

MINUTES
SOUHEGAN COOPERATIVE SCHOOL BOARD
February 20, 2007
Souhegan High School – Annex Room 222

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Chair Steve Coughlan called the Public Hearing to order at 6:05 p.m. **PUBLIC HEARING**

Board members received a copy of a letter dated December 18, 2006 addressed to Scott Prescott, Principal, Souhegan High School, regarding the Grant Application to Milford Hospital Association dated December 1, 2006.

The letter stated the Milford Hospital Association had voted to grant \$20,575 to Souhegan High School in order to fund the requested items as proposed in the grant application.

Scott explained this is the third year Souhegan High School has received this grant which is designed to aid students who are struggling with mental stress such as substance abuse either with a family member or their own personal substance abuse, tough home life, etc.

Steve Coughlan asked if any meeting attendees or board members had any questions or comments about the grant however there were none.

The Public Hearing was closed at 6:09 p.m.

Chair Steve Coughlan called the meeting to order at 6:09 p.m. **CALL TO ORDER**

Present:

ATTENDANCE

Souhegan Cooperative School Board: Steve Coughlan, Janet Gaynor, Jeanne Ludt (arrived 6:09 p.m.), Dana Redmond, John Rizzi (arrived 6:30 p.m.) and Phyllis Thomas.

Administrative Team: Kris Gallo, Dr. Mary Jennings, Colleen Meaney, Scott Prescott and Elizabeth Shankel

Other: Christine Morley

Minutes Recorder: Lyn Jennings

A. Administrators Report - Board members received a copy of the School Board Report prepared by Scott Prescott dated February 2007. **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Scott highlighted they are in the process of completing the Advanced Placement audit which was mandated by the College Board. Scott explained they are required to submit materials to the College Board for each AP class they offer, and they must be completed by the end of June. Scott said they are scheduled to complete their work by June 1st. Scott said Colleen Meaney is managing this process.

Scott said Lori Scarito and Allen Gordon are creating a new support group to deal with the issue of substance abuse for either a student or one of their family members.

- B. Community Council Report – Board members received a copy of the Community Council Report, which was addressed to the School Board and dated 2/20/07 submitted by Brittany Daniels.

Steve Coughlan told board members Brittany was not able to make the board meeting because she had the flu.

Jeanne Ludt told board members Community Council has approved the Sign in Sign out proposal. Jeanne said a system would be established for students to sign in and out in order to account for their whereabouts in case of an emergency.

Jeanne said a new Absentee Policy was adopted and the number of days a student can now be absent from school in a trimester is seven. Once a student has seven absences in a trimester, the absences must be investigated with the teachers and parents to understand why the student is absent so much.

There is also a procedure in place to make up the work missed. If the absences have been scattered throughout the trimester, there may be a good reason for the absences and this could be determined if a meeting took place. At the time a student has missed seven days in a trimester, they receive an administrative no credit. The student has an opportunity to get the administrative credit removed by making up the work missed.

Linda Conley will track the absences.

Janet Gaynor asked who is going to let Linda Conley know to look for students that are out seven days in a trimester. Jeanne Ludt said she assumed Ted Houlihan,

the Dean of Students would be responsible for letting Linda know when to look for students that are out seven or more days in a trimester.

Jeanne said the administration also needs to stress the importance of the policy to parents and students to let them know about it.

Scott Prescott said if a student is out because of a major illness, they will not get a “No Credit.”

Scott said often times parents will not make their kids come to school and there is a high expectation for teachers to put together make up work for a student.

Jeanne Ludt said hopefully they will be able to put something in *Connections* about the new attendance policy.

Phyllis Thomas said she served on the Strategic Planning Committee with Brittany Daniels and her comments were always worth listening to and she enjoyed her serving on the committee.

Steve Coughlan pulled Item A. Minutes – January 11, 2007, from the Consent Agenda. **CONSENT AGENDA**

Steve Coughlan pulled Item D. Acceptance of \$300 Donation.

The Board adopted Consent Agenda Items B. Treasurer’s Report – January 2007 and C. Manifest – January 2007.

A motion was made by Phyllis Thomas and seconded by Janet Gaynor to approve Consent Agenda Item A. Minutes – January 11, 2007 as amended. All members of the board voted in favor of the motion and the motion passed.

A motion was made by Janet Gaynor and seconded by John Rizzi to accept Consent Agenda Item D. Donation of \$300 from the PTSA to be used towards an amplifier for the music/theater department. All members of the board voted in favor of the motion and the motion passed.

A motion was made by Janet Gaynor and seconded by Janet Gaynor to accept Consent Agenda Item E. the Milford Hospital Association Grant in the amount of \$20,575 to fund health issues. All members of the board

voted in favor of the motion and the motion passed.

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

- A. NEASC Accreditation Update – Board members received a handout from Kris Gallo, Dean of Faculty entitled School Board Meeting, Tuesday, February 20, 2007, NEASC Update. **PRESENTATIONS**

Kris explained board members received the Standards previously.

Kris highlighted some of the committees past work –

- a. Seven committees – teachers, support staff, students, parents.
- b. Questionnaires, researching, analysis, synthesis
- c. Writing of reports, executive summaries, strengths, and needs lists.
- d. Edits and approval at staff meetings this year.
- e. Final revisions.

Kris said the Steering Committee is currently meeting weekly. They re-read all reports, summaries, and lists and look for consistency. The committee is preparing for the visiting team visit.

Kris said on March 25, 2007, there will be a panel presentation for each grade level student, teacher, alum, parent and school board member. There will also be a reception for which the administration is sending invitations to involved students and their parents, SAU, Board, faculty, staff, PTSA, principals, assistant principals, town selectman, finance committee and town library. There will also be forty one-on-one interviews.

Kris said there will also be two meetings, one on Sunday, March 25, 2007, and one on either Monday, March 26, 2007, or Tuesday, March 27, 2007.

Kris said they would like the board to host a staff appreciation luncheon once the NEASC Accreditation is complete.

Kris said board members will receive the following information via e-mail:

- a. Executive summaries of each Standard report.
- b. Whole school strengths & needs list.
- c. Exact board schedule – 2 meetings with team
- d. Full report copy to Steve

Kris said they are waiting to hear from the Chair to see if he has accepted the position.

- B. Auditor's Report – Cheryl Burke from Melanson Heath and Company provided board members with a copy of the Souhegan Cooperative School District Annual Financial Statements for the Year Ended June 30, 2006.

Cheryl thanked the Souhegan School Board for having Melanson Heath as their auditor again this year.

Cheryl explained the only page of the Annual Financial Statements report that belongs to Melanson Heath is the Independent Auditors Report, which was found on Page 1 in the handout. Cheryl highlighted important information in the Financial Statements.

Board members were given an opportunity to ask questions about the Financial Statements.

Steve Coughlan asked about sick time buy back. He wanted clarification whether or not employees were entitled to vacation buy back as well as sick time buy back.

Cheryl Burke said only a few employees are entitled to vacation buy back.

Steve also questioned the statement on page 25 of the report in which it states “there are several pending lawsuits in which the District is involved.”

Lisa Ambrosio and Betty Shankel agreed to work with Cheryl from Melanson Heath to determine if this information was accurate.

Steve also questioned the date the Independent

Auditors Report was signed – September 15, 2006. Cheryl explained this is the date Melanson Heath completes their fieldwork and therefore, the date they use on the report.

Jeanne Ludt asked if we have a contract that states the date the work is to be completed by Melanson Heath.

Cheryl explained they do not have a contract that states a specific completion date however, their fieldwork was completed on September 15, 2006, and they had drafts out in mid January.

Board members agreed, they would like to see the Auditors report a lot sooner than what was provided this year.

Cheryl said there were no new management letter comments this year; they just needed to follow up with last year's comments.

Board members received a copy of the Souhegan Cooperative School District Management Report for the Year Ended June 30, 2006, provided by Melanson Heath.

Included in this report was a Status of Prior Year Recommendations. The recommendations were as follows:

1. Include the School Store in the District's General Leger.

Cheryl explained they previously recommended the activities of the Scratching Post be accounted for by the District in the general ledger, whereby all the receipts and disbursements be processed through the District's normal accounting process.

Cheryl said the Scratching Post activities were not accounted for in the District's general ledger during fiscal year 2006, however certain controls were implemented to eliminate the lack of segregation of duties related to disbursements.

Cheryl said they continue to recommend the District account for the activities of the Scratching Post in the general ledger in order to increase oversight and controls over cash receipts and disbursements from this activity. Cheryl explained this could be accomplished by depositing receipts into the District's bank account instead of the separate Scratching Post account and submitting invoices through the District's standard disbursement process.

The report also suggested the administration: Improve the Student Activity Fund Policies and Procedures. Cheryl explained during the prior year audit, they noted that non-student related activity funds were maintained at the school. The report stated this was an inappropriate use of student activity funds. In addition, they found deficit activity fund balances existed.

The report suggested the District implement formal policies and procedures to provide student activity fund personnel and activity advisors with documented resources to properly and consistently maintain student activity fund records. The report also recommended the District consider performing periodic audits of these decentralized student activity fund records.

Board members as well as members of the administration agreed, the receipt process needs to be formalized

The report stated during the current fiscal year 2006 audit, they again noted non-student related activity funds were maintained at the school and that deficit activity fund balances still existed. In addition they found disbursements that were not approved and did not have proper external supporting documentation such as a vendor invoice or receipt.

The report again recommended the District implement formal policies and procedures.

Discussion followed. Dana Redmond asked if a club gives a donation for example, the Booster Club, and it's air marked for a specific program, how do we know if its used for the specific program it was intended. Betty Shankel explained when a motion is made to accept the

donation, it should specify what the donation is to be used towards.

Christine Morley asked how an activity fund could have a deficit balance. Lisa Ambrosio explained if they have to pay for a student activity but are still owed for the activity by a student, it shows up as a deficit. Lisa said all deficit account balances were taken care of as soon as the year-end closed.

Jeanne Ludt said the board should formally accept any donation or gift and they should send a personal thank-you. Jeanne said she is concerned about the process.

Betty Shankel said Scott Prescott is keeping the administration up to date about donations, it may not have been a priority in the past, but the process has definitely been improved over the past year.

C. Quarterly Report - Betty Shankel provided board members with a copy of the Souhegan Cooperative School District Fiscal Year 2006-2007 Revenue and Expenditure Report dated 7/1/2006 – 12/31/2006.

Betty informed members of the board the projected overage in anticipated revenue at year-end is estimated to be \$254,396. Betty explained the reason for the overage is Local Revenue in regards to Interest Income and Rentals were higher than expected. State Revenue in regards to Catastrophic Aid was higher than expected and Federal Revenue in regards to Medicaid Reimbursement was also higher than expected.

Betty said the expected overage in expenditures at year-end is \$60,506, which is not allowed so a transfer will be made to make up the shortfalls. Betty explained overages were projected in Regular Education Programs, Special Education Programs, Adult Education Programs, Student Support Services and School Board Expenses. Betty also provided the details for the accounts with a projected surplus at year-end which included School Administrative Services, Operation and Plant Maintenance, and Support Services – Other.

Betty said she welcomed feedback from the board on the

report format. She said if board members would like more information or had any comments or suggestions to let her know.

Betty said she would like to do an audit timeline next year and sees no reason why they received their audit reports so late this year.

Betty thanked Lisa Ambrosio for her work on the Revenue and Expenditure Report.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. 2007-08 Proposed School Calendar – Board members received a copy of the SAU 39 Proposed 2007-2008 School Year Calendar. The draft document was dated February 8, 2007.

Based on the proposed calendar, Dr. Jennings explained the first day of school for students would be August 29, 2007. She said they are proposing two in service days for teachers, one on January 25, 2008, and the other on October 8, 2008. The last day of school for Amherst and Mont Vernon is June 12, 2008, and for Souhegan it is June 13, 2008.

Dr. Jennings said all suggestions regarding the proposed calendar are welcome and the calendar will come back to the board again for their approval.

Steve Coughlan said he wanted to make sure the calendar reflected Graduation Day is tentative so there is no doubt in anyone's mind it is not exact.

B. Appointment/Election of Clerk and Treasurer – Steve Coughlan informed members of the board right after the elections they need to appoint the School District Clerk and on July 1, 2007, they need to appoint the Treasurer. Steve explained Lisa Ambrosio is willing to serve as the School District Clerk again next year and Ann Logan is willing to continue as the Treasurer.

Steve asked members of the board if they would like to reappoint both Lisa Ambrosio and Ann Logan to their respective positions next year. All members of the board agreed to reappoint Lisa and Ann.

C. Student Behavior Report – Board members received a copy of the Souhegan High School Student Behavior Report dated February 15, 2007 from Scott Prescott. The report contained data compiled from the first 102 days of 180 days of school.

Jeanne Ludt said she was a little concerned about the Behavior Report.

Scott Prescott said he welcomed feedback on the structure of the report.

Members of the board agreed to put this agenda item on the next agenda for March 22, 2007, since the meeting time ran later than expected.

A motion was made by Phyllis Thomas and seconded by Jeanne Ludt to enter into Non-Public Session per RSA 91 – A:3 II (a). By roll call vote, Gaynor-yes; Coughlan-yes; Ludt-yes; Thomas-yes; and Rizzi-yes, all members of the board voted in favor of entering into Non-Public Session at 8:16 p.m.

NON PUBLIC SESSION

A motion was made by Phyllis Thomas and seconded by Janet Gaynor to come out of Non-Public Session. By roll call vote, Gaynor-yes; Coughlan-yes; Ludt-yes; Thomas-yes; and Rizzi-yes, all members of the board voted in favor of coming out of Non-Public Session at 9:10 p.m.

Steve Coughlan and Dr. Jennings spoke briefly about upcoming future agenda items.

OTHER

Janet Gaynor moved to adjourn and Jeanne Ludt seconded the motion. All board members voted in favor of the motion. The motion passed. The meeting adjourned at 9:20 p.m.

REVIEW OF MEETING/ADJOURNMENT