

MINUTES
SOUHEGAN COOPERATIVE SCHOOL BOARD
November 17, 2005
Souhegan High School Information Center

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Chairperson John Walsh called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.

CALL TO ORDER

Present:

ATTENDANCE

Souhegan Cooperative School Board: John Walsh, Jeanne Ludt, Jan Phelps, Phyllis Thomas, John Rizzi, Janet Gaynor, and Steve Coughlan

Administrative Team: Howard Colter, Susan Ward, Scott Prescott, Colleen Meaney, and Kathy Skoglund

Finance Committee: Art Faint and Christine Morley

Faculty: Melissa Chapman, Susan Mann, Gary Schnakenberg, Donna Corcoran-Schwartz, and Beth Woodbury

Minutes Recorder: Terri Connolly

John Walsh invited comments from the public, but none were forthcoming.

PUBLIC TIME

Jeanne Ludt reported Community Council approved the 15-minute rule. The rule stipulates that if a teacher does not show up at the beginning of class within the first 15 minutes (without an explanation), the class will designate a student to take attendance and the sign-in sheet will be taken to the attendance office. Students can leave after 15 minutes, however, the sign-in sheet must indicate where they are in the event the teacher wants to reconvene class.

COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Phyllis Thomas moved to accept the minutes of November 3, 2005 and Steve Coughlan seconded the motion. The minutes were accepted as amended:

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 3, 2005

Page 695, 1st paragraph, 2nd line, change to read: "...Souhegan Cooperative Finance Advisory Committee..."

Page 695, 1st paragraph, 3rd and 4th lines, change: DeShambeau to DeChambeau, Dodd to Dod, Alysse Desmay to Allise Desmet

Page 695, 4th paragraph, 1st line, change to read: "Jeanne reported a website was being created and is designed to..."

Page 696, 4th paragraph, 1st line, change: Merdeau to Murdough

Page 696, 4th paragraph, 6th line, delete "do"

Page 699, 6th paragraph, 2nd line, change: project to position

The motion passed.

Phyllis Thomas approved and signed the manifest.

**MANIFEST
APPROVAL**

**BUSINESS AND
INSTRUCTION
School Yard Garden
Project Proposal**

Melissa Chapman, Susan Mann, Gary Schnakenberg, Donna Corcoran-Schwartz, and Beth Woodbury presented information on the schoolyard garden project and requested Board approval on the proposal to participate in an EPA grant proposed by Dr. Rebecca Martusewicz from Eastern Michigan University. If the grant is approved, there will be four participating districts involved and all districts will receive travel funds for 3 to 4 staff members to participate in a retreat as well as a \$2,000 - \$2,500 stipend to support follow up work on the project.

The faculty presented recognizable benefits to the district, which include curriculum enhancement through sustainability education that could provide opportunities for program continuity within the district, integration across curricular areas, differentiated learning environments for at risk and special needs students, school and community connections within the Souhegan Valley, and career training for non-college bound students. There are several direct connections and links with specific curricular areas including life sciences, social studies, technology, health and wellness, and life skills.

Howard Colter noted he enthusiastically endorsed the proposal and, if approved, the project had great potential in bringing teachers together throughout the school system as well as a variety of other possible advantages. Scott Prescott also noted his endorsement of the program and added he did not see any significant impact on the budget.

The faculty presenters also noted part of the teacher retreat will be over the over a weekend. The non-weekend days will be designated as part of continuing education, which would require a substitute. Gary Schnakenberg reported a projected savings, as Dr. Martusewicz normally charges an \$800.00 per day consulting fee, but will not charge the SAU.

There was a brief discussion regarding upcoming use of the greenhouse and it was noted the ventilation did not work properly. A \$200 PTSA grant has been given to address the matter. Susan Ward noted the ventilation in the locker room has already been addressed, but she could call in the vendor to address this matter as well.

Steve Coughlan noted he hoped the project would be SAU-wide and questioned how other districts, within the SAU, can participate in the project, to which it was noted the commitment letter would allow the SAU on the grant and then there would be a concerted effort in integrating the project district wide.

Steve Coughlan moved to approve that the Superintendent sign the letter of commitment, as discussed. Janet Gaynor seconded the motion. All Board Members voted in favor of the motion. The motion passed.

Susan Ward presented a FY'07 Preliminary Budget Review. Susan presented information regarding SHS goals, which include differentiated instruction and programs to meet the needs of all learners. As such, instructional staff must continue to develop their ability to meet the requirements of students with a broad range of learning styles and professional development opportunities that encourage and allow staff members to refine skills to meet instructional demand. Susan noted the technology need and addition of textbooks to maintain materials for curriculum areas. Sustained professional development for staff also assures that teachers maintain the skills essential to delivering challenging curriculum in creative ways. Susan thanked Scott Prescott and Rhonda Donaldson for their efforts to developing the proposed FY'07 budget, and noted the numbers presented are preliminary. It was agreed the Board would submit questions to the SAU office and those questions would be addressed prior to the next Board meeting. There was a request for a simple notation as to why an item has increased and Art Faint suggested breaking down the salary line and academic stipend.

**Proposed FY'07
Budget**

Jeanne Ludt noted there were significant percentage increases in some special education accounts, to which Scott Prescott responded the increases are based upon relatively low expense items. Kathy Skoglund added there has been a factor in more program expenses for students not going out-of-district and materials for the NOVEL program. Kathy also noted she will meet with Scott and the Finance Advisory Committee before presenting the entire special education budget.

Scott reported there should not be a significant change in the next budget rendition, which should be expected in a couple of weeks (with the exception of the special education element). Scott added there are projected increases in special education, technology, and heating, and the salary component is unknown at this time. Scott noted he has asked Kathy White to create a technology cycle plan to evenly distribute replacement costs over a number of years. Kathy is

developing a 6-year plan and Scott will present that spreadsheet at a future meeting.

Susan Ward reported the preliminary budget is using a 10% increase in insurance costs, and she would know if there is an increase or decrease by the next meeting.

Steve Coughlan suggested the Board and Finance Advisory Committee view a technology presentation as it pertains to SHS technology needs and improvements; Steve added he would see if the presentation would be available for the next meeting.

Art Faint commended Susan, Scott and Rhonda for their presentation and in establishing goals and objectives for strategic planning. Art questioned if the district was trying to do everything at once or should there be an incremental implementation with a yearly review of actual goals accomplished, to which Susan reported this is a multiple year effort and the goals presented would not be accomplished in one year. Susan will also be working on a multi-year budget next year.

The Board reviewed the soccer club contract resolution measures and Steve Coughlan reported the Amherst Soccer Club has accepted the contract in theory. The ASC Board has to meet and approve the contract resolution, but Steve believed the settlement agreement has support from those who have seen it so far.

Soccer Club Contract Resolution

Jan Phelps moved to authorize the Board Chair to sign the settlement agreement, as presented. John Rizzi seconded the motion. All Board Members voted in favor of the motion. The motion passed.

Janet Gaynor presented a wellness room update; Janet noted the RFPs have been distributed, the fundraising initiative is underway, and there have been multiple meetings between the committee, administration, and Bruce Wasson to determine use for storage space within the current facilities. Janet reported the wellness program uses space in the gym, mini-gym, hallway, weight room and café in the Annex. After reviewing the space needs, the committee is recommending eliminating the storage areas and focusing on space for wellness classes. The proposed space is estimated to be 4,000 square feet, which will include a fitness room, wellness room and corridor. Janet distributed the proposed floor plan design to the Board for review.

Wellness Room Update

Janet reported the projected construction costs would be \$440,000 (this amount does not include soft costs, such as a construction manager, site testing, contingency fee, etc.). When asked if the equipment would be included as a soft cost, Janet noted she hoped the fund raising initiative will cover equipment costs. Janet added she felt there is a legitimate need for this space [for wellness] and there have been multiple year requests for additional space. The Annex was built to address space needs, but the area for wellness is not practical. Special education students, who currently use the ticket booth room for physical therapy, will use the current weight room (under the new proposed plan). Janet indicated the committee would like to move forward with the project and requested the Board approve the commitment letter with Fulcrum Associates for preconstruction services. Janet also reported the project would be eligible for state aid and John Rizzi briefly explained the formula used in determining if state aid is available.

Steve Coughlan noted he appreciated all the work the committee has done and that he had two personal goals for the project, which include not asking for more than \$100,000 from voters and getting rid of the trailers. Steve added he is concerned the cost request to the voters is higher than \$100,000 and the proposed project does not address storage needs, to which Jeanne reported two of the trailers can be eliminated simply by throwing and moving many of the items away.

Jan Phelps expressed concern regarding the projected costs for the wellness center and the technology needs of SHS, to which John Walsh questioned if the project could be implemented in two phases. Jeanne reported a two-phase implementation may interfere with the anticipated ASD project and would cost more to have the work done over a two-year period.

Janet Gaynor reported the committee has received and reviewed bids and is recommending Fulcrum Associates for the construction project. Janet added the competitive bid process did lower the costs, as the construction fees are 5% (down from 8%) and will be capped at \$30,000.00; there will be no preconstruction fees if the bond fails. Fulcrum Associates has a fast track program whereby work will be completed around the school schedule. Janet also noted the principal owner is an Amherst resident (with children in school) and is committed in keeping project costs as low as possible.

Howard Colter questioned if the Board is comfortable with approving the commitment letter and moving forward with the project.

Art Faint suggested letters be sent to the other construction firms notifying them that SHS is going with Fulcrum, to which Janet agreed she will send letters to the other bidders.

Jeanne Ludt moved the Board authorize the Superintendent to sign the contractor agreement with Fulcrum Associates to engage construction management services for the proposed Wellness Center under the terms agreed upon. John Rizzi seconded the motion.

Phyllis Thomas expressed her concern about the cost and suggested a possible two-year fundraising effort, as was done in Hollis.

Jan Phelps questioned what the obligation would be to Fulcrum Associations if the Board chooses not to go forward with the project and pulls the warrant, to which Janet Gaynor reported there would be no preconstruction fees.

Cheryl Ross questioned if the committee has accounted for the costs of additional heating, lighting and equipment maintenance. Cheryl noted she supports educational matters over wellness initiatives and is concerned about the other space needs within the ASD, to which Janet Gaynor responded the committee has tried to remain sensitive to the needs of the other districts and when requests from those districts will be made to the taxpayers. SHS does not want to compete for the same tax dollars, but the committee does not want to push the wellness project out another 3 to 5 years.

All Board Members voted in favor of the motion. The motion passed.

Howard Colter signed the agreement letter for the construction management services.

The Board conducted a second reading of Policy GCG, the Substitute Pay Policy, and Steve Coughlan moved to adopt policy GCG, as provided in the packets. Jan Phelps seconded the motion. All Board Members voted in favor of the motion. The motion passed.

**Policy GCG:
Substitute Pay Policy
– 2nd Reading**

Scott Prescott notified the Board he would be increasing a part-time teacher's work schedule by one period per day. The increase in hours is within the budget and the teacher is still part-time. This item was informational for the Board.

**PERSONNEL
Proposal for
Increasing a Part-
Time Teacher's
Working Periods per
Day**

The Board briefly reviewed the coaching stipends. Scott reported most of the coaching positions were voluntary, however, there were a couple of coaches, for winter season sports, who still have to meet with Bill Dodd. There was some discussion regarding Board action in approving the stipends, to which Howard Colter suggested the Board to approve the list, as presented, and authorize the Principal to move forward to offer employment to coaches with the understanding the list would be brought before the Board for approval at the next meeting.

Nomination of Coaches

There was a question as to why the activity stipends were under the Athletic Director, to which Scott reported it was always done that way and would think about that matter.

Scott Prescott reported on highlights from SHS and noted the conservation classes will be working on the parking lot. There are additional state Health and Social Studies requirements, effective for the current Freshmen class, and SHS will incorporate those requirements accordingly.

ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Jeanne Ludt requested Colleen Meaney share information and a presentation regarding differentiated instruction at a future meeting, to which Colleen noted she would be glad to do so.

Jan Phelps moved, Steve Coughlan seconded, to go into non-public session under the provisions of RSA 91-A:2,I.(b). By a roll call vote, all members voted in favor: Jeanne Ludt-yes, John Rizzi-yes, Jan Phelps-yes, John Walsh-yes, Steve Coughlan-yes, Janet Gaynor-yes, and Phyllis Thomas-yes. The Board went into non-public session at 8:16 p.m.

NON-PUBLIC SESSION

The Board discussed a negotiation matter.

Jeanne Ludt moved, Steve Coughlan seconded, to come out of non-public session. By a roll call vote, all members voted in favor: Jeanne Ludt-yes, John Rizzi-yes, Jan Phelps-yes, John Walsh-yes, Steve Coughlan-yes, Janet Gaynor-yes, and Phyllis Thomas-yes. The Board came at out non-public session at 8:58 p.m.

The Board agreed to conduct a special meeting to discuss the upcoming Board and Faculty meeting and address Jan Phelps' suggestion regarding upcoming PPC negotiations. The meeting will be held on Tuesday, November 29th at 5:00 p.m. at the Brick School. Steve will contact the SAU office to arrange for a meeting room.

OTHER

It was also noted that it would be helpful to hear from the Administration regarding career growth for faculty and staff.

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John Rizzi moved to adjourn. Phyllis Thomas seconded. All Board Members voted in favor of the motion. The meeting adjourned at 9:05 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT