

## SOUHEGAN SCHOOL BOARD

### Minutes

**October 16, 2008**

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

#### **I. CALL TO ORDER**

#### **Present**

Souhegan School Board: Chairman Steve Coughlan, Jeanne Ludt, Mary Lou Mullens, Pam Coughlin, Dana Redmond, and Dan Foley

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

#### **ATTENDANCE**

Minutes Recorder: Heather Loewy Nichols

#### **A. Principal's Report**

Principal Scott Prescott noted that the Board had received his report in their packets and that he also wanted to add that the staff has completed IWalkthrough training and the staff will be collecting data and presenting it to the Board, perhaps this winter.

#### **II. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

In response to a question from Ms. Mullens, Mr. Prescott explained that the IWalkthrough system was procured through grant money and that the school would like to try to run it for two years if they can get the grant money again next year.

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

David Brundage explained that over the past few weeks the Council has passed a proposal to buy rally towels which will be sold and the monies reimbursed to the Council and also the Judicial Board and Community Board have started. He noted that they are working on reviewing the by-laws, and proposing replacing class council with class meetings as a better way to facilitate constructive communication. He also noted that they are working on the semi-formal and Candidates Forum.

Ms. Ludt invited the Board to attend the Candidates Forum on October 28, 2008 at 7:00 p.m. and explained that there will be 30 candidates speaking including executive, state house, and state senate candidates for Amherst and Mont Vernon and Pete Stearns who is running for state representative. She noted that the students will be moderating and asking the candidates questions. In response to a question from Mr. Foley, Ms. Ludt stated that the

event has been advertised in local papers, she has contacted the Milford Social Studies teachers, and students will be creating posters. Mr. Coughlan also noted that an announcement about the event has been streaming at the bottom of the community bulletin board channels.

### **C. Souhegan Finance Committee**

Mr. Coughlan explained that the Board needs to appoint one member of the public to the SAU 39 Finance Advisory Committee and seeing no objections he appointed Patty Casey of Monticello Drive in Amherst.

### **A. Minutes**

1. September 18, 2008 Minutes

**A MOTION was made by Mr. Redmond and SECONDED by Ms. Ludt to approve the minutes of September 18, 2008 as amended.**

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

### **B. Budget**

1. Treasurer's Report
  - a. September 2008
2. Manifest
  - a. September 2008
3. Transfers

Ms. Shankel explained that the budgets needed to be realigned in the benefits section in order to be in compliance with the DOE accounting regulations, and she noted that she might need to make a few more transfers to make everything balance correctly after tonight's transfers.

In response to a question from Ms. Mullens, Ms. Shankel stated that the administration is considering creating a different report for this budget season in order to make the comparison from this year to next easier.

**A MOTION was made by Ms. Ludt and SECONDED by Ms. Mullens to approve budget transfers #2009-001, 2009- 002, 2009-003, 2009-004 and 2009-005.**

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

### **A. FY09 Quarterly Report**

Ms. Shankel explained that the revenues look to be on track, although she noted it is still early in the year. She also noted that some expenditure lines look overspent but this will be straightened out with the transfer the Board just approved. She stated that support services benefits will be under spent and currently she is reviewing the Special Education out of district placements

## **III. CONSENT AGENDA**

## **IV. PRESENTATIONS/ DISCUSSION ITEMS**

to see if there are cost savings to be found.

### **B. Science NECAP**

Nicole Heimarck explained that the Science NECAP test was given in May of 2008 to grades 4, 8, and 11, noting that this was the first year the school participated in the official administration of the testing. She presented comparative results with the state averages for 11<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade and an area district comparisons for grades 11 and 8. She noted that the highest proficiency level in the state was in 4<sup>th</sup> grade. She noted that, on November 5<sup>th</sup>, she and the Science Coordinators will be reviewing the results for strengths and weaknesses.

In response to a question from Ms. Coughlin, Ms. Heimarck explained that the state standards played a big role in the curriculum revision last year and that the state requires students to take two years of science but Souhegan requires three.

Mr. Prescott noted that the students whose scores the Board is currently reviewing were not able to benefit from the realignment because the test was taken before the realignment.

In response to a question from Ms. Mullens, Ms. Heimarck explained that they would usually engage in communication with a community that has had several years of success but this is only one year of data. She also noted that the state offers a workshop to help leaders understand the results so the state does a lot of data analysis before the workshop and the attendees receive a lot of information from these workshops.

Mr. Prescott also noted that he has visited and plans to visit other schools to talk about what they are doing well.

Dr. Jennings noted that currently the Science NECAP is not a part of No Child Left Behind and adequate yearly progress.

### **C. Budget Assumptions**

Mr. Coughlan asked Cynthia Dokmo to introduce the Advisory Finance Committee. Ms. Dokmo explained that the committee is comprised of five Amherst residents and has no Mont Vernon members because she has been unable to find any volunteers. In response to a question from the Board, Ms. Dokmo confirmed that an advertisement was placed in the paper but she did not receive any response from it. The committee members are Marilyn

Peterman, Fran Harrow, Mary Mahar, Gail Agans, and Pete Stearns.

Dr. Jennings explained that the first step in creating the budget is to review the assumptions the administration is proposing and after the Board agrees with or corrects the proposed assumptions the administration will create the first draft of the budget. Dr. Jennings then reviewed the proposed assumptions.

In response to a question from Ms. Mullens, Dr. Jennings stated that the administration can present the nurse caseload as well as the guidance counselors' caseloads.

In response to a comment from Mr. Coughlan, Ms. Shankel explained that the SAU has been able to lock in a price for natural gas at the same rate as last year which is just a little higher than this year's rate. She noted that this rate is locked in for four years.

In response to a question from Ms. Coughlin, Ms. Shankel stated that any remaining fund balance, at the end of the fiscal year, will go back to the town that provided the funding but during the year the Board can transfer funds and spend any surplus.

Ms. Ludt noted that in past the district has pre-bought items for the following year using the fund balance. She also stated that she wants the district to have a better grasp of the salary requirements as this year there was a gap. Ms. Shankel stated that she thinks that she already has the career growth information needed to help with budgeting salaries.

Mr. Redmond noted that the food service budget was an issue last year. Ms. Shankel stated that she is happy with the changes that have been made.

In response to a question from Ms. Ludt, Mr. Prescott explained that at the beginning of the school year he meets with the coordinators and he shares some of the same assumptions as tonight and then the coordinators meet with their departments, gets their input, and brings the input to him and Rhonda Pisani. They then look at the numbers, review them with all the coordinators, and then review the numbers in individual meetings.

In response to a suggestion from Mr. Redmond, Mr. Coughlan stated that his ideal budget would be one that does not increase the tax rate for instance if the assessed valuation of the town increases one percent then the budget can go up one percent. Dr. Jennings noted that the district is obligated to pay 3-5%

increases in salaries so if the goal is a one percent increase then the Board will have to decide at the next meeting what to cut. Mr. Prescott noted that this conservative message is the same one he has been passing on to his staff.

Ms. Shankel noted that one of the members of the District Advisory Committee should be sitting on the SAU Advisory Committee also.

#### **D. Board Knowledge of SHS Assessment Practices**

Dr. Jennings explained that the Board chose two goals for this year, one of which was to increase the range of student assessments by increasing the Board's knowledge of the assessment. She noted that she asked the Board to complete a survey regarding their knowledge base so the administration can determine what presentations they should make to the Board.

#### **A. Creation of Athletic Advisory Board**

The Board continued on their previous conversation with regard to the creation of an Athletic Advisory committee. Most of the Board felt that Mr. Coughlan's original proposal for the committee make up was too large. The Board has questions as to how and where the Athletic Director allocated his money, and how fundraising is completed. Dr. Jennings suggested that a well written athletic handbook could answer a lot of these Board's questions. Ms. Ludt stated that there is a need to create a good working relationship with the Athletic Director.

Mr. Coughlan suggested that the Board charge the committee to work with the Athletic Director and the Principal to understand and prioritize all of the present issues in order to start addressing them. Mr. Prescott stated that he was comfortable with the charge. Mr. Coughlan asked for a report at the next meeting. Mr. Redmond and Mr. Foley were appointed to the subcommittee.

#### **B. NSBA petition to the NHIAA on scheduling events**

Mr. Coughlan noted that the Board had received this petition at the last meeting in order for them to have time for review.

Ms. Mullens stated that the Late Start Committee is interested in this topic because if school were to start an hour later it would make scheduling games in day light hours that much harder.

Mr. Coughlan explained that this petition suggests not traveling as far for games and therefore saving gas and reducing time out of class for travel.

Dr. Jennings explained that this issue should be decided in the NHIAA but the

#### **V. ACTION ITEMS**

Athletic Directors running the NHIAA do not see the current schedule as a problem possibly because they do not schedule the busses and buy the fuel. She noted that she has charged Mr. Prescott with looking for possible solutions that the school can implement now, such as dropping some games or sharing busses. She suggested that the new committee could speak to the Athletic Director about his opinion in this matter.

Mr. Prescott explained that the NHIAA is against the petition as it is fraught with problems and would put teams in violation during finals. He noted that the NHIAA has changed one rule so now traveled games do not need to be made up if they are canceled. Also, the number of played games needed to compete in the finals has been reduced. Mr. Prescott also noted that they have been looking at combining bussing, reducing the number of school-funded scrimmages to two, and requiring 10 games within a school's class and 6 games locally.

Mr. Redmond noted that the entrance fees for playoff games goes to the NHIAA and not to the schools.

Ms. Mullins suggested getting feedback from the Athletic Committee.

After discussion, Mr. Coughlan explained that the sense he is getting from the Board is that the system needs to be changed but this petition is not the answer. He stated that he is willing to go back to the NHSBA meeting with the message.

### **C. Policies – 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading**

In response to a question from Ms. Mullins regarding Policy JICD, Dr. Jennings explained that between the RSA and the local police the definition of “dangerous weapon” is well covered.

**A MOTION was made by Ms. Coughlin and SECONDED by Ms. Mullens to adopt the following policies:**

- **JCID- Student Conduct Discipline and Due Process**
- **KB – Title One Parent Involvement**
- **EGA- School District Internet Access for Students**
- **EGAD – Copyright Compliance**
- **EHAA – Computer Security E-Mail, and Internet**

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

### **A. Status of the Professional Contracts**

### **VI. DISCUSSION**

Dr. Jennings explained that previously the Board voted to make changes to 45

**ITEMS**

contracts and 6 still remain to be changed. She explained that it has been good because the faculty has gotten really involved in checking their past files and a lot of changes have been made because of increased awareness.

Mr. Prescott explained that career growth is a three phase process that overall requires the teacher to develop a question of inquiry about teaching and learning, do research, implement a strategy, collect data, bring their findings to their critical friends group, and get feedback on their work. He also noted that there are a number of check points to be completed, each phase must last at least a year but can be longer, and the administrator has the final sign off on each phase. Also, he noted that the final phase must include a presentation to the staff.

In response to a question from Ms. Mullens, Mr. Prescott stated that the teachers do not get the pay increase until each phase is complete.

In response to a question from Ms. Ludt, Mr. Prescott stated that he believes the staff understands the deadlines and requirements for getting their pay increase as it is communicated frequently.

**B. Cable TV Proposal**

Mr. Coughlan appointed Ms. Ludt temporary chair explaining that for this agenda item he is representing the Amherst Communication Committee and that he has already spoken to the Amherst Board of Selectman and Amherst School Board. He explained that when the Board of Selectman negotiated with Comcast they negotiated for public access Channel 20 for government use and Channel 21 for school use. He explained that the Amherst town budget, the Amherst School budget and the Souhegan budget cover the cost of the equipment and the personnel is volunteered. Due to the fact that this resource is shared by three entities, Mr. Coughlan is proposing the creation of a non-profit organization, owned by all three entities, in order to operate the channels on behalf of the entities, as is common practice. He explained that the Board of Selectmen had no objection to the proposal and while the Amherst School Board can think of a number of issues they are willing to negotiate.

In response to a question from Ms. Ludt, Mr. Coughlan stated that Souhegan is donating a space for the studio and the town is purchasing \$50,000 to \$60,000 in equipment. Discussion as to how the space was allocated ensued and Ms. Ludt expressed her dismay that previously no space could be found for a wellness class but a space was found for broadcasting without the

knowledge and approval of the Board. Mr. Prescott explained that the space needed for a wellness class is different than what is needed for a broadcasting class. Mr. Foley noted that the Board has been supporting the broadcasting with their budget and the Board has discussed it but not to this detail.

Ms. Coughlin questioned what liability was involved with having the town's equipment in the school and having towns people in and out of the building. Mr. Prescott noted that the doors are separately keyed and all the doors are locked at 2:30 p.m.

The Board agreed that they may need to continue the discussion about programming issues but they agree to begin negotiations. Mr. Redmond agreed to be the Board's representative.

Ms. Ludt explained that the Late Start Committee agreed to put together a six month summary of all the actions taken and the experts that have been spoken to and as soon as the summary is approved they will publish it on the website.

## **VII. OTHER**

Ms. Mullens explained that at the end of last year surveys were sent to parents and the committee has received a lot of hits in response.

Mr. Foley noted that the PMEC grand opening will be held this Sunday from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. and the Board Members are invited to attend.

Ms. Ludt asked that the whole board be better educated regarding non resident students.

**A MOTION was made by Ms. Coughlin and SECONDED by Ms. Mullens to adjourn the meeting.  
Voting: 6 ayes; motion carried unanimously.**

## **VIII. REVIEW OF MEETING/ ADJOURN**