

**MINUTES**  
**SOUHEGAN COOPERATIVE SCHOOL BOARD**  
**December 12, 2006**  
**Souhegan High School – Annex Room 222**

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Chair Steve Coughlan called the meeting to order at 6:06 p.m. **CALL TO ORDER**

Present:

**ATTENDANCE**

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

Administrative Team: Dr. Mary Jennings, Colleen Meaney (arrived at 6:10 p.m.), Scott Prescott, Elizabeth Shankel, and Kathy Skoglund

Finance Advisory Committee: May Balsama, Dan Foley, Fran Harrow, Christine Morley and Marilyn Peterman

Community Council: Brittany Daniels

Minutes Recorder: Lyn Jennings

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

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Scott Prescott said they had advertised and interviewed for a Lacrosse Coach and have found someone. Scott told members of the board Dave McPhearson would be hired as the coach, he was the assistant coach.

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 Daniel's told members of the board they had a Community Council meeting yesterday, December 11, 2006, and discussed their new budget.

Brittany told members of the board they made \$1,153.87 at the Semi Formal, which was held on Saturday, December 2, 2006.

Steve Coughlan recognized Rich Boardman. Steve said he is finishing his work on a Masters in Education and is completing his hours of internship with Scott Prescott

and Colleen Meaney.

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

Steve Coughlan asked to pull the minutes of November **CONSENT AGENDA**  
16, 2006 from the Consent Agenda.

Board members reviewed the Consent Agenda, Treasurer's Report, Manifest, and Acceptance of Retirement Letter. The Consent Agenda per Steve Coughlan is adopted.

A motion was made by Janet Gaynor and seconded by John Walsh to approve the minutes of November 16, 2006 as amended. Members of the board voted in favor of the motion and the motion passed with three abstentions, Janet Gaynor, John Rizzi, and Steve Coughlan.

A. Naming – Guidance Suite – Board members **PRESENTATIONS/DISCUSSION**  
received a Proposal regarding the Linda Merrill College and Career Center from Scott Prescott.

Scott said Student Service personnel have requested that the college and career area in student services be dedicated in the memory of Linda Merrill. Scott said Linda worked in student services from 1992 until 2005 and recently passed away.

Scott said the proposal is to purchase a plaque that states the area is dedicated to Linda Merrill who worked at Souhegan from 1992-2005.

Scott said Souhegan administration is in full support of this proposal and requests the school boards approval for the dedication.

Scott told members of the board he supports this proposal and this would not have a major budget implication.

Board members agreed the dedication was a good idea.

Steve Coughlan said he was happy to hear their

will be a permanent memory of Linda Merrill at Souhegan High School.

B. Student Activities Account Update – Scott Prescott agreed to provide the detail behind the Student Activities Account at the next board meeting.

Betty told board members she is aware the administration wanted to develop a policy regarding the Student Activity Fund. Betty said she spoke with Dr. Jennings and she said all the boards were in the process of reviewing their policies so she suggested they might want to hold off since the boards are all doing policy reviews at this time.

Betty said the audit firm agreed it is not traditional in the way they like to see an activities fund presented however, the accounting is handled in a first class manner. Betty said they would look to the review of policies to determine where they want to go with handling this account in the future.

Dr. Jennings said they want to develop a policy that could be utilized for all student activities accounts.

Jeanne Ludt said the board has no knowledge of gift money coming in which she feels the board should be aware of so they are able to acknowledge their gratitude. Jeanne said she is not questioning Rhonda's impeccable handling of the student activities account but believes a policy would be good for anyone beyond Rhonda handling the account.

Betty said the board should accept gifts so they are aware of who is giving them money.

Steve requested Scott provide the detail of the Student Activities Account.

Dana Redmond said in the past, the account has been criticized because people believe some of the

items being purchased out of the account should have been budgeted for rather than used from this fundraising account.

C. Report from Safety and Security Committee – Board members received a copy of the Souhegan High School Safety Report dated November 2006 from Scott Prescott.

Scott told board members this report was the result of work that began in the Spring of the 2005-2006 school year. Scott said he and Officer John Smith put together a committee to review the safety and security at Souhegan High School.

Scott explained the report includes work that has already been completed, work that is ongoing and recommendations for areas needing to be addressed as we move forward.

Scott said the committee consisted of 2 Souhegan students, 2 teachers, 1 community member, 1 school board member, the SRO, the dean, the assistant dean of students and the principal.

In order to identify recommendations, Scott explained the committee reviewed reports on safety at Souhegan High School from the Amherst Police Department, Amherst Fire Department, state safety officials and the National Infrastructure Institute. Scott explained the areas were outlined, discussed and then prioritized by the committee. Prioritized areas were then analyzed by the principal and used to formulate the Safety Report.

Scott explained the report was organized as follows:

- 1) What is currently being done and what has been done in the past.
- 2) Ongoing work that addresses safety.

Scott said as a result of all this work, the committee came up with a punch list of items that could be done without impacting the current budget. He said they did have a list of more long-term items that do have budgetary implications so they would need to be

budgeted for and done over time. A Punch List was provided to board members as well as a list of items that would have budget implications.

Scott said the largest issue for him was the installation of security cameras. Scott said the committee did not reach a consensus regarding installing security cameras. The committee produced a list of the pros and cons as well as questions.

Scott said based on the discussion with the safety committee and the school-wide discussion last year, he does not recommend the installation of security cameras.

Scott said he waives on the issue because he recognizes the potential benefits of having security cameras. However, the reason he does not recommend them is that he believes the vast majority of students and staff do not want cameras installed so we should honor this.

Scott said for many, this is rooted in their mission statement, which speaks of being a community built on respect, trust and courage. Students and staff feel that the installation of security cameras would be counter to their mission. Scott said he supports this reasoning and therefore does not recommend camera installation.

Scott recommended for those that feel strongly that security cameras be installed in the school should write a proposal and bring it to community council. Scott suggested it might involve Ted Houlihan, as he is in support of security cameras.

Scott thanked all the members of the Safety Committee and said they were really helpful in terms of feedback they gave the school. Scott said he would be happy to provide other members reports to the board if they wanted to see them.

Discussion followed Scott's presentation.

Steve Coughlan asked aside from the camera issue, was their anything you feel changes the culture of the school in a significant way. Scott said no, nothing.

Jeanne Ludt was a member of the Safety Committee and said the process was very useful for all of them and if anything, it revised their consciousness about safety and security at Souhegan.

Jeanne said no one really wanted to talk about the camera issue. Jeanne said she missed the meeting where the committee discussed the pros/cons regarding the use of security cameras at Souhegan. She asked the list be provided to members of the board in case they ever need to discuss the issue and make a decision.

Scott Prescott said he would send the list of pros/cons to members of the board in an e-mail prior to the next board meeting.

Janet Gaynor said the public wanted to hear some of the Security Committee's results and asked how they planned on sharing them.

Officer John Smith and Scott Prescott will put a shorter version of the results in the next issue of *Connections* in January.

D. FY08 Budget – Draft 1 and Expendable Trust Proposals – Dr. Jennings explained she met with the central office administration, Scott and the Souhegan team and the result of their work was in the budget before them this evening.

Dr. Jennings said the total budget increase was 6.83%.

Dr. Jennings explained the increase is a result of the following:

- Retirement increases as discussed at the last board meeting.
- Increase in utilities costs.
- Programmatic changes which Scott Prescott will speak to during his presentation.
- Decrease if food service.

Scott Prescott presented the Souhegan High School FY08 Draft 2 Budget to members of the school board.

Scott provided a Budget Summary –

- Overall proposed increase of 6.83%.
- Areas driving the increase:
  - Salaries and benefits
  - Special Education
  - Replacement Technology
  - Interscholastics – Scott explained at the last board meeting board members asked that this be included in the budget.

The total budget numbers were provided for the last two years. FY05/06 - \$15,058,281; FY06/07 - \$16,135,998; and FY07/08 Projected - \$17,233,683.

Scott provided some details on the Current Budget:

- Regular Education – 1100
  - Adequately supports curriculum needs.
  - Adequately supports educational goals
  - Supports salary increases
  - Supports ESL/504 increase.
- Special Education – 1200
  - Increased support personnel as required by IEP.
  - Adequately supports required related service.
- Interscholastic – 1400
  - Maintained previous level of support of existing programs.
- Student Services – 2100
  - Approved part-time nurse to meet state requirements. Scott explained this is a \$15,000 increase.
- Professional Dev & Info. Center – 2200
  - Increased professional development funding per agreement with PPC.

- Provided funds to support curriculum revision cycle needs.
- Included funds for course reimbursement per agreement with PPC.
- School Board – 2300
  - Increased funding of legal services to reflect actual expenses.
- Administration – 2400
  - Funded NEASC accreditation related costs. Scott explained you would see a drop in the 2400 services in this year's budget.
- Facilities – 2600
  - Adjusted utility funding to reflect increase in energy costs.
- Transportation – 2700
  - Adjusted transportation funding to reflect increase in energy costs.
- Food Services – 3100
  - Food service costs exceeded the budget.

The Souhegan Enrollment was presented:

- Enrollment decreased by 27 students in 06-07.
- Anticipated decrease of 31 students in 07-08.
- Decrease will allow us to return to 80 to 1 ratio in teams, which is consistent with CES principal.

Scott explained they are projecting a total of 988 students for 07-08. The actual number of students in 06-07 was 1,019 as compared to 1,046 in 05-06.

Scott presented the one new program in the budget.

- Alternative Educational Program

- Scott said in an effort to realize our goal of appropriately challenging all learners, we are requesting to maintain the current level of staffing which will allow us to reassign the equivalent of one staff member to implement this program.

Scott explained Rich has done a lot of work with this committee. Scott said he would like to shift some of the staff to oversee personnel until they get up and running next year. Scott said this program will allow them flexibility to develop plans and oversee them.

Scott explained Technology has three areas of increase:

- Software – Angel and Digital Portfolio. Scott said Angel software is a course management software.
- Tech Infrastructure:
  - Student and Staff Servers – Scott explained the servers are at the end of their life, and they can no longer get service agreements for them.
  - SHS portion of district and Angel servers.
- Replacement Equipment: This is our first year of implementing the replacement cycle for desktops and laptops per our long-range technology plan.

Scott explained the bulk of the technology increase is in Replacement Equipment. He said they pulled out a lot of the money last year and now are spreading out the cost over a longer multi-year plan.

The actual Technology for 06-07 was \$172,689 and the proposed amount for 07-08 is \$300,733, which represents a 1.83% increase as a percentage of the total budget assuming 5% growth. The projected technology cost for 08-09 is \$312,930, which is a 1.82% increase.

Scott provided board members with a handout titled Technology and dated 12/12/06. Scott said Kathy White has done a tremendous amount of work on this project,

and in his opinion an excellent job.

Dana Redmond asked if any of the items were going to be leased.

Scott said if leasing equipment was something the board would like to look into, he said Kathy White would be happy to talk to the board about it.

Jeanne Ludt agreed this was a good idea and suggested they have Kathy White come in to speak with the board.

Scott highlighted the changes in Special Education:

- Additional support personnel to meet the needs of the incoming 9<sup>th</sup> grade.
- Additional support for related services: psychologists and other specialists.
- Additional support for out of district placement.

The following changes in Interscholastic were presented:

- Coaches – addition of two new assistants (alpine & swimming)
- Gymnastics – eliminate (low participation)
- Activity Stipends
- New – video club & Summer Institute for European Studies.
- Remove – weight room and recycling club.
- Maintain current level of funding for existing programs.
- Supplies
- Includes cost of ice time for girls and boys hockey.
- Includes cost of pool time.
- Includes 1<sup>st</sup> year in 3-year replacement cycle for uniforms. (varsity level uniforms then passing them down)
- Includes increase in dues and fees as mandated by state.
- Includes replacement of wrestling mats and volleyball carts.

Professional Development & Info Center:

Scott explained to be consistent with their school goal of on-going learning for staff they need to present the following initiatives:

- Curriculum Revision
- Faculty Professional Development
  - Regular Account
  - Course Reimbursement – looking to fully fund this program for professional and non-professional staff.
- Summer Curriculum Work – has a slight increase so they can offer every teacher two summer workdays rather than the current 1.5 days.
- Software
- Replacement Equipment – includes overheads, and video equipment

Scott said board members requested he include some other items in the budget:

- Wintercession – Chaperone cost and financial aid.
- Health Salaries - .42 nurse position to meet state recommendations.
- Safety - \$10,000 for items in report.
- Salaries and Benefits
  - 11 career growth
  - Anticipated increases in salaries
  - Employer contribution to benefits

Scott provided the following Staffing Comparison:

FY07 – Regular Ed – 78.41  
Special Ed – 14

FY08 – Regular Ed – 78.91  
Special Ed – 13.5

The Non-Certified Staffing comparison was also presented. Scott said Franceen is looking to reduce the hours in Food Service from 10.29 to 9.42.

Scott summarized the 07-08 Budget by stating it represented a 6.83% increase over 06-07.

Scott said the increase is driven by:

- Salary and benefits
- Special Education costs
- Implementation of technology replacement cycle.
- Interscholastic Equipment.

Discussion amongst Board members, the Administration and the Finance Advisory Committee followed Scott's presentation.

Jeanne Ludt asked Scott why he was not recommending getting rid of faculty based on the declining enrollment numbers.

Scott said it was a fair question, but looked at the information before him and determined it would be a good opportunity to shift personnel into a program they were looking to implement rather than going out and increasing personnel.

John Walsh suggested doing a short presentation on the AEP program so board members could have a good understanding of its purpose and benefits to Souhegan.

Kathy Skoglund said without this type of program, it is already costing the district something. She said by consolidating our supports, we may be more efficient.

Janet Gaynor suggested once the AEP program is implemented, they should be given a presentation on the programs historical perspective.

Betty Shankel provided the board with a handout titled Souhegan Cooperative School District Revenue Summary – Draft, December 12, 2006.

Betty emphasized to the board this was a draft document and subject to change.

Betty said she is projecting a proposed unreserved fund balance for 2007-2008 of \$100,000. Betty explained the Souhegan budget is very tight this year and they are

keeping a close eye on it.

Steve Coughlan asked if any Title I money was included in Federal Aid. Colleen Meaney said about \$10,000 was Title I money. Betty said they are expecting a decrease next year.

Betty explained there is a fund transfer of \$32,000 because of the projected deficit in Food Service. Betty said Franceen is looking to reduce this amount by \$7,000 because of the changes they made in the food service program. Betty said they put back the a la carte items and November was a terrific month for Franceen.

Betty said for the next draft she would include the \$8,000 in revenue for 2007-2008 from the Amherst Soccer Club.

Betty highlighted the fact Amherst was receiving a reduction in the Adequate Education Grant and Mont Vernon was receiving an increase.

Jeanne questioned why nothing was in the budget for Building Design Fees. Jeanne suggested they set aside some money to conduct a study regarding wellness space needs or to come up with a design for a wellness facility.

Steve said they have capital reserve funds that could be utilized for this expense. Steve asked Jeanne what she was looking to set aside for this project and she said about \$5,000-\$10,000.

Steve asked if Jeanne was proposing a warrant article to start a maintenance fund.

Marilyn Peterman said it was important to have a “plan” before we put money into the Design Fees line item.

Steve Coughlan referred to a re-design of the original plan or anything related to the plan.

Marilyn Peterman questioned why there was a large increase in ESL/504 Instruction. (p. 1 line 6)

Scott said this person is contracted out to work with a student or students for one or two periods a day.

Marilyn asked how many students were being budgeted for based on the \$10,660 increase over last year.

Kathy said last year they had one student and now they have four students. Kathy explained these students do not speak English at all.

Marilyn suggested including a narrative with the budget. She said it would be helpful if they included it and it would make it easier for them to analyze and understand the budget.

Phyllis Thomas asked what the budget increases were in other districts.

Dr. Jennings said Amherst saw a budget increase of 1.4%-1.5% without the collective bargaining agreement for the teachers. She said Mont Vernon is going to see their budget for the first time on Thursday night.

May Balsama suggested the administration identify major expenditures for people. She said a certain level of frustration comes out on programs that are expendable. In this case, she said a decrease should be shown.

Jeanne Ludt asked Scott if he figured out what account *Connections* is being paid from. Scott said it is being paid from line 162, Printing.

Jeanne said other printing comes out of this line as well; she questioned whether the budgeted amount was adequate. Jeanne said last year they had to do a budget transfer so they may want to take a closer look at this account.

Betty agreed to look at the Printing line.

Steve Coughlan asked Betty to include \$10,000 in the Souhegan budget to support broadcast technology. Steve explained he asked Dwight Brew to do the same in the Amherst budget.

Steve said he hoped board members would support this request.

Steve asked that the local cable channel be made available to Mont Vernon residents as well. Steve said he would ask that the Mont Vernon Selectmen talk to Comcast. Steve explained if Mont Vernon agrees to have access to this channel, they would not always see programs that are specific to them.

Steve asked for suggestions from the board and the Finance Advisory Committee on the budget. He asked if everyone was happy with the proposed increase.

Phyllis Thomas asked what was the real increase and asked that the administration identify what they can have control over.

Jeanne Ludt said based on a 6.83% increase how much would we have to cut to go down by 1%. They would have to decrease the budget by \$171,000.

Betty agreed to look at whether they had room for revenue adjustments.

Christine Morley asked for the breakdown on the number of students participating in sports based on the cost per student per sport.

Scott said Bill Dod provided this information last year and he would see if he could get this information updated for this year.

Steve Coughlan asked the Finance Advisory Committee what process they were following to review the budget.

Committee Chair, Dan Foley said they met with Scott Prescott last night. He said the committee has a meeting scheduled for Monday to dive into the budget.

Betty Shankel asked where the meeting was being held and Dan said at the Amherst Library. Betty agreed to attend the meeting to answer any questions the committee might have.

Dr. Jennings noted the next board meeting was scheduled for December 21, 2006. She said the Public Hearing was scheduled for January 15, 2007.

Phyllis Thomas said she thinks the budget increase is too high and they may need to make some cuts.

John Walsh agreed with Phyllis. He said it would be prudent for the board as well as the administration to come up with two additional budget scenarios. John suggested dropping the budget down by 1% to an increase of 5.8% and then dropping it by 2%, which would be an increase of 4.8%.

Jeanne Ludt asked when the board would see a default budget. Betty said it would be presented on January 11, 2007, the last meeting before the Public Hearing.

Board members received a handout titled Souhegan Cooperative School District FY08 Draft Warrant Articles, which was dated December 12, 2006.

Dr. Jennings presented three draft warrant articles. Board members reviewed the articles as presented.

The first article discussed the operating budget.

The second article was to raise and appropriate up to \$40,000 from the year-end undesignated fund balance (surplus) if available on July 1, 2007. It was explained, this has no tax impact to the town and would only be done if there were money left over at the end of the year.

The last warrant article presented was to create an expendable trust fund for unfunded liabilities for retiring employees. Dr. Jennings said if this article were approved by the board, they would be able to save for it each year. She said they need to get ahead of the game and this would be a step in the right direction.

Steve said he thinks they have two of the same types of Expendable Trust Funds created and he agreed to meet with Betty to resolve the issue.

A motion was made by John Walsh and seconded by Janet Gaynor to go into Non-Public Session per RSA 91 - A:3, II (a). **NON-PUBLIC SESSION**

By a roll call vote, Walsh-yes; Thomas-yes; Rizzi-yes; Gaynor-yes; Ludt-yes; and Redmond-yes; the board went into Non-Public Session at 9:00 p.m.

The board discussed contract negotiations.

A motion to come out of non-public session was made by Janet Gaynor and seconded by Phyllis Thomas.

By a roll call vote, Walsh-yes; Thomas-yes; Rizzi-yes; Gaynor-yes; Ludt-yes; and Redmond-yes; the board came out of Non-Public Session at 9:28 p.m.

Steve Coughlan asked board members how it was going with one meeting a month.

#### **REVIEW OF MEETING / ADJOURNMENT**

Steve explained if the board wanted to continue with one meeting per month, the upcoming meeting schedule was included in the board packets.

Janet Gaynor and Phyllis Thomas said they like one meeting a month.

Jeanne Ludt said they are much more efficient having one meeting a month but feels disconnected. Jeanne said she has no sense of what is going on between meetings.

Steve Coughlan said it was the intent to hold more SAU Board meetings, which would enable all board members to feel connected. Steve encouraged more Souhegan board members to attend the SAU meetings.

Steve asked for Dr. Jennings' feedback on one meeting per month for each board. Dr. Jennings said it seems natural to be operating this way and it is helpful. She said it has created a rhythm in the central office and it has begun to flow through the schools as well.

Kathy Skoglund said by having one meeting a month, she notices how everything is operating more efficiently.

Steve said the general sense of the board is to keep the schedule at one meeting a month so we can have the educators continuing their focus on education.

John Walsh moved to adjourn Phyllis Thomas seconded the motion. All board members voted in favor of the motion. The motion passed. The meeting adjourned at 9:30 p.m.