

MINUTES
SAU BOARD MEETING
October 26, 2006
Souhegan High School Annex, Room A222

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Chairperson John Schwope called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.

CALL TO ORDER

Present:

ATTENDANCE

Souhegan Cooperative School Board: Steve Coughlan, Janet Gaynor (arrived 6:08 p.m.), Jeanne Ludt, John Rizzi (arrived 6:17 p.m.), Phyllis Thomas and John Walsh.

Amherst School Board: Dwight Brew, Deborah Cort, Pam Dudoff, Nancy Head (arrived at 6:23 p.m.), and Jim O'Mara (arrived at 6:05 p.m.)

Mont Vernon School Board: Howard Brown, John Schwope, and Leo White.

Administrative Team: Dr. Mary Jennings, Nicole Heimarck, Elizabeth Shankel, and Kathy Skoglund.

Minutes Recorder: Lyn Jennings

Dr. Jennings said board members were given their copy of News & Notes at tonight's board meeting.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Dr. Jennings said the upcoming NH School Board Association meeting is scheduled for November 4, 2006 and each board can appoint a delegate and an alternate to attend the meeting. She said if a board was planning on sending someone, contact the School Board Association. Dr. Jennings said Jan Phelps resigned her position on the Souhegan School Board, and said this information was in News & Notes.

The Souhegan School Board has advertised for the vacant position and they plan on holding interviews on November 9, 2006. The deadline for expressing interest to serve on the board is November 1, 2006.

Steve Coughlan said if board members know of someone interested in serving on the Souhegan Board, let them know there is a position open.

John Schwope invited comments from the Public but none were forthcoming.

PUBLIC/PRESENTATIONS

- A. FY08 Budget Proposal – 1st Draft – Board members received the first draft of the SAU 39 FY08 Budget dated October 26, 2006.

Dr. Jennings explained the budget would be presented

in two installments – the first installment will include the budget assumptions and the second installment will include the assumptions from the administration as well as the board.

Dr. Jennings explained no votes or decisions would be made at tonight's meeting, it was just a presentation to establish the assumptions.

Dr. Jennings said at the initial meeting of the individual boards, they would establish their own district assumptions.

Betty Shankel presented some background information regarding the FY08 Budget Proposal:

- Research substantiates at least 3.6% increase in cost of living through July 2006.
- Assume an 8.2% increase in health insurance premiums, a 1% increase in dental insurance premiums, a 5% increase in other insurances for FY08.
- NH Retirement increase from 6.81% to 8.74%.
- Additional positions added to the SAU staff in FY08 are treated as separate budget proposals.

Betty presented the following FY08 Budget Proposal Highlights:

Betty explained the SAU Budget is personnel driven – 91.3%.

- Salaries of 22 full and part-time administrators and support staff comprise 68.5% of budget (\$1,143,831).
- Benefits (insurances, FICA, NH retirement contributions, courses and conferences) comprise 22.5% of budget (\$376,222).
- Food Service Secretary, Accountant and Purchasing positions were eliminated and Human Resources Director and Bookkeeper positions were added in recent SAU reorganization.
- Courses and Conferences increased to reflect new staff at the director level. Supports the professional development of all personnel at the SAU at various levels of funding.
- Travel decrease more accurately budgets for the number of staff attending meetings, workshops and other professional development activities throughout the state and region.
- Requests for additional equipment reflect the need for improved working conditions for some positions, as well as replacement computer

equipment.

- Utilities have leveled off somewhat with electricity up 7% and heating oil level funded.

The SAU 39 FY08 Baseline Summary was presented:

- Increase is 2.51% over the FY07 Budget.
- Personnel Driven – salary increases at rate of inflation or higher to bring salaries to competitive levels.
- Projected 8.2%, 1%, and 5% increases to health, dental and other insurances respectively.
- NH Retirement increases from 6.81% to 8.74%.
- Reflects increases for professional development and electricity and decrease in travel.

Betty said she would be presenting Alternative Proposals.

- Board members had three budget proposals for consideration.
- Administration sensitive to the need to be fiscally responsible.
- Simultaneously, need to budget responsibly for continued high level of service SAU wide by creating economy of scale and improved services for students, staff and residents of Amherst and Mont Vernon communities.

Budget Proposal #1 was summarized as follows:

- Create New Position – English Language Arts Coordinator
 - Vertical, seamless literacy curriculum across all districts.
 - Common instructional practice.
 - Concrete evidence of student growth.
 - Reduction in Special Education referrals.
 - Abundant evidence of teacher application of literacy expectations at all grade levels.
 - Cross building/district collaboration.

Nicole Heimarck said she sees this as an SAU level position. She said it was similar to the position, which was drafted last year as a Literacy Coach. She said the individual whom was hired would be embedded in the schools, on a daily basis working with the teachers on curriculum.

Dr. Jennings said she could see this leading into a vertical structure across districts. The example she gave was they could also have a Math Coordinator as an SAU level position.

Jeanne Ludt asked if any of the Lawrence Spaulding

money had been used yet.

Nicole said at this time, none of the money has been accessed yet.

Steve Coughlan asked how the staff was regarding the changes proposed.

Nicole said the Principals are completely on board with this proposal. Nicole said the Principals agree they need to move in a vertical direction and by creating this position, it would be a start towards moving in the right direction.

Steve asked assuming this position works and improves students reading and writing, will it be a forever job or would it be phased out.

Nicole said she sees this as a forever job. She said she believes it's important to always move forward.

Nicole said the English Language Arts Coordinator would be constantly in the classrooms working with teachers.

Janet Gaynor said she thinks this proposal is an excellent idea and long overdue.

Janet asked what type of education and qualifications this position would require.

Nicole read from a draft document created last year but said it was not finalized yet. Nicole highlighted a couple of qualifications – a Masters, proficient in Reading and Instruction, previously collaborated or held a coaching position, adept at keying in on different personalities or learning styles.

Jeanne Ludt wondered if the person would have a larger impact in grades K-8 or 9-12 or all grades.

Nicole said the person wouldn't be isolated in an elementary focus.

Kathy Skoglund said they have literacy concerns across the board and the administrations focus is different at each level. Kathy said the focus in primary grades is pre-reading and language skills and in grades 9-12 teachers need to understand how kids are reading in their content area.

Dwight Brew asked if this person would be involved in teacher evaluations. The administration said they would like this person to become involved in the evaluation process if at all possible.

Budget Proposal #2 was summarized as follows:

- Create New Position – Maintenance Specialist
 - SAU Maintenance Specialist will be available to all districts for repairs and training in repairs for plumbing, electrical, carpentry, along with other maintenance issues.

- Less hiring of outside vendors will result in savings and better service in all districts.

The administration believes by hiring a Maintenance Specialist, they will reduce their costs to hire outside specialists.

Betty Shankel provided the board with an example – she said the SAU needed a fuse changed at the SAU office and to get the necessary work done, it cost \$185. Betty said if a Maintenance Specialist was on staff, this would have cost the SAU a lot less.

Budget Proposal #3 was summarized as follows:

- Purchase Website Content Management Software
 - Enable a better use of website by all schools and departments.
 - Fits with Districts' and SAU goal of improved communication.

This proposal was being presented to the board as a result of comments by members of the board regarding website management and content management.

Nicole Heimareck said with this software, you don't need to be a Web Developer or Web Master. You can have someone as a page creator, a page editor, or an approver.

Nicole suggested board members go to the companies website www.ektron.com.

A summary of the FY08 Budget was presented:

- Baseline Budget Increase – 2.51%
- English Language Arts Coordinator – 5.28% increase (\$85,960)
- Maintenance Specialist – 3.60% (\$58,610)
- Website Content Management Software - .55% Increase (\$9,000)
- Total Baseline + All Proposals – 11.94% increase
- Total Budget + All Proposals \$1,822,755

Board members were asked to provide comments and ask questions.

Jeanne Ludt said she is in support of the recommendations of the proposals however we can always justify new positions. Jeanne said we keep growing and growing and adding more, she said it should be a warning for all of us to think about it carefully.

Pam Dudoff said we should explain to the public we are not just adding a position to add positions. Pam said as an example, if we add an English Language Arts Coordinator, and catch learning issues early, we could save the district a lot of money in the end.

Pam suggested the SAU office determine how much is

being spent on outside vendors and what could be saved if an internal person was used to perform these repairs. By providing this data, Pam said it would show the public this was a good management decision.

Dwight Brew said tonight they were presented with an additional \$153,000 in proposals. Dwight said the approximate cost to Amherst would be \$75,000. Dwight said board members need to determine where they want to spend the \$75,000.

Dwight asked what the Maintenance Specialist would be responsible for when not responding to emergencies. Betty said in the SAU buildings there is always work to be done.

John Walsh said Jim Miner should quantify the request. John asked that Jim Miner outline the full time need. John said Jim should share with the board a state of the state – where the needs are in each building and whether they are over or under staffed in their respective building.

Jeanne Ludt asked if the SAU Budget Committee has seen these proposals yet.

Some members of the administration said they were not aware there was a SAU Budget Committee that reviewed the budget proposals.

Board members explained in the past, the committee was comprised of members from the Ways & Means Committee as well as the Finance Committee and a citizen nominee from each school board.

The administration agreed they would coordinate a meeting so the SAU budget could be reviewed.

Jim suggested the board waive the policy and invite the committee to the next board meeting.

Dr. Jennings said perhaps we could invite the members of the SAU Budget Committee to the next SAU Board meeting.

Dwight asked how the administration would make sure the person in Budget Proposal #1 and Budget Proposal #2 were being utilized proportionately between schools/districts.

Pam suggested the administration provide the following data – In the past, the SAU has spent X \$ on vendors. If the Maintenance Specialist is approved, the SAU could save X \$, therefore, X \$ could be pulled from the district budgets.

Pam said regarding the English Language Arts Coordinator show how there could be a cost savings.

Along with the job description Pam suggested the administration provide a cost savings estimate for years 1-3 if this position was approved.

Steve Coughlan said he thinks Proposal #1 is a good idea. Steve also agreed with Proposal #3 because of his comments at the last meeting.

Pam Dudoff said if the administration took enough money out of the individual budgets to justify the savings the Maintenance Specialist would encumber, then she thinks this position would be okay with the voters since it would show the SAU is operating more efficiently.

Jeanne suggested the SAU look at a Handyman because this way, the district would save money. Jeanne said use an outside vendor on retainer rather than an SAU staff position.

Dr. Jennings said this was a good suggestion and the administration would look into this recommendation.

A. SAU Goals – Dr. Jennings reviewed with board members the handout, which was presented to board members at the last SAU meeting. **ACTION ITEMS**

Dr. Jennings said after reviewing the goals of the individual districts, she saw three things in common:

- 1) Individual Student Achievement
- 2) Improve Communications
- 3) Provide Facilities Planning

Dr. Jennings said she was proposing these be the goals of the SAU Board.

A motion was made by Pam Dudoff and seconded by Nancy Head to accept the SAU goals as presented by Dr. Jennings.

Discussion amongst board members followed.

Phyllis Thomas said she liked the idea of these being the goals of the SAU however she just wondered if facilities planning was too easy to have as a goal.

Dr. Jennings said by approving these goals as SAU goals, they were providing the staff with some guidance as to what should be a priority at the board meetings for the rest of the year.

John Walsh said the SAU budget should be in line with the SAU goals.

Board members voted on the motion to approve the SAU goals as presented by Dr. Jennings. All members of the board voted in favor of the motion and the motion passed.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. SAU Strategic Plan Proposal – Board members received a memo from Mary Jennings dated October 24, 2006, entitled Strategic Planning Team Proposal.

Dr. Jennings provided some background information for the proposed formation of a Strategic Planning Team.

Dr. Jennings said the SAU approved the allocation of \$10,000 for consulting services. She said if this plan were approved, some of this money would be used by the Strategic Planning Team.

In the memo, Dr. Jennings said in order to address the continuation of the goal-setting process with an emphasis on SAU wide goals, the Superintendent proposes the establishment of a Strategic Planning Team.

Dr. Jennings outlined the process they would follow:

The SAU Board would vote to establish an SAU Strategic Planning Team with the expectation that this team would

- Hire a consultant to lead the process
- Review all goals established by the district boards and the SAU
- Review previous work done on the mission statement and strategic planning
- Collect current planning documents and processes and assess how the work of the strategic planning team might be coordinated with existing groups (Professional Development Committee, Technology Plan Committee, Wellness Strategic Plan)
- Collect information gleaned from the superintendent's entry process

After reviewing current practices and documents, the Strategic Planning Team (SPT) would craft no more than 5 five-year goals for the SAU.

After crafting the long-term goals, action teams, led by members of the SPT, would participate in creating action plans for each year of the goal.

The goals and the action plans would be presented to the SAU School Board for acceptance.

Dr. Jennings suggested the following Membership to be appointed by the SAU Chair:

- 3 School Board members, one from each district
- The SAU Board Chair
- The Superintendent
- 3 Parent representatives, one from each district

- 2 Administrators – one elementary, one secondary
- 3 Teacher representatives, one from each district
- 2 Community representatives, one from each town
- 2 Students, one middle school, one high school
- 2 Support staff representatives

The Timeline was also presented and included:

November: Advertise Strategic Planning Committee vacancies.

December: Appoint members, Hire Consultant, Establish first meeting.

January-February: Three full-day meetings with 3 after-school evening meetings to accomplish the work of the Committee

March: Board votes on goals, Action Teams formed.

March-April: Action Teams meet to craft Action Plans.

May: Board votes on Action Plans. Establishes goals for 2007-08 and 2008-09 school years.

Board members provided feedback regarding the Strategic Planning Team proposal.

Dwight Brew thought it was an excellent idea.

Leo White said the proposal was very well thought through. Leo asked what the role of the consultant would be.

Dr. Jennings said the process needs to be neutral and by hiring a consultant, this would be the case. She said by having a consultant, there are no pre-conceived ideas.

Dr. Jennings said crafting goals can be a tricky process and by having a consultant, they help to push the process along.

Nancy Head asked if she had done this before and if it was valuable.

Dr. Jennings said she has been involved with this process three different times, and each time it was successful.

Nancy said the committee seemed large.

Dr. Jennings said if the board had any suggestions on cutting it down, to let her know.

Jim O'Mara said he applauded Dr. Jennings for developing such a road map that would address the future.

John Schwoppe asked if some of the \$10,000 could be used to have the all day meeting off site. Dr. Jennings

said yes, some of the money would be used to have the all day meetings offsite.

Jim O'Mara suggested maybe the SAU board could do this so not so many people would have to give up five days of their own time.

Dr. Jennings said this wouldn't be a good idea because then it would become the boards Strategic Plan rather than achieving broader perspectives from such a diverse group.

Jim suggested maybe they cut the number of offsite days down from three to two. Dr. Jennings said she could advertise it as a guaranteed two days offsite and a possible third day.

A motion was made by Jim O'Mara and seconded by Deborah Cort to approve the Strategic Plan Team Proposal as presented by Superintendent Jennings and to consider a rearranging the number of committee members based on board feedback.

All members of the board voted in favor of the motion and the motion passed.

Steve Coughlan requested the Approval of the Minutes (VI. C) be removed from the Consent Agenda. Jim O'Mara requested the Acceptance of Funds (VI. D) be removed from the Consent Agenda. **CONSENT AGENDA**

A motion was made by Dwight Brew and seconded by Steve Coughlan to approve Consent Agenda items A and B (Treasurer's Report – September 2006 and Manifest – September 2006).

All board members voted in favor of the motion and the motion passed.

A motion was made by Dwight Brew and seconded by Steve Coughlan to approve the minutes of October 5, 2006, as amended. All board members voted in favor of the motion and the motion passed. There were two abstentions, Pam Dudoff and Jayson Darula.

A motion was made by Jim O'Mara and seconded by Pam Dudoff to table the approval to accept the funds of the NHCF-Boutelle Grant until the Superintendent provides a report at the next meeting. All members of the board voted in favor of the motion and the motion passed.

Jeanne Ludt said she understands the four board chairs meet with the Superintendent on a regular basis. Jeanne said she would love to get an update as to what they discuss. **OTHER**

John Schwope suggested Steve Coughlan provide this information to it's board members at the monthly

Souhegan meetings. Steve agreed to provide this information to members of his board.

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Phyllis moved to adjourn the meeting, Nancy Head **ADJOURN** seconded and the Board voted unanimously of the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 7:50 p.m.