school will be receiving recognition in the February 23<sup>rd</sup> issue of USA Today.

#### IV. ANNOUNCEMENTS

In response to a question from Ms. Janson, Mr. Prescott explained that time

has been added onto periods throughout the day, but not lunch, to extend the day by 20 minutes. He noted that each period is two to three minutes longer and that extracurricular activities that used to occur at 2:08 are now beginning at 2:30 and in the spring coaches will not be able to start practices until after 3:15.

Dr. Jennings noted that Mr. Prescott and Ms. Meaney will be presenting in San Diego, California at the National Secondary School Convention.

In response to a question from Mr. Foley, Mr. Prescott stated that the world studies and world literature teachers were each asked to recommend a student to participate in the Great Decisions seminar. He noted that the seminar lasts for six sessions and that the students will not be receiving credits for participating.

#### **B. Community Council Report**

A Community Council member appeared before the Board and explained that the group is continuing to work on the proposal to improve the cafeteria, by making the food more appealing and less costly. He noted that they had Francine come to a question and answer session and different committees have been working on research.

Ms. Mullens stated that already some positive changes, such as catering to advisories so they order off campus less often, have been occurring.

#### **C. NHSBA Scholarship**

Dr. Jennings explained that the School Board Association offers a scholarship to children of School Board members every year and that any School Board member can apply.

Mr. Coughlan noted that Ms. Mullens needs to resign from the PPC due to a scheduling conflict. He explained that there is one more meeting between now and the end of the School Board year as the Board will be reorganizing in March and if someone wanted to test the waters they could come to the March meeting before signing up for next year.

In response to a question from Chairman Coughlan, the Board asked that the minutes of December 18, 2008 and January 6, 2009 be pulled from the consent agenda.

#### **V. CONSENT AGENDA**

**The Board unanimously agreed to approve the following consent agenda items:**

**A. Minutes**

1. **January 13, 2009**
2. **January 14, 2009**
3. **January 29, 2009**

**B. Budget**

1. **Treasurer's Report**
  - a. **December 2008**
  - b. **January 2009**
2. **Manifest**
  - a. **December 2008**
  - b. **January 2009**

**A MOTION was made by Ms. Coughlin and SECONDED by Mr. Foley to approve the minutes of December 18, 2009 as amended.**

**Voting: 6 ayes; motion carried unanimously.**

**A MOTION was made by Ms. Coughlin and SECONDED by Ms. Ludt to approve the minutes of January 6, 2009 as amended.**

**Voting: 6 ayes; motion carried unanimously.**

**A. Literacy Initiative**

Mr. Prescott introduced Peggy Silva, literacy coordinator, Beth Dunham, reading specialist, and Jess Tremblay, 10<sup>th</sup> grade Social Studies teacher to the Board.

Ms. Silva explained that the district is midway through the second year of a five year initiative and that last year they flooded the faculty with professional development and spent a lot of in service time focusing on literacy strategies. She explained that they asked teachers to choose from a wide menu of tools, assess their success, and then report back. She stated that the team is happy with last year's success and this year they asked that the teachers set student centered goals. The teachers were given a template to chart their progress and most goals have focused on vocabulary and specific reading strategies.

Jess Tremblay gave a shortened version of her Career Growth presentation to the Board.

Ms. Coughlin thanked the team for presenting to the Board.

Ms. Ludt stated that Ms. Tremblay's presentation was the best she had seen in nine years on the Board.

**VI.  
PRESENTATIONS/  
DISCUSSION  
ITEMS**

**B. NECAP Scores**

Ms. Heimarck appeared before the Board and explained that the NECAP test has been taken twice at Souhegan and includes reading, math, and writing sections. She noted that NH has the only multi state assessment under No Child Left Behind and Maine is now joining the program which will increase the wealth of student data. She explained that the test scores include four levels of performance, substantially below proficient, partially proficient, proficient, and proficient with distinction and that all students are expected to be proficient by 2013. Ms. Heimarck reviewed the process that went into developing the test.

Ms. Heimarck presented Souhegan's two year reading scores using the 2007 and 2008 teaching year data and noted she likes to have three to five years of data before making any changes. She stated that this year the reading scores are just slightly higher than the state average and this is the area where the Souhegan has the greatest decline.

Nancy stated that there were only four questions on the reading test and noted that three of them were constructed response questions.

Ms. Heimarck pointed out that research shows that at least 95% of children have the ability to read on grade level.

Ms. Heimarck then presented a two year comparison of the math scores, noting a jump in 11 points, and the writing scores, noting a 14 point jump. She explained that the administration is working aligning the lower score on the constructed response test to their higher writing score. She then presented a grade level cohort tracking graph for reading and math noting that the 2008 eleventh graders were the fifth graders who took the test in 2005. Ms. Heimarck then presented a four year comparison of the Amherst Middle School's scores in reading, math, and writing, and a district comparison chart for grade 11.

Ms. Heimarck explained that the next steps include data triangulation, released item analysis, examination of student level data, staff development on making data instructionally meaningful to all staff members, and examination of test operations.

In response to a question from Ms. Mullens, Ms. Heimarck stated that one hypothesis for the eighth grade decline is the difference in the test operation as this year the test was given over five days but last year it was three days.

She noted that the local district is given a three week window in which the testing has to be given but the specifics are up to the district.

In response to a question from Ms. Ludt, Ms. Prescott stated that he could present a formal report to the Board about the other schools that they have been visiting towards the end of the year.

In response to a question from Ms. Ludt, Ms. Heimarck explained that the NECAP is administered in the fall based on school responses when the test was created; schools wanted data back early enough in the year so that they can use the test data during the coming year. She also noted that the state test used to be given in the spring but then the students were being tested on material that they still had time to learn. Ms. Ludt expressed concern about the loss of information over the summer.

### **C. FY09 Quarterly Report**

Ms. Shankel reviewed the financial report through December 31, 2008 noting that the revenue is lower than budgeted by \$37,300 due to lower interest returns. She also noted that due to Ms. Sparks' perseverance the district will be receiving more catastrophic aide than budgeted. Also the district has received approximately \$50,000 more in Medicaid reimbursement than budgeted.

Ms. Shankel went on to explain that the Special Education expenditures are higher than budget primarily due to a \$70,000 unanticipated out of district placement but student transportation is under budget due to the district not needing to transport students to the Manchester Vocational program. She also noted that the 403B benefits are under budget and the administration was successful in getting a substantially lower workers compensation rate. She explained that as of this report the district has a \$250,000 surplus.

### **A. Proposal: Space Committee**

Ms. Ludt explained that it has become clear to her, due to changing enrollment, that a committee should be brought together to see what spaces and needs the district has so as to get the most efficient use out of the space they do have. Ms. Mullens thinks a study would be beneficial as they are already considering the athletic and cafeteria needs.

The Board discussed the possible make up of the group.

**A MOTION was made by Ms. Ludt and SECONDED by Ms. Jansen to establish a Souhegan Space Needs/ Usage committee made up of the**

## **VII. ACTION ITEMS**

**Principal, two Board members, the Facilities Director, and the Athletic Director.**

**Voting: 6 ayes; motion carried unanimously.**

**B. HEAL grant**

Ms. Ludt explained that the HEAL Grant, Healthy Eating Active Lifestyle, is a grant that will be awarded to multiple sectors, such as schools, recreation departments and hospitals, within a region. She explained that Beaver Brook is applying for the grant and in order for the district to partner with them the Board would need to sign a letter of commitment to create more opportunities for kids the community. She suggested that the district could commit to finding a space for a fitness center and use the grant money for any necessary renovations. She further suggested that a fitness center could be used for wellness classes as well as after school programs for students and faculty and eventually used for adult fitness education classes run by the recreation center.

Several of the Board members expressed concerns about making such a commitment. The Board went around and expressed that they were not prepared to commit to the grant but would like to look further into the lack of wellness space perhaps through other grants or through the facilities expendable trust fund.

**C. Accept donation from Gateway Community Services**

**A MOTION was made by Mr. Foley and SECONDED by Ms. Coughlin to accept the donation of \$19,957 from Gateway Community Services.**

**Voting: 6 ayes; motion approved unanimously.**

Ms. Coughlin volunteered to go to the PPC meetings in March.

**A MOTION was made by Ms. Coughlin and SECONDED by Ms. Mullens to adjourn the meeting.**

**Voting: 6 ayes; motion carried unanimously.**

Chairman Coughlan declared the meeting adjourned at 8:54 p.m.

**VIII. OTHER**

**IX. REVIEW OF  
MEETING/  
ADJOURN**