

SAU #39 Board

Thursday, November 19th, 2020

Meeting Minutes- Approved 02 18 2021

Attendees:

Administrative Team: Adam Steel- Superintendent, Christine Landwehrle- Assistant Superintendent, Meg Beauchamp- Director of Student Services, Michele Croteau- SAU #39 Business Administrator, Anna Parrill- Principal CW, Dr. Kim Sarfte - Principal MVVS, Dr. Bethany Bernasconi Mike Berry- Principal SHS, Roger Preston- Director of Facilities.

Amherst School Board: Chair- Elizabeth Kuzsma, Vice Chair- Tom Gauthier, Secretary- Ellen Gruzdien, Terri Behm and Josh Conklin.

Mont Vernon Village School Board: Chair- Sarah Lawrence, Vice Chair- Peter Eckhoff, Jessica Hinckley and Stephen O'Keefe.

Souhegan Cooperative School Board: Chair- Pim Grondstra, Vice Chair- Amy Facey, Secretary- Stephanie Grund, Steve Coughlan, George Torres, John Glover and Laura Taylor.

Board Minutes: Danae A. Marotta

Public: Sarah Hurd- SHS Alumna, Kelly Schmidt, 11 Patricia Lane, Amherst NH, Maria Daly, Amherst NH, Seth Smiley, 20 Holly Hill Dr, Amherst NH, Lisa Eastland, 19 River Road, Amherst NH, Catie Dodge, Amherst NH, Shannon Gascoyne, 5 Parker Farm Lane, Amherst NH, and Delaney Facques, SHS CC Liaison.

I. SAU #39 Chair Opening

Today, we will be conducting a school board meeting of the SAU #39 Board.

Before we get started, I'll read through a checklist to ensure that the meeting that we are holding is in compliance with the Right-to-Know Law.

As chairperson of the SAU #39 Board, I find that due to the state of emergency declared by the Governor as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, and in accordance with the Governor's Emergency Order Number #12, pursuant to Executive Order 2020-04 and its extensions, this public body is authorized to meet electronically. Please note that there is no physical location to observe and listen contemporaneously to this meeting which was authorized pursuant to the Governor's Emergency Order.

In accordance with the Emergency Order, I am confirming that:

1. We are providing public access to the meeting by telephone, with additional access possible by video and other electronic means. We are utilizing Zoom for this electronic meeting. All members of the committee and selected legislative staff have the ability to communicate contemporaneously in this meeting through this platform. And the public

39 has access to contemporaneously watch and or listen to the meeting on Zoom and via
40 phone by following the directions and links provided on our website: www.sau39.org.

- 41
42
- 43 2. We have provided public notice of the necessary information for accessing the meeting.
 - 44
 - 45 3. We are providing a mechanism for the public to alert the public body during the meeting
46 if there are problems with access. If anyone has a problem, please email
47 awallace@sau39.org.
 - 48
 - 49 4. In the event the public is unable to access the meeting will be adjourned and
50 rescheduled.
 - 51
 - 52 5. Please note that all votes taken during this meeting shall be done by roll call vote.
 - 53
 - 54 6. Finally, let's start the meeting by taking a roll call attendance. When each member states
55 their presence please also state where they are and if anyone else is in the room with you
56 during this meeting, which is required under the Right-to-Know Law.

57
58 Kuzsma- home and alone, Gauthier- SHS Theater with two other members of the District, Behm-
59 Home and alone, Gruzdien- Home and alone, Conklin- Home and alone, Grondstra- Home and
60 alone, Facey- Home and alone, Coughlan- Home and alone, Taylor- Home and alone, Torres-
61 Home and alone, Grund- Home and alone, Glover- Home and alone, Lawrence- Home and
62 alone, Eckhoff- Not Present , St. Denis- Not Present, O'Keefe- Home and alone and Hinckley-
63 Home and alone

64
65 II. Public Hearing on SAU #39 Budget FY' 22

66
67 **Ms. Grund motioned to to open the Public Hearing. Ms. Kuzsma seconded the motion. The**
68 **vote was unanimous, motion passed. Roll Call 15 yes and 2 absent**

69
70 **Kuzsma-Yes, Gauthier- Yes, Behm- Yes, Gruzdien- Yes, Conklin- Yes, Grondstra- Yes,**
71 **Facey- Yes, Coughlan- Yes, Taylor- Yes, Torres- Yes, Grund- Yes, Glover- Yes,**
72 **Lawrence- Yes, O'Keefe- Yes, Hinckley- Yes, St. Denis- Not Present, and Eckhoff- Not**
73 **Present**

74
75 Superintendent, Mr. Adam Steel, noted that tonight he will be presenting the proposed FY'22
76 Budget. There have been some revisions due to the SAU Budget Committee. One of the key
77 items of the budget is the addition of the second Assistant Superintendent position as discussed
78 by each of the other three boards earlier this evening. They have spent some time discussing that,
79 but this new Assistant Superintendent position is not a new position but simply a new title that
80 has a change in responsibilities. This new position will focus mostly on the Middle and High
81 School, while the existing Assistant Superintendent will focus on their two elementary schools.
82

83 There are some minor changes in other positions which results in a net FTE reduction of 0.3.
84 They have also cut a special program administrator position; a part time accountant position has
85 been increased and they have reclassified an Administrative Assistant to the Business Office.

86
87 The SAU Budget Committee has met several times and the proposed budget has been reduced by
88 \$23k, for a final amount of \$2,702, 324.

89
90 He then discussed the apportionment formula RSA 194:C. He is happy to answer any questions
91 about the SAU Budget.

92
93 Ms. Kuzsma asked when should the SAU Budget Committee present their findings.

94
95 Mr. O’Keefe replied after the public has a chance to ask their questions and comments. He asked
96 the public to use the “Raise your hand” feature.

97
98 Ms. Kelly Schmidt, 11 Patricia Lane, requested to see Superintendent Steel’s presentation slides.
99 It would be helpful to have a quick visual.

100 Ms. Grund mentioned that they met multiple times and they have asked about healthcare and
101 dental insurance. They did ask what benefits are being offered by the SAU and found that it
102 matches with what is being offered at the schools. They did ask SAU #39 Business
103 Administrator, Ms. Michele Croteau, to take a poll to see if they can increase buyout for people
104 who wouldn’t take the insurance. They have found out that increasing a buyout would not
105 incentivize people to move their insurance. There is an increase in the NH Retirement and had a
106 lot of discussion regarding the Assistant Superintendent Position. There was support for adding
107 that position. They have looked at travel, using Zoom that the SAU could reduce their budget. so
108 They did ask for a decrease of 15% in all of the different departments and asking for an
109 additional 10% decrease for next year.

110 There was a generator that was being asked for at the SAU and they had discussions with SAU
111 Facilities Director, Mr. Roger Preston. There was nothing pressing, and they decided not to
112 support the generator. There was also a Building Improvement amount of \$7,500 and since there
113 is nothing that needed to be repaired, they decided to forgo that amount. Last, in the SAU budget
114 there is a pool for raises that will be distributed among all of the employees.

115 Mr. O’Keefe asked for the vote of the Budget Committee.

116 Ms. Grund replied that the Committee had unanimous support.

117 Ms. Behm inquired about the benefit from an additional Assistant Superintendent.

118 Mr. Steel explained that they have had this position open for this past year and have had
119 difficulty attracting the type of candidate that they need.

120 Mr. O’Keefe asked the public not to reach out to board members individually but communicate
121 during Public Comment Time.

122 **Ms. Behm motioned to close the Public Hearing. Ms. Kuzsma seconded the motion. The**
123 **motion passed.**

124 **Kuzsma-Yes, Gauthier- Yes, Behm- Yes, Gruzdien- Yes, Conklin- Yes, Grondstra- Yes,**
125 **Facey- Yes, Coughlan- Yes, Taylor- Abstain, Torres- Yes, Grund- Yes, Glover- Yes,**
126 **Lawrence- Yes, O’Keefe- Yes, Hinckley- Yes, St. Denis- Not Present, and Eckhoff- Not**
127 **Present**

128
129 **Ms. Kuzsma motioned to adopt the SAU Budget as modified, amended and proposed. Mr.**
130 **Grondstra seconded the motion.**

131 Mr. O’Keefe asked for board discussion.

132 Ms. Grund followed up on the question about the Assistant Superintendent position. She
133 explained that they know that they need someone to help smooth out curriculum transition. This
134 would be a huge benefit to them.

135 Mr. Glover asked about the incentives to not take the SAU health insurance. It makes fiscal sense
136 to have that incentive.

137 Mr. O’Keefe replied that the budget committee looked at increasing the incentive from \$1,000 to
138 \$7,000. They surveyed the entire office staff and it was not enough for staff to switch. They still
139 have an incentive.

140 Ms. Gruzdien added that she was on the panel for interviewing candidates and there were an
141 number of teachers on that panel as well. She has always talked about a better bridge from the
142 AMS to the high school. She believes that this position can help to achieve that.

143 Mr. Grondstra also gave his support for the Assistant Superintendent position.

144 Mr. Glover commented that he appreciates the survey and the work of the SAU Staff. There
145 might be a need for the Assistant Superintendent or a new employee to take that incentive. He
146 inquired what is the outlay for a staff member on the health insurance family plan per year. He
147 recommended keeping the higher incentive for attracting employees or for the future.

148 Ms. Taylor asked about the historical data for the budget for the last 10 years and how many
149 people have been at the Brick School. She does not need that to vote, however, it would be
150 helpful for perspective.

151 Mr. O’Keefe added that he knows that she had made that inquiry.

152 Mr. Steel replied that they will get it out to her.

153 Mr. Coughlan commented that the only good time to raise the incentive is if they have someone
154 new. Right now, the evidence is that no one is going to take it.

155 Mr. Glover mentioned that he does not see where they are coming with that conclusion. Even if
156 it is only one person that takes the incentive, as long as it is lower than the district’s portion of
157 healthcare costs, it is still a savings.

158 Mr. Coughlan replied that it is only a benefit if to them as the employer it encourages someone
159 new.

160 Mr. O’Keefe added that it was the sentiment of the SAU Budget Committee. There are two SAU
161 staff members that are currently taking the incentive with no additional staff interested.

162 Ms. Taylor asked if it was possible to link the SAU budget with their budgets if they are passed
163 or not.

164 Mr. Steel replied that there are no raises for any employee that are guaranteed for next year.
165 They do not set salaries until they issue contracts for next year. There is a mechanism to allow
166 for direct voting on SAU budgets that can be passed if voters choose to put that on the Warrant.
167 Two years later there would be direct approval of the SAU Budget, if that is what the voters
168 wanted.

169 Mr. O’Keefe asked for more comments.

170 There were no more comments and he called for a vote.

171 **Kuzsma-Yes, Gauthier- Yes, Behm- Yes, Gruzdien- Yes, Conklin- Yes, Grondstra- Yes,**
172 **Facey- Yes, Coughlan- Yes, Taylor- Yes, Torres- Yes, Grund- Yes, Glover- Yes,**
173 **Lawrence- Yes, O’Keefe- Yes, Hinckley- Yes, St. Denis- Not Present, and Eckhoff- Not**
174 **Present. Motion passed.**

175
176 The Board thanked Superintendent Steel.

177
178 III. Public Comment I of II

179 Mr. O’Keefe asked members of the public to use the “Raise your hand” feature and allowed for
180 three minutes per citizen.

181 Ms. Maria Daly, Amherst NH, gave her support for the school start time. She commented that
182 they should look beyond their personal situations.

183 Mr. Seth Smiley, 20 Holly Hill Dr, Amherst NH, commented that he and his wife have been
184 working for many years to change the school start time. He has found that his kids are happier
185 and well rested. The science is there, it is for the greater good of the community. It is time to
186 move the school start time.

187 Ms. Lisa Eastland, 19 River Road, inquired is about athletics and how many schools do they
188 compete with that have gone to a later start time.

189 Mr. O’Keefe replied that this is not the time for questions, and they will address it later on in the
190 meeting.

191 Ms. Eastland added that she has given Ms. Facey some feedback from community members.

192 Ms. Catie Dodge, Amherst NH, sincerely thanked the Board for all that they do. She noted that
193 she was impressed by SHS Principal, Mr. Mike Berry. She mentioned that a lot of parents are
194 concerned with Empower. If she goes on to Google Classroom, which is free, she can see the

195 score. Her children sometimes feel disenfranchised and hopeless using Empower. They are
196 staying with Souhegan for the teachers, because they are so fantastic.

197 Ms. Kelly Schmidt, 11 Patricia Lane, Amherst NH, gave her support for the later start time, it
198 will benefit all students. She suggested that they jump into it and make sure that the students
199 don't miss academic time.

200 Ms. Shannon Gascoyne, 5 Parker Farm Lane, Amherst NH, commented that she is also
201 encouraging the later start time. She believes that there is science behind the later start regarding
202 health and wellness for the students.

203 Lastly, Ms. Gascoyne referenced the first school district that had adjusted their start time Edina,
204 Minnesota. They had challenges in the beginning but over came them.

205 Mr. O'Keefe closed Public Comment

206 The Board thanked Ms. Daly, Mr. Smiley, Ms. Schmidt, Ms. Dodge and Ms. Gascoyne.

207 IV. Superintendent's Report

208

209 • Play Based Kindergarten

210 Mr. Steel noted that included in the packet is a Memo on Play Based Learning, prepared by CW
211 Principal Ms. Anna Parrill and CW Assistant Principal, Ms. Kathleen Murphy. They have not
212 done as much as they would have liked although that is in the forefront of their minds.

213 • Tuition Agreement ASD and MVSD

214 Earlier this evening, the Amherst and Mont Vernon Boards have agreed to an 5 year extension to
215 the Tuition Agreement. They have worked collaboratively, and it will be on the ballot this
216 coming March. It is a good thing for MV 7th and 8th graders.

217 • SAU Brick School Lease Agreement

218 Later tonight, the SAU will be reviewing a lease for the Brick School. It allows for the Brick
219 School to be leased from the ASD who owns that building.

220 • Presentation with Ms. Sarah Hurd

221 Mr. Steel explained that a few months ago, Ms. Sarah Hurd, had presented a letter to Chairman
222 O'Keefe with a petition. The key author is Ms. Hurd.

223 Ms. Hurd noted that she has graduated in 2014. She wrote this this letter regarding how they
224 speak, educate and act regarding race. The letter has over 400 signatures from, alumni, parents,
225 students, teachers and community members.

226 Mr. Steel added that there was great dignity and professionalism. He added that his role starts
227 with making sure that every member of their community feels safe in school. There have been
228 other sensitive discussions such as Gender-Neutral Bathrooms and Security Cameras. He has

229 been brought before him issues of race and it is something that has persisted. It is something that
230 they need to face head on and make progress towards.

231 Ms. Hurd commented about her experiences at SAU #39. They cannot ignore the fact that the
232 towns of Amherst and Mont Vernon have a very homogeneous population. It is time for them as
233 a community for their wake-up call and to uphold the great values of their community regardless
234 of identity.

235 Mr. Steel commented that the good news is that there is significant interest in doing this work.
236 Some of staff members have already begun this work. He is beginning his work with Ms. Hurd
237 and her group, and the Racial Equity Work Group to investigate this issue and make
238 recommendations. The purpose of this work is to make sure that they are reinforcing protections
239 for all students so that everybody, staff and students feel safe at school.

240 He added that a community member had mentioned to him to that he should be intentional about
241 thinking about diversifying their faculty. That will be a part of their work. Ms. Hurd has brought
242 information to him that has been educational and helpful. It will strengthen their work as they
243 combine their efforts.

244 He is not looking for any action from the Board tonight but will be reporting back about this
245 issue in the future.

- 246 • School in December and January

247 He added that in the past few minutes, a message has gone out to the community regarding
248 school in December as long as the scientific and medical data still support it. They all know that
249 case counts are going up in the community, however, the data and science still seems to support
250 that schools are a safe place for students and faculty. It is not a decision that comes lightly.

251 He has made changes to the calendar. First, because of their use of remote learning for the first
252 two weeks in January, he is moving the In- service day for teachers from January 15th and March
253 26th, 2021 to December 21st and 22nd. December 23rd will be a no-school day that will be made
254 up at the end of the school year. The last day for students before the holiday break will be Friday,
255 Dec 18th, 2020 and the projected last day of school is June 10th, 2021. They will not lose any
256 days by making this change. He has every intention or reopening Jan 19th, 2021 in the Yellow
257 status. As long as the data in the community support it. They intend on working with their
258 associations and staff to make this as easy as possible.

- 259 • Souhegan Sabers Championship Game

260 They are hosting a championship and this Saturday. It is not open to the public it will be
261 streamed online and there is limited ticket availability.

262 Ms. Grund noted her concern with missing more and more classes and then shutting down Dec
263 18th. The AP and Dual enrollment students are getting cut short again. She requested an update
264 with Winter Sports.

265 Mr. Steel replied that he is allowing practicing to begin in December but will not approve
266 interscholastic play until he is convinced that they are safe.

267 Ms. Facey gave her support for the presentation with Ms. Hurd. All three of her children are
268 graduates of SHS and have signed the petition. It is an extremely important issue and she is
269 proud to live in a community that is taking this head on.

270 Ms. Gruzdien added that her children have struggled with the same issues as Ms. Hurd. She
271 suggested that they look at this by individual district starting at the Pre-k level. She offered her
272 help so that they can get it going across all of their schools. Lastly, she is not in support of indoor
273 winter sports in the current NH Covid climate.

274 The Board thanked Superintendent Steel.

275 V. Board Chair Reports

276 Ms. Elizabeth Kuzsma, Chair of the Amherst School Board, commented that they have voted to
277 move forward a warrant article for the JFAC construction. They are working to reduce their
278 budget and at the meeting right before this they have approved the ASD/MVS Tuition
279 Agreement.

280 Mr. Pim Grondstra, Chair of the Souhegan Cooperative School Board noted that they have a
281 new Board Member, Mr. John Glover. They have had a lengthy discussion regarding the FY'22
282 budget and have had subcommittee meetings. Their next meeting is scheduled for Nov 30th. He
283 hopes to have more information for the next SAU Meeting.

284 Ms. Sarah Lawrence, Chair of the Mont Vernon School Board, added that they have be
285 discussing their budget and have an active Budget Committee this year, which they are very
286 grateful for. At their last meeting, they had a presentation from the JFAC committee so that the
287 MV taxpayers can be aware of educational and tax impacts. ASB Chair, Ms. Kuzsma had
288 mentioned that they have approved a great tuition agreement that represents both communities
289 really appropriately.

290 The Board thanked Ms. Kuzsma, Mr. Grondstra and Ms. Lawrence.

291 VI. Principal's Reports

292 Mr. O'Keefe asked if there were any questions for Principal of CW, Ms. Anna Parrill.

293 Mr. Gauthier questioned the CW 4th graders taking a 3rd grade assessment and if that was normal
294 (*on page 6*).

295 Assistant Superintendent, Ms. Christine Landwehrle, replied that because they were unable to
296 give the NHSAS test in the Spring the DOE determined that they would require districts to take
297 it in the Fall. It was a required State assessment that they had to participate in. It gives the State
298 information whether remote learning had been successful and information to the teachers. They
299 did give parents the option to opt out and they did honor those requests.

300 Mr. Gauthier asked if it was a once a year test or twice a year test.

301 Ms. Landwehrle replied that typically it is a one a year test. They are making up for last spring
302 and parents are able to opt out.

303 Mr. Gauthier asked about Dreambox usage.

304 Ms. Landwehrle replied that she does routinely check in on Dreambox usage and can provide an
305 update. There has been a challenge at CW with laptops but not as much as AMS.

306 Ms. Behm thanked them for highlighting the remote work. She appreciates the Social Emotional
307 information as well. She was disappointed for not seeing behind the lockers. She gave her
308 support for Principal Berry for laying out his plan and inviting them into that process.

309 Ms. Kuzsma inquired about the opt out limit.

310 Ms. Landwehrle replied that as a State they need to have a 95% participation rate and it can
311 impact Federal Funding. They were waived on their accountability from last Spring. It is
312 challenging to do a remote testing and they are working on some technology issues.

313 Ms. Kuzsma asked if the districts were being penalized on lower than expected.

314 Ms. Landwehrle added that they are anticipating it for support.

315 Mr. O'Keefe asked if there were questions for Dr. Bernasconi.

316 Mr. O'Keefe inquired about Eagle Block and if it was for remedial instruction.

317 Principal Bernasconi explained that it is an exceptional year and they are looking to provide
318 remediation, support and time to finish assignments. There is always a teacher in the room to
319 provide guidance.

320 Mr. O'Keefe asked about locker usage.

321 Principal Bernasconi replied that it is something that they can take a look at and they have
322 beautiful new lockers in the building funded through the UFB . The new desks have hooks on
323 them for students to hang their backpacks.

324 Mr. O'Keefe asked if there were further questions for Principal Bernasconi.

325 There were no additional questions.

326 Mr. O'Keefe asked for questions for Mr. Berry.

327 Ms. Grund asked for an update with TeacherEase and where they are in the process of looking
328 at a different grading system.

329 Ms. Landwehrle replied that they have a group of 20 teachers that are piloting TeacherEase.
330 They even have their own Slack channel and that includes the TeacherEase representative. They
331 will be piloting till the end of January and meeting during that time. That committee will be
332 making a recommendation on next steps. They did leave it open for the PowerSchool gradebook.
333 They have a tentative February pilot if they have made all of their changes. They hope to have
334 information soon.

- 335 Ms. Grund asked if they were going to have a potential pilot.
- 336 Ms. Landwehrle replied, yes, potentially.
- 337 Ms. Facey inquired about the Wednesday Flex Days. She is hearing about how much the
338 teachers appreciate that day. She wants to make sure that there is enough academic rigor for
339 students. She asked about the challenges.
- 340 Principal Berry replied that they had some division II students that needed structure. The goal is
341 to make sure that they are keeping the learning cycle throughout the week. He will be sending
342 out communication tomorrow to students and families.
- 343 Ms. Facey asked if the Board can have that information as well.
- 344 Ms. Behm commented on her child's good experience with remote learning. She thanked
345 Principal Berry for all of his work.
- 346 Mr. Grondstra asked about the SAT scores.
- 347 Principal Berry explained that they are two different groups of students.
- 348 Mr. Grondstra gave his support to see the increasing scores. He would prefer to see test results
349 from the the same cohort of students.
- 350 Principal Berry mentioned that he can get that data for him.
- 351 Mr. Steel added that they also have more information coming for the November 30th SCSB
352 meeting.
- 353 Ms. Taylor thanked Principal Berry for all of the information. She inquired about the Individual
354 Plans are carried out and where is that covered in the budget.
- 355 Mr. Berry replied that he is not yet prepared to discuss the details.
- 356 Ms. Taylor asked for clarification on Wednesdays.
- 357 Principal Berry responded that they are trying to use Wednesdays to compensate for the reduced
358 informal time.
- 359 Ms. Taylor asked about the VLACS and how many classes that students are participating in and
360 how this fits in the Master Schedule.
- 361 Principal Berry replied that they have 74 students in 38 different courses.
- 362 Mr. O'Keefe asked the Board if there were any further questions for Principal Berry.
- 363 There were no further questions or comments.
- 364 Ms. Lawrence thanked MVVS Principal, Dr. Kim Sarfde, for the glimpse inside the classroom.
365 She mentioned that she is thankful for her connecting with the teachers and staff.

366 Principal Sarfte remarked that the credit goes to the teachers. It has been a joy to see the children
367 enjoying their time with new MVVS Music teacher, Ms. Rebecca Carle.

368 Ms. Behm thanked Principal Sarfde for the pictures as well.

369 Principal Sarfde mentioned that they still have a few parents that have not completed their
370 returning student registration. She encouraged the parents to call the office so that they can help
371 them in that process.

372 Ms. Kuzsma commented that she is grateful for the lunches for the remote students. She
373 questioned if they can streamline the food pick up process.

374 Mr. Steel replied that they can look into that.

375 Mr. O’Keefe asked for more questions for Principal Sarfde.

376 There were no more questions or comments.

377 The Board thanked Principal Parrill, Principal Bernasconi, Principal Berry and Principal Sarfde.

378 VII. Board Committees

379 Ms. Amy Facey, Chair of the Joint Facilities Advisory Committee, commented on the behalf of
380 JFAC. They will be presenting to the Souhegan Board at their next meeting on Nov 30th. The
381 ASD has voted unanimously to place it on the ballot as a warrant article. This has been years of
382 work and not to be taken lightly. The ASB’s decision to add a warrant article was made with
383 great care and seriousness.

384 The JFA Committee is working on a website and a comprehensive plan to engage the
385 community.

386 The Board thanked the JFA Committee for all of their work.

387 VIII. Consent Agenda

388 Mr. O’Keefe added the Lease Agreement and they can pull it.

389 Ms. Taylor pulled the #1. 10 29 2020 Minutes and the #2. Draft Calendar.

390 Mr. Glover added that he would like to discuss the #5 Lease Agreement.

391 Mr. O’Keefe replied that it leaves items #3. SAU #39 Facilities Update and #4. September 2020
392 Treasurer’s Report

393 **Ms. Kuzsma motioned to approve items 3. SAU #39 Facilities Update and 4. September**
394 **2020 Treasurer’s Report. Ms. Behm seconded the motion.**

395 **Kuzsma-Yes, Gauthier- Yes, Behm- Yes, Gruzdien- Yes, Conklin- Yes, Grondstra- Yes,**
396 **Facey- Yes, Coughlan- Yes, Taylor- Yes, Torres- Yes, Grund- Yes, Glover- Yes,**
397 **Lawrence- Yes, O’Keefe- Yes, Hinckley- Not Present, St. Denis- Not Present, and**
398 **Eckhoff- Yes. Motion passed.**

399

400 Ms. Taylor added three changes to the Draft Minutes 1. 10 29 2020.

401
402 Add a line to on 157. She commented that “*As an Engineer, 5 years appears to be a long time to*
403 *wait to evaluate the effectiveness of changes in the Math instruction*”.

404
405 Line 338 “*the point of board meetings is for discussion especially when presented with 40*
406 *proposed policies at once.*”

407 518 “*What are the challenges with Wilkins being in the Historic District*”.

408 **Ms. Taylor motioned to make the changes to the 10 29 2020 Draft Minutes. Ms. Behm**
409 **seconded the motion.**

410 **Kuzsma-Abstain, Gauthier- Yes, Behm- Yes, Gruzdien- Yes, Conklin- Yes, Grondstra- Yes,**
411 **Facey- Yes, Coughlan- Yes, Taylor- Yes, Torres- Yes, Grund- Yes, Glover- Yes,**
412 **Lawrence- Yes, O’Keefe- Yes, Hinckley- Not Present, St. Denis- Not Present, and**
413 **Eckhoff- Abstain. Motion passed.**

414

415 Mr. O’Keefe asked about Ms. Taylor’s concerns with the school calendar.

416 Ms. Taylor noted that they were presented with a possible Covid calendar. She asked when will a
417 decision be made.

418 Mr. Glover asked for clarification on the other calendars.

419 Mr. Steel replied that the proposed calendar is the non-Covid calendar. It was meant to
420 demonstrate that they were thinking ahead. They are planning on a normal school year and there
421 is no way to predict what the school year will like.

422 He noted that the SAU Chair and Vice Chair, with other board members have negotiated the
423 lease agreement that had expired 5 years ago. They need to have an appropriate lease agreement
424 and met with legal counsel. The ASB has approved it earlier this evening and it should be
425 approved by the SAU Board this evening and then voters have to approve it at their annual
426 meeting.

427 Ms. Kuzsma mentioned that it was brought up during a SAU Budget Committee meeting. Some
428 items were out of date. They removed the \$30k need and made the SAU responsible for upkeep
429 and changes to the building.

430 Mr. Glover thanked the board member that had found the expired lease agreement. He
431 highlighted some concerns. He has added some specificity on ambiguity. He does not know how
432 many board members have reviewed his comments.

433 Mr. O’Keefe asked for other board member comments.

434 **Mr. Glover motioned to table the #5 SAU Lease Agreement for a short period of time until**
435 **it can be reviewed by legal counsel. Ms. Taylor seconded the motion.**

436 Mr. O’Keefe asked for discussion.

437 Ms. Grund added that she has not been able to read through it because she does not have it.

438 Ms. Behm commented that she appreciates the thought that Mr. Glover has put into this,
439 although she does not foresee having a contentious relationship with the SAU. She commented
440 that the Annex is a similar situation. It is appropriate for what it is being used for as is.

441 Mr. Conklin inquired if after the changes were made, were they reviewed by legal counsel.

442 Mr. O'Keefe replied yes; the entire document was drafted by their Attorney.

443 Ms. Kuzsma pointed out that even the suggestions that were made were reviewed by legal
444 counsel.

445 Mr. O'Keefe asked for a roll call.

446 **Kuzsma-No, Gauthier- No, Behm- No, Gruzdien- No, Conklin- No, Grondstra- No, Facey-
447 No, Coughlan- No, Taylor- Abstain, Torres- No, Grund- No, Glover- Yes, Lawrence- No,
448 O'Keefe- No, Hinckley- No, St. Denis- Not Present, and Eckhoff- No. Motion does not
449 pass.**

450

451 **Ms. Hinckley motioned to accept items 1. Oct. 29th, 2020 Draft Minutes as amended above)**
452 **2. SAU #39 2021-22 School Calendar and #5 SAU Lease Agreement. Mr. Conklin seconded**
453 **the motion. Motion passes (15-1)**

454

455 **Kuzsma-Yes, Gauthier- Yes, Behm- Yes, Gruzdien- Yes, Conklin- Yes, Grondstra- Yes,
456 Facey- Yes, Coughlan- Yes, Taylor- Abstain, Torres- Yes, Grund- Yes, Glover- Yes,
457 Lawrence- Yes, O'Keefe- Yes, Hinckley- Yes, St. Denis- Not Present, and Eckhoff- Yes.
458 Motion passed.**

459

460 IX. School Start Times

461 Mr. O'Keefe mentioned that they will have a short comment by Superintendent Steel. They will
462 then motion to accept the Superintendent's recommendation, open it up for discussion and call
463 for a vote.

464 Mr. Steel commented that they have had discussions on this topic for his entire tenure at the
465 SAU. In short, he believes that it is time for the Board to act and change the school start time to
466 8:00AM for the Elementary schools and 8:45AM for middle and high schools. They have done
467 their research and heard from everyone, teachers, students, parents and community members. He
468 is relying on the scientific data that says that middle and high school students perform better and
469 are safer when they start later in the day.

470 He is asking the Board to make the motion to adopt this.

471 There is a complication in that the schedule changes at Souhegan need to be approved by
472 Community Council. The school schedule will remain intact for now. Principal Berry is in the
473 process of developing a plan. As you recall, last year it was the Souhegan schedule that resulted
474 in them delaying a year. He will ask the building principals to come back to their individual
475 boards with an implementation plan in January or February with the specific details of the

476 change. The individual boards can stop and rescind the decision of the SAU Board. He
 477 recommended the board to take that motion so that they can continue their planning and come
 478 back to the individual boards with specific details of this change, most notably to Souhegan.

479 Mr. O’Keefe asked for a motion.

480 **Ms. Kuzsma motioned to approve the start times for 8:00AM for the MVVS and CW and**
 481 **8:45AM for AMS and SHS for the 2021- 2022 school year and authorized the**
 482 **Superintendent to take any other action necessary to carry out this change. Mr. Coughlan**
 483 **seconded the motion.**

484 Ms. Delaney Facques, SHS Community Council Liaison, replied that she is a Senior at
 485 Souhegan and a few years ago she was on School Start Time Committee. She has created a
 486 survey from last year and wanted to share some highlights- almost 500 responses, 70% replied
 487 that play sports, 75% have a time commitment, 30% watch a younger sibling, and 70% were not
 488 in favor of the change. She would like to strongly urge the students be involved if the motion
 489 passed.

490 Ms. Behm commented that the one thing that has become very clear in the past 9 months is that
 491 we can do hard things, especially when it is in the best interest of our students. It takes
 492 cooperation, preparation, and flexibility, but it is possible.

493 This is my second term on the Amherst School Board. I led the original committee to review
 494 start times when I was an eager new board member. And some members of my committee were
 495 very familiar with the issue as they had tried to make a change 10 years before. And they learned
 496 lots from the group who tried 10 years before that. We have been discussing this for a very long
 497 time, and the science has only become stronger to support the respected recommendations which
 498 have emerged that middle and high school students should not be in a classroom before 8:30 a.m.
 499 Period. That’s the charter we started with.

500 There has been far less conclusive study done toward ideal times for elementary-aged students;
 501 however, preliminary studies and anecdotal evidence suggest they benefit from fewer transitions
 502 before school, have greater attention span earlier in the day, and ending their day sooner allows
 503 enough time to pursue extra curriculums before getting to bed sooner than older students. Overall,
 504 a net positive. Their circadian rhythms are actually different and skew earlier than adolescents.

505 So, what has held us back until now? There are lots of logistics involved in such a change!
 506 That’s why we are making a decision now so there is time to plan with the community,
 507 businesses, athletics, etc. We know most of the challenges and have researched best practices
 508 from others on how to tackle them. Still, change is tough. But we can do hard things that are in
 509 the best interest of our students.

510 Athletic directors, you will likely get pushback when you say we can’t start games until 4 p.m.
 511 and can’t show up for games until a little later than we currently do. We aren’t the only SAU in
 512 the state asking for such accommodations, but we will still be in the minority at first. If they
 513 grumble, you can tell them what my parents told me. We don’t care what your friends’ parents
 514 do; they are not our responsibility—you are. We are doing what we believe is best for the

515 students we are responsible for in our SAU. And if they still gripe, the other thing my parents
516 told me was blame us. So, go ahead and blame the stupid school boards and, what did Adam call
517 himself for a while, our mediocre intendent?

518 I was also a proud community representative of the Souhegan Community Council longer than
519 I've served on the school board. I know there is not a universal desire from our high school
520 students to start the day later. To that I say I haven't met a teenager yet who loved their curfew,
521 but they negotiate with their parents and figure it out. This affects the entire SAU, not just
522 upperclassmen with jobs or a particular sport. I am not on the Community Council this year, but
523 I have full faith and challenge them to partner with the administration to look at what did and not
524 work this year with very different schedules and see what will benefit students most within the
525 parameters of these new times. Off the top of my head, maybe having the extremely important
526 SHS Club Block move from 45 minutes after school every day to select days. Make every effort
527 to ensure AP and hand-on core classes aren't scheduled last period so student athletes don't miss
528 instruction it's hard to make up (which is already an ongoing issue for student athletes). Study
529 periods might move to end of day, and I'd love to see more kids taking advantage of Extended
530 Learning Opportunities and internships in the afternoon. Everything should be on the table and
531 your voices and experiences matter to make this work for everyone!

532 For elementary parents, maybe your older kids currently help get your youngers ones off the bus
533 in the afternoon. Now, they might help put them on the bus in the morning instead. We'll listen
534 and help as you figure it out. If you have older students, you might miss some sit-down dinners
535 at home, but you will likely gain the ability to see more of their games. Nothing wrong with a
536 post-game family pizza now and then!

537 One final hat I'll mention wearing is being trained for CERT, which stands for Community
538 Emergency Response Team. They drilled into us that we should strive to do the greatest amount
539 of good for the greatest number. This is not an easy thing, but it is the right thing for the greatest
540 number of students in our charge. And we can do hard things TOGETHER that are in the best
541 interest of our students.

542 Ms. Gruzdien asked about the end times for the day.

543 Mr. Steel replied 3:00PM for the elementary schools and 3:45 PM for the middle and high
544 school.

545 Mr. Glover added that he is a great supporter of this. He added that now that he is on the SCSB
546 their concerns are sharper in clarity for him. He added that the motion contains broad language
547 and they need to have a plan.

548 Ms. Taylor remarked that it is 8:45AM start for the high school and it is an hour and a half
549 change. They have limited lighted fields and 70% of the high school plays sports.

550 Ms. Facey mentioned that they did have a committee that did a lot of work. She would also like
551 to see a plan before they voted. Perhaps they would add additional information then they would
552 reserve the right to rescind their approval. The science is clear, and they need to move forward

553 with this. She trusts the Superintendent and administrators to do their work. She suggested an
554 amendment to the motion.

555 **Ms. Facey motioned to keep the same motion that was presented and also request that the**
556 **Superintendent present a plan to the SCSB by Feb 2021 that addresses the interconnected**
557 **factors associated with the proposal. Should the SCSB not be satisfied with the**
558 **Superintendent’s plan, the Board reserves the right to rescind their approval. Ms. Grund**
559 **seconded the motion.**

560 Mr. O’Keefe asked for discussion in regard to Ms. Facey’s motion.

561 Ms. Kuzsma inquired if the SCSB rescinds, does that mean rescind for everyone.

562 Mr. Steel replied that he would not be able to implement the change next year if any of the three
563 boards isn’t in support due to bussing. It would have to come back to the SAU Board to be sorted
564 out.

565 If he is understanding Ms. Facey’s motion, is that the SAU Board is making a commitment that
566 this is the right thing to do and we’re going to go forward with it. The plans need to be shown at
567 the individual board level and if any of the boards has an issue with it none of them are going
568 forward with it in the fall because they won’t be able to do that with the busses. He is confident
569 that they will come up with a plan and is confident in Principal Berry.

570 Ms. Behm commented that they should go into this with an open mind.

571 Ms. Facey clarified that she is not looking to find issues with implementation. She just wants to
572 address the factors and have a more detailed plan.

573 Ms. Grund added that she is in support of the amendment and has multiple things that she wants
574 to talk about.

575 Mr. Grondstra mentioned that he agrees with the amendment, however, there are other schools
576 involved.

577 Mr. O’Keefe noted that it is implied. When they look at the SAU Board, they look at the best
578 possible strategy and if any individual board needs additional time, he will gladly grant that time.
579 He believes that it is time to move this ship forward and they have been discussing this for the
580 past three years. There is a lot of scientific data to support the change and their district is very
581 innovative.

582 He called for a vote on the motion to amend.

583 **Kuzsma-Yes, Gauthier- No, Behm- Yes, Gruzdien- Yes, Conklin- Yes, Grondstra- Abstain**
584 **(Ms. Facey reread the motion Mr. Grondstra noted that he has an issue with it) Facey- Yes,**
585 **Coughlan- Yes, Taylor- Yes, Torres- Yes, Grund- Yes, Glover- Yes, Lawrence- Yes,**
586 **Eckhoff- Yes , O’Keefe- Yes, Hinckley- Yes, St. Denis- Not Present, (14 yes, 1 no 1**
587 **abstention) Motion passed.**

588

589

590
 591 **Mr. O’Keefe amended the second motion to add in ASB and MVSB. Mr. Coughlan second**
 592 **the motion. (16 yes, 1 not present) Motion passed.**

593
 594 Mr. O’Keefe asked for discussion.

595 Ms. Facey gave her support.

596 **Mr. O’Keefe called a roll call: Kuzsma-Yes, Gauthier- Yes, Behm- Yes, Gruzdien- Yes,**
 597 **Conklin- Yes, Grondstra- Yes, Facey- Yes, Coughlan- Yes, Taylor- Yes, Torres- Yes,**
 598 **Grund- Yes, Glover- Yes, Lawrence- Yes, O’Keefe- Yes, Hinckley- Yes, St. Denis- Not**
 599 **Present, and Eckhoff- Yes.**

600
 601 Mr. O’Keefe went back to the original motion now that it has been amended twice.

602
 603 Ms. Grund mentioned that she agrees with the science in behind the later start times although she
 604 has concerns. She noted her concern with Club time, missing academic time. It will get darker
 605 sooner and there are kids running and they do not have lights. They need to figure out how it is
 606 going to work with the CTE students. She is trying to figure out a more amenable time.

607 Mr. O’Keefe asked if she can put her questions in writing to Superintendent Steel for Feb 2021.

608 Mr. Conklin referenced Mr. Coughlan’s statement at a previous Deliberative Session “the goal of
 609 the Board is to do the most good for the most students”. He then spoke about the culture at
 610 Souhegan. He feels that their school is strong enough to withstand the changes.

611 Ms. Taylor mentioned that Sept 7th is the start date for next year. She is asking if they can add
 612 days to potentially shorten the day.

613 Mr. O’Keefe thanked Ms. Taylor.

614 **Mr. O’Keefe called a vote on the change of start times to adopt as a district- wide policy as**
 615 **amended: Kuzsma-Yes, Gauthier- Yes, Behm- Yes, Gruzdien- Yes, Conklin- Yes,**
 616 **Grondstra- Yes, Facey- Yes, Coughlan- Yes, Taylor- No, Torres- Yes, Grund- Yes,**
 617 **Glover- Yes, Lawrence- Yes, O’Keefe- Yes, Hinckley- Yes, St. Denis- Not Present, and**
 618 **Eckhoff- No. (14 yes, 2 no) Motion passed.**

619
 620 X. Bus RFP

621 Mr. Steel added that he has provided information to the Board in the past couple of days. He
 622 applauded Assistant Superintendent, Ms. Christine Landwehrle for all of her work. The bus RFP
 623 has been included and he can discuss the specifics in Non-public session.

624 This fall, they conducted a request for proposals for bus transportation services. Although three
 625 vendors showed interest in the RFP, only one, the incumbent, provided a proposal. The other two
 626 interested vendors stated that market conditions with driver availability was the reason they did
 627 not provide a proposal.

628 After negotiations with the incumbent vendor, they have agreed on the following conditions: 1-
 629 A 5-year extension to the current contract; 2- A daily rate of \$348 per day per bus with a 2%
 630 escalation each year for 5 years total; 3- A requirement for 5 buses per year to be replaced with
 631 new buses so that each bus is new by the 5th year; 4- A waiver of the bonding requirement in the
 632 RFP (which adds \$2.30 per day per bus); 5- Acceptance of additional safety requirements in each
 633 bus (additional cameras, Zonar, and Child Checkmate); 6- The right for the SAU to operate our
 634 own athletic and/or field trip buses at our discretion as long as we do not use any Butler Bus
 635 Company drivers; and, 7- Some other minor contractual changes to the existing contract required
 636 by law or school district policy.

637 **Mr. Glover motioned to accept the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools to**
 638 **enter into a 5- year extension to school bus transportation services at a daily rate of \$348**
 639 **per day per bus with a 2% increase each year subject to the successful contractual**
 640 **negotiation by the Superintendent with Butler Bus Company and to authorize the**
 641 **Superintendent of Schools to carry out any actions necessary to enact this agreement. Ms.**
 642 **Facey seconded the motion.**

643 Mr. O’Keefe asked for discussion.

644 Ms. Kuzsma asked about Child Checkmate and Zonar.

645 Mr. Steel explained that Child Checkmate is to protect from sleeping children and Zonar is for
 646 bus maintenance but for them is for GPS. He will be able to log in and see where the bus is for
 647 parent concerns. He can also see the speed, braking etc.

648 Mr. Glover gave his appreciation for the work that was done and is pleased to work with Butler
 649 Bus Company again.

650 **Kuzsma-Yes, Gauthier- Yes, Behm- Yes, Gruzdien- Yes, Conklin- Yes, Grondstra- Yes,**
 651 **Facey- Yes, Coughlan- Yes, Taylor- Yes, Torres- Yes, Grund- Yes, Glover- Yes,**
 652 **Lawrence- Yes, O’Keefe- Yes, Hinckley- Yes, St. Denis- Not Present, and Eckhoff- Yes.**
 653 **Motion passed.**

654

655 XI. Public Comment II of II

656 No Public Comment

657 XII. Meeting Adjourned

658 Mr. O’Keefe mentioned that after the last SAU meeting, he has received feedback on the
 659 meeting. He is trying to give them more structure, and equitable time with the meeting. He
 660 wished the Board and Administrators a safe and happy Thanksgiving.

661 **Mr. O’Keefe adjourned the meeting at 9:00PM.**

662

663

664