

**MINUTES**  
**SOUHEGAN COOPERATIVE SCHOOL BOARD**  
**November 16, 2006**  
**Souhegan High School – Annex Room 222**

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Chair Steve Coughlan called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.

**CALL TO ORDER**

Present:

**ATTENDANCE**

Souhegan Cooperative School Board: Steve Coughlan, Jeanne Ludt, Dana Redmond, Phyllis Thomas, and John Walsh.

Administrative Team: Dr. Mary Jennings, Colleen Meaney, Scott Prescott, Elizabeth Shankel, and Kathy Skoglund

Finance Advisory Committee: Dan Foley, Fran Harrow (arrived 7:15 p.m.), Christine Morley and Marilyn Peterman

Community Council: Brittany Daniels

Minutes Recorder: Lyn Jennings

Steve Coughlan announced Linda Merrill, the Registrar for Souhegan had passed away. Steve said Linda was a tremendous advocate for kids. Steve said Linda was a member of the faculty and retired a year ago. Steve said the board would certainly miss Linda.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Steve welcomed Dana Redmond as the newest member of the Souhegan Cooperative School Board.

Dr. Jennings informed members of the board the SAU Office received a letter from Ed Murdow notifying them Souhegan High School has been approved by the state for meeting their standards. The approval has been extended to 2010.

Board members received a copy of Scott Prescott's School Board Report dated November 2006.

Jeanne Ludt asked if the report could be amended to include that the Cheerleaders came in second place.

Board members received a copy of Brittany Daniel's Community Council Report, which was addressed to the School Board and dated 11/16/06.

Brittany told members of the board the Community Council met on Monday and they are in the process of planning their Semi-Formal. The theme will be Winter Wonderland.

Community Council is planning an Issues Forum at Souhegan since they are lacking proposals. Parents and students are encouraged to bring their ideas to the forum.

Steve Coughlan invited comments from the public but none were forthcoming.

**PUBLIC TIME /  
PRESENTATIONS**

Steve welcomed members of the Finance Advisory Committee to the board meeting.

Dan Foley said once nominated, he will Chair the Committee. He said the first meeting is scheduled for November 20, 2006. The Finance Advisory Committee is scheduled to receive Draft 1 of the budget on December 12, 2006.

Jeanne Ludt asked how the budgets were coming out SAU wide.

Dr. Jennings said Amherst is going to receive Draft 1 of their budget first, Souhegan is second, and Mont Vernon is third.

A. Recognition of Service: Jan Phelps – Steve Coughlan recognized Jan Phelps' years of service, highlighting she joined the School Board in August of 2003, ran for office twice and was very active in the Finance Budget Committee.

Steve said Jan gave a lot to the school and on behalf of the community, they wanted to say thank you. Steve presented Jan with a card and gift.

Members of the school board thanked Jan for her hard work and dedication to the school board.

Jan Phelps said resigning from the School Board was a difficult decision to make however, she believed at this time, it was the right decision.

Dana Redmond agreed to take on manifest duties.

Steve Coughlan asked to pull the minutes of October 19, 2006 from the Consent Agenda.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

Board members reviewed the Consent Agenda, Manifest; Treasurer's Report and Budget Transfers. The Consent Agenda per Steve Coughlan is adopted.

A motion was made by John Walsh and seconded by Phyllis Thomas to approve the minutes of October 19, 2006 as amended. Members of the board voted in favor of the motion and the motion passed with one abstention, Dana Redmond.

A. Wellness Policy: 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading - Vote – Jeanne Ludt said she and Dr. Jennings were supposed to meet to review the current language of policy BBA since the administration indicated it may be enough to cover the issue. **ACTION ITEMS**

Jeanne Ludt read policy BBA out loud for all board members to hear. Jeanne said she was not convinced the policy was strong enough.

Jeanne said the current policy is pretty generic, she does not believe it shows their commitment to increasing physical activity. She said the policy does not address providing the students with adequate space and equipment.

Discussion amongst board members followed.

Board members thought the issue involving providing adequate space and equipment should not be part of the policy but part of the strategic plan.

Phyllis Thomas felt it should not be part of the policy, she thought the policy should be as general as possible.

Steve Coughlan thought it should not be in the policy. Steve said by including the statement of providing adequate space and equipment, he did not believe it added anything to the policy or future weight for new board members should existing members not return or be re-elected.

Dr. Jennings said she did not have a chance to meet with Jeanne Ludt about the Wellness Policy but spoke to her briefly and believes the previous policy is adequate.

Discussion amongst board members continued.

A motion was made by Jeanne Ludt and seconded by John Walsh to include the following verbiage under Physical Activity Opportunities and Physical Education. In addition, the District will strive to provide appropriate space and equipment to meet this goal.

Dr. Jennings said she believes this sentence might fit in the policy, and feels it's a nice middle ground.

Board members voted in favor of the motion and the motion passed with one abstention, Steve Coughlan.

Steve Coughlan asked to include a title on the Policy and asked that the title be Wellness Policy.

Steve also requested the policy read specifically for Souhegan

and not include Amherst and Mont Vernon.

A motion was made by John Walsh and seconded by Phyllis Thomas to adopt policy JLCF as amended. All members of the board voted in favor of the motion with one abstention, Steve Coughlan.

- A. Souhegan Board Goals and Objectives: Review of Draft – **DISCUSSION ITEMS**  
Board members received a copy of the Souhegan High School Board Goals, which included the SAU and Souhegan Pursuits.

Board members were asked if there was something the board was not already doing that they would want to do in support of their goals this year.

Jeanne Ludt said it is true that adjustments have been made as to where Wellness classes meet so they do not have to utilize hallway space as much however, it depends on the time of year. When classes can be outside, it would be true, but in the winter, this wouldn't be the case. So, she said by the statement under Goal #1, it sounds as if the class space issue has been fixed, but it is an ongoing problem.

One goal of the Strategic Planning Committee will be a long-range facilities plan and it will be coordinated with the other two boards. Meetings will begin in January.

Under Goal #2, Ensure improved communication between and among all parts, board members suggested including the monthly meeting of the four board chairs as a Board Pursuit.

An additional Board Pursuit was their involvement in the Community Advisory Committee.

The School Board is also responsible for publishing an article in *Connections*.

Steve asked board members if they thought unification was dead.

Jeanne said she didn't believe unification was dead. She said the boards should focus on what they have in common and accomplish it as an SAU board. Also, each board should go off and accomplish what they have on their individual priority lists.

Phyllis Thomas is no longer attending Amherst and Mont Vernon

School Board meetings. Board members agreed Dr. Jennings has filled the gap with her News and Notes, which provides information on what takes place at other Board meetings.

Jeanne Ludt asked when the Facilities Plan would be coming out. Dana Redmond is a member of the committee but said he was not sure when the report would be ready.

Dana said they are in the process of addressing the fees, which are being charged to Mont Vernon. Dana said it should not just be the burden of the Amherst taxpayer. John Walsh asked for clarification.

Dana said in the past, the fees have not been properly apportioned. Dana said the Amherst taxpayer has been paying the majority of the fees.

Brittany Daniels said she thinks they can improve their program for transitioning students from the Mont Vernon Village School to the Amherst Middle School.

Dr. Jennings suggested a focus group be formed which would include Porter Dodge and Brittany Daniels.

Dr. Jennings also suggested putting the topic of transition between schools on the SAU Board agenda in the near future.

Dr. Jennings said the Strategic Planning Process would help them develop goals for the next 2-3 years. Dr. Jennings said they will be involved in this process annually as a board and the process will begin earlier next year, most likely in June.

Under Goal #3, Improve overall operations and procedures. Board members agreed, they want to improve the process for recording gate receipts of the student activity fund. Steve Coughlan said since he has been on the board in 2002, this has been an outstanding issue.

Jeanne requested this item be put on the next board agenda.

B. Update: Food Service Program - Betty Shankel updated the board on the FY06 deficit in the Food Service Program. She said, the board covered most of it however; they began the year with an \$18,000 deficit.

Betty said based on the projected revenue, less anticipated expenses, they are expecting a \$40,000 loss.

At the end of last year, they had a reduction in staff.

Betty said in the past, the Food Service Program has always broken even if not better than break even.

Betty provided board members with the reasons for the loss:

- Food Service salaries are higher in the district than surrounding areas.
- Offer good medical and dental benefits after twenty-five hours.
- Cut back on a la carte items because of the new Wellness Policy.
- No longer making money on coffee and muffins.
- Powerade, soda, and juice, are no longer sold on site, now accessed off campus.

Betty said the numbers were looking bad at the end of October so she made the decision to have the Food Service program start offering a la carte items again.

Betty said based on the districts labor agreement, half of every dollar goes towards the labor costs but in other districts only a third goes towards labor.

Betty is predicting a \$30,000 loss this year based on bringing back the a la carte items.

Colleen Meaney said she would like to see some supporting data regarding offsite purchases made by students. Colleen said they should not make assumptions without the proper data. Colleen said an analysis could be done since they keep records of students going off campus.

Board members agreed they should check into the number of hours the Food Service Staff are required to work prior to being eligible for benefits.

Steve Coughlan said they are currently reviewing whether they should put caps on this job category. Steve said this would prevent them from being disproportionate with other districts.

Jeanne Ludt asked how the other schools Food Service Program was doing with the implementation of the new Wellness Policy.

Betty said the other schools in Amherst as well as Mont Vernon are currently breaking even. Betty said comparing Souhegan High School with the other schools wouldn't be a true comparison, you would have to compare them against another High School.

Dr. Jennings suggested the administration speak with Community Council as well as other students to get their feedback on the Food Service Program.

C. Quarterly Report – Board members received a copy of the Souhegan School District FY07 Fund 10 Revenue Report.

Betty Shankel said they are on track. Betty said tuition from parents was overestimated by \$13,125, they have a higher than forecasted amount in interest, and they are still waiting to receive money from the soccer club. (\$8,000) Betty said a letter went to the club over a month ago, however, they have not heard anything or received a payment.

Steve Coughlan suggested the administration send a letter requesting the money be sent by December 31, 2006, indicating if not received, the board will have to review their use of the field next year.

Betty Shankel said based on forecasted revenue, they are predicting a \$30,000 deficit in Food Service.

Phyllis Thomas questioned why they didn't properly predict the tuition from the parent's revenue line. Scott Prescott said the decision was made to turn any student away that was not a staff member, which would account for this, differential.

Jeanne Ludt asked where the \$10,000 is budgeted for the postage and printing of *Connections*. Jeanne said Hampshire Hills donates \$2,500 and has their logo at the bottom of the magazine. Jeanne said she would encourage everyone to try to get three more sponsors so they could cover the cost of the postage and printing outside the budget.

Betty Shankel said she would look at where the *Connections* line is currently being budgeted.

Steve Coughlan summarized the current budget by saying they are on track, tight but in pretty good shape. Steve asked Betty to notify the board if she sees any major changes.

D. FY08 Budget Assumptions – Dr. Jennings presented the

Souhegan Cooperative School District FY08 Budget Assumptions. Dr. Jennings said the budget presentation would be broken down into three sections. Dr. Jennings said tonight she would be presenting the assumptions, which were a result of meeting with the administration. Now, she was looking for feedback from board members on assumptions they would like to include.

Dr. Jennings said Draft 1 of the budget would capture assumptions, hopes and dreams. She said they would cost all this out however, they would not necessarily be keeping it in the budget.

Dr. Jennings presented the following Souhegan School District FY08 Budget Assumptions:

Enrollments – Tied to supplies, materials, educational initiatives and staffing. Scott Prescott and Dr. Jennings sat down a couple of months ago to look at the incoming 9<sup>th</sup> grade projections. Dr. Jennings said they still think it's a good number.

FY07 Actuals (October):

1019 students

FY08 Projected: 988

FY08 Budgeted: 988

Dr Jennings said the presentation by Scott for Enrollment projections would be split out by grade level.

Staffing Assumptions will be based on the following:

- *Administration:* Staff & student supervision
- *Special Education:* Case loads
- *Custodial:* Facility square footage
- *Support Staff:* Staff support and special education individualized Education Plans
- *Teachers:* Student teaching load of 80 students/teacher

Benefits:

- Health Care – they are anticipating a 7.2% increase in health care however, they are budgeting 8.2% to cover the possible shift in plans from single to family.

- Dental – 1.0% increase
- Other insurances – 5.0% increase

Staffing:

- Contracts
  - PPC – discussions underway
  - Career Growth: 11 staff members are going for career growth
- New Hires
  - The administration is recommending new teachers be hired at the Masters Step 5 rate.
- Retirements
  - NH Retirement went from 6.81% to 8.74%. The increase for non-certified staff is 3.7% and a 5.8% increase for certified staff.

Jeanne Ludt asked if the administration had a sense for the number of teachers that would be retiring this year. Scott Prescott said he was not aware of any teachers retiring.

Operations:

- Cost of Living Increase: 3.5% increase
- Delivery and shipping costs 10% additional cost per order – the administration is trying to find ways to decrease the number of deliveries or consolidate orders.
- Utilities – 6.4% increase in electricity; \$.250/gallon heating oil (same as FY07)

Maintenance and Repairs:

- Capital Items: Long term capital plan and technology plan
- Replacement needs: Rotational basis
- Repair and Maintenance/Operational – yearly proposals – Dr. Jennings said they are working towards a long-term maintenance plan.
- Transportation – 2<sup>nd</sup> year of 3 year extension
  - Number of buses remain the same
- Food Service – School District operational budget support is needed. (Betty addressed this issue under Update: Food Service Program)

The following educational initiatives were presented:

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- K-12 English/Language Arts
  - Literacy coaches at sites as presented at the SAU Board meeting. Dr. Jennings said this is one of their key initiatives and will not necessary mean an increase to the Souhegan budget.
- Technology
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> year of major replacement plan
- Alternative Program for “At Risk” and other students
- Novel Program continues
- Athletic Program
  - Uniform replacement program
  - Ice time for hockey
- Professional development
  - RTI (Response to Intervention)
  - Core Competencies work – state mandate, fits in well with Differentiated Instruction at every level.
  - Inclusion Practices
  - NEASC recommendations

Dr. Jennings said they do not foresee an increase in Federal and State Grants, in fact they are predicting very few Grants therefore, the administration will project conservatively.

The administration just received the State Aid figures today, they will be available for Draft 1.

The administration will not know what the district will receive in Catastrophic Aid for Special Education until the end of the year therefore; they will budget conservatively.

Dr. Jennings said the district is holding to no tuition students accepted, since they don't have the room.

Currently Souhegan has an existing Expendable Trust for Handicapped Students and Building Maintenance but the administration is suggesting they need one for Unfunded Benefits to allow for retirees coming in the future.

Dr. Jennings asked board members for some directives.

Jeanne Ludt said she would speak on behalf of Janet Gaynor since she was not at the board meeting and suggested the administration

look at funding the faculty portion of Winter Session trips in order to reduce the student cost. Dr. Jennings said she would cost this assumption out.

Dr. Jennings told members of the board they would receive Draft 1 of the Budget on December 12, 2006. She said they would try to get a copy of Draft 1 to members of the Finance Advisory Committee prior to the December 12<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Draft 2 of the Budget will be presented on December 21, 2006.

The Public Hearing is scheduled for January 15, 2007 where the Budget and Warrant articles will be presented. February 6, 2007 is the Deliberative Session and March 13, 2007 is District Voting.

Phyllis Thomas moved to adjourn. Jeanne Ludt seconded the motion. All board members voted in favor of the motion. The motion passed. The meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

**REVIEW OF  
MEETING /  
ADJOURNMENT**