

**Souhegan Cooperative School Board  
June 17, 2010**

**Attendance**

**Attendance**

**Present**

Chairman Steve Coughlan, Mary Lou Mullens, Jeanne Ludt, Chris Janson, Howard Brown, Pim Grondstra and Dana Redmond.

Attorney Gordon Graham

**Administrative Team**

Jim Bosman, Mary Athey Jennings, Renea Sparks, Nicole Heimarck, and Elizabeth Shankel, Peggy Silva, Colleen Meany, Bob Thompson

**Minutes Taker**

Beth Penney

**Call To Order**

**Call to Order**

Mr. Coughlan called the meeting to order at 6:04pm.

**Announcements**

**Announcements**

Mr. Bosman highlighted the successful final week of school before graduation. The Run for Hope was successful and we made a large donation and the Ethics Forum at the Hampshire Dome raised \$3200 for Share. Step-up Day was this week. We went to the NH Board of Education to appeal the 2010 AYP designation and we were successful in the appeal.

**Public Time**

**Public Time**

None

**Consent Agenda**

**Consent Agenda**

Dr. Jennings stated that there was a change in consent agenda. The resignation has been rescinded and there is a nomination for a reading specialist.

Mr. Coughlan asked to pull the May 20<sup>th</sup> minutes.

Mr. Redmond asked that the board support Chris Lavoie to work to address the bus issue of not having more than 3 buses per day for games.

Ms. Shankel stated that we can work with the bus company and will bring this issue forward to the bus company.

45 The consent Agenda was adopted containing the minutes from May 20<sup>th</sup> and April  
46 15<sup>th</sup>, the treasures report, the manifest, the nomination for the reading specialist,  
47 and the special services bid recommendation for occupational therapy.

48

49 **Ms. Ludt made a motion to accept the May 20<sup>th</sup> minutes and Mr. Brown**  
50 **seconded the motion.**

51

52 Mr. Coughlan asked to make the following changes to the May 20<sup>th</sup> minutes:

53

54 Line 24 Shannon was spelled wrong and Dokmo was spelled wrong.

55

56 Line 64 add Chris to Mr. Chris Lavoie.

57

58 Line 198 add the word change and fix the spelling of about.

59

60 **The minutes of May 20<sup>th</sup> were adopted as amended. Ms. Janson and Mr.**  
61 **Grondstra abstained from the vote.**

62

63 **Discussion**

**Discussion**

64 Souhegan Yearbook Policy

65

66 Mr. Coughlan read a statement on behalf of the board. The statement discussed the  
67 board's process with the support of their attorney. The statement addressed the  
68 federal law that requires schools to educate all students and the privacy laws  
69 concerning students and staff in the school. The statement also addressed that the  
70 yearbook would be modified using stickers, which would be provided to students by  
71 the principal. The statement was clear about what can and cannot be discussed at  
72 this meeting.

73

74 Ms. Ludt stated that after reviewing the policy the administration and the yearbook  
75 committee made a decision based on a policy in hand and a very unusual  
76 circumstance. The school board has revisited the policy and will include new  
77 language to help folks in the future with tools, direction, and a protocol. The board  
78 is also making the commitment to have the ability to pull the yearbook back after  
79 the book has been printed and make corrections.

80

81 Dr. Jennings asked the board to leave the wording for the policy committee and to  
82 be decided at a later date.

83

84 Mr. Coughlan stated that the school board committee appointments will be assigned  
85 later in this meeting and the board will appoint more members to the policy  
86 committee. The first priority would be to look at this policy.

87

88

89

90

91 **Public Time**

92

93 Greg Early, 7 Braunwood Dr., Amherst:

94

95 Indicated that how this incident was handled was an embarrassment. He called for  
96 the resignation of the superintendent and the people responsible surrounding the  
97 yearbook. He also asked for clarification about what students are expelled for and  
98 why the students in question were not expelled.

99

100 Mr. Coughlan explained that expulsion is complicated and every student has the  
101 right to an education independent of ones actions outside of the school. Expulsion  
102 has to be tied to actions in the school and the educational nexus.

103

104 Attorney Graham also explained the responsibility of the district to educate students  
105 and the rights of all students.

106

107 Nan Stearns, 31 Fells Drive, Amherst:

108

109 Expressed that the school board, SAU, and the school are not guilty. She feels that  
110 SHS is a good school and the school board works very hard for the school and the  
111 community.

112

113 Peter Row, 3 Tanglewood Way, Amherst:

114

115 Discussed the judgment of the people responsible for the yearbook and how the  
116 decisions were made.

117

118 Wendy Hunt, 44 Stearns Rd., Amherst:

119

120 Discussed her support of the school and the school board. She expressed her  
121 disappointment that the apology took over a week. She indicated that she is also a  
122 lawyer and that state and federal statues can be interpreted differently.

123

124 Joe Esposito, 25 Lord Jeffrey Dr., Amherst:

125

126 Questioned if students are convicted of a felony if the school is still obligated to  
127 educate them.

128

129 Mr. Coughlan explained that even when serving a life sentence the school is  
130 obligated to educate all students.

131

132 A back and forth between Mr. Esposito and Mr. Coughlan ensued about the ability of  
133 the school to expel a student after they have been found guilty of a felony.

134

135

136

137 Gary Molaghan, 2 Cranes Crossing, Mont Vernon:  
138  
139 Questioned if the board had anything to do with the decisions made concerning the  
140 yearbook.

141  
142 A discussion between Mr. Coughlan and Mr. Molaghan ensued concerning the  
143 timeline of events in the decision process for the yearbook.

144  
145 Mr. Molaghan stated that he would like to know who was responsible for the  
146 decisions concerning the yearbook and their rationale. He questioned if the  
147 yearbook was a part of an education and the judgment of the people involved in the  
148 decision process.

149  
150 Theresa Grella, 128 Amherst St., Amherst:

151  
152 Asked if students who are sent out of the district to high schools for emotional or  
153 handicapped reasons are in the yearbook.

154  
155 Mr. Coughlan replied that a student is a student in the district and they are in the  
156 yearbook.

157  
158 Chris Conrad, 7 New Boston Rd., Amherst:

159  
160 Referred to an article in the paper that explained activities and behaviors of  
161 students that they could be expelled for. He expressed his discontent with the  
162 apology of the school board to the community.

163  
164 Amily Moore, 7 Foundry St., Amherst:

165  
166 Expressed her disappointment with the leadership concerning the yearbook issue.  
167 She questioned judgment and wants someone to take responsibility. She handed the  
168 board a petition for the resignation of Mary Jennings.

169  
170 Neil Soice, 9 Buckridge Dr., Amherst:

171  
172 Expressed his concern with the judgment of the administration and the lack of trust  
173 now between the administration and the community. He discussed the example  
174 being sent to other students and feels the sticker solution to the yearbook is  
175 unacceptable.

176  
177 Tom McKinney, 10 Kittredge Rd, Mont Vernon:

178  
179 Expressed his concern over who the school thought the victims in this incident are.  
180 He also expressed his concern that not all families involved were considered at the  
181 time of the decision concerning the yearbook. He feels that the solution to the

182 yearbook is not acceptable and that the people responsible should pay to have the  
183 yearbooks reprinted.

184  
185 Robert Choquette, 33 Brook Rd., Amherst:

186  
187 Expressed his dissatisfaction with the lack of responsibility taken surrounding the  
188 yearbook. He asked for the resignation of the superintendent, the administration  
189 and the school board.

190  
191 David Villiotti, 42 Thorton Ferry II, Amherst:

192  
193 Expressed his disappointment with the lack of answers from the board and the  
194 administration. He also expressed his disappointment that not all people were  
195 taken into consideration when the decisions surrounding the yearbook were made.

196  
197 Angela McLaughlin, 6 Marden Way, Mont Vernon:

198  
199 Expressed her disgrace with the yearbook decision. She referred to how Souhegan  
200 strives to raises students with respect, trust, and courage. She indicated that this  
201 incident shows a lack of respect and trust.

202  
203 Mark McGovern, 20 Deerwood Dr., Amherst:

204  
205 Expressed his discontent with the behavior of the people in the room towards the  
206 board and each other. He stated that he supports all of the work the board does.

207  
208 Kimberly Kane, 12 Fieldstone Dr., Amherst:

209  
210 Stated that she felt the yearbook should not have been printed as it was and the  
211 district should have just been willing to deal with the after math of that decision if it  
212 occurred.

213  
214 Kathryn Dillon, 5 Terrace Lane, Amherst:

215  
216 As a student at SHS, she brought up the Souhegan Six, which includes being  
217 responsible and accountable for your choices. She wants answers to the things that  
218 can be explained.

219  
220 Susan Durling, 16 Main St., Amherst:

221  
222 Expressed her surprise by the reaction of the school board and stated that she is  
223 embarrassed by their actions. She asked the board to go to the jail and give the  
224 students in question due process.

225  
226 Mr. Esposito expressed that he wants to believe what the board says, but the  
227 problem is that the board is not telling the public anything.

228  
229  
230  
231  
232  
233  
234  
235  
236  
237  
238  
239  
240  
241  
242  
243  
244  
245  
246  
247  
248  
249  
250  
251  
252  
253  
254  
255  
256  
257  
258  
259  
260  
261  
262  
263  
264  
265  
266  
267  
268  
269  
270  
271  
272  
273

Mr. Early stated that the board set an ugly precedence for upcoming students and families in the community.

Ms. Ludt stated the board has not been clear because our hands are tied. It is important to understand the fault lies in the process and not having a broader perspective. The decisions were correct. The fault is that more voices were not included in the decisions and there was a lack of input.

Mr. Redmond stated that he thinks mistakes were made. He reviewed the success of the 2010 graduating class and the top colleges they are attending. He expressed that asking for the resignation of the superintendent and the administration is over the top. He felt the board should have been informed about the yearbook decisions and that policies will be changed so this does not happen again.

Ms. Mullens stated the board has listened and heard the public clearly. The board is not saying there were not things that were done wrong. She acknowledged the good things including 225 good people graduated last week and the great faculty and administration that work at the school. This decision was not callous or made easily. The board is not looking to crucify anyone, but acknowledge there was wrong and hope in the future to focus on the positives.

Mr. Coughlan called a break at 7:30pm.

Mr. Coughlan called the meeting back to order at 7:43pm.

**Action Items**

**Action Items**

JLCF- Wellness 3<sup>rd</sup> Reading

**Mr. Redmond made a motion to approve the policy JLCF. Mr. Grondstra seconded the motion.**

Ms. Ludt asked if the language in the policy about the school store was changing based on the discussion last meeting.

Mr. Coughlan stated that the amendment he and Ms. Sullivan propose for the school store in Section G: School Store pg 22; Mr. Coughlan moved to amend the proposal by striking the existing language and replace it with language he and Ms. Sullivan had discussed. The language is consistent with school laws and meets Ms. Sullivan's needs to make a healthy school store.

Ms. Shankel asked what the purpose of the change is.

Mr. Coughlan and Ms. Mullens explained to Ms. Shankel the rationale behind changing the language.

274 Ms. Shankel stated that she is concerned because they are not meeting the RSA  
275 guidelines and the ramifications to the budget with this new language.  
276  
277 The board discussed this policy and changing the language more closely based on  
278 the times of lunch and meeting state and federal guidelines for school stores.  
279  
280 Ms. Mullens stated that Ms. Shankel was not at the last meeting and Ms. Sullivan is  
281 not at this meeting. Lets look at this amendment later.  
282  
283 Dr. Jennings suggested adopting the policy as the other boards have. The SAU board  
284 is putting together a SAU wellness committee.  
285  
286 Mr. Coughlan stated that the board should adopt the policy as published in the  
287 packet. Then include Ms. Shankel and the new food service director to write a new  
288 amendment to bring to the August meeting.  
289  
290 Mr. Redmond asked about the clause dealing with fundraising. His concern is about  
291 the sports team’s ability to do the much needed fundraising.  
292  
293 The board discussed this issue and determined that this policy only applied to the  
294 school day and would not affect sports teams from fundraising after school.  
295  
296 Ms. Ludt asked is frozen vegetables and fruits were included in the last bullet under  
297 C on pg 21. She suggested also listing frozen vegetables in this part of the policy.  
298  
299 **Ms. Ludt made a motion to make an amendment to the policy to add frozen**  
300 **vegetables and frozen fruits to part C of the policy. Mr. Brown seconded the**  
301 **motion and the vote was unanimous**  
302  
303 **The policy was adopted as amended and the vote was unanimous.**  
304  
305 IICK – Bullying 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading  
306  
307 Dr. Jennings stated that this is the second reading and encouraged the board to  
308 adopt the policy because they would like to put language into the student  
309 handbooks and train faculty this summer and fall. The difference from initial  
310 reading is that the word “non-verbal” was added. The other two districts have  
311 adopted the policy.  
312  
313 Mr. Coughlan stated that the state just passed a law and asked if the board will see  
314 amendments later.  
315  
316 Dr. Jennings replied yes. This policy is an excellent base from which to start. It  
317 would be better to pass the policy and then wait to amend it.  
318  
319 Mr. Redmond asked if there is a hold harmless clause.

320  
321  
322  
323  
324  
325  
326  
327  
328  
329  
330  
331  
332  
333  
334  
335  
336  
337  
338  
339  
340  
341  
342  
343  
344  
345  
346  
347  
348  
349  
350  
351  
352  
353  
354  
355  
356  
357  
358  
359  
360  
361  
362  
363  
364  
365

Dr. Jennings replied yes. This was a large conversation at the state level. This holds harmless the administration and is in section 8.

**Mr. Redmond made a motion to approve the policy. Ms. Ludt seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous.**

**Presentation**

**Presentation**

**Community Council Report – Security**

Kevin Proctor made this presentation as the community council advisor. There was a charge from the board to look into the security situation at SHS. This security initiative is a work in progress and will change, as the school’s security needs change. The school and the council are always open to suggestions.

The Council’s recommendations are summarized below:

- Limit access to chemical rooms, hatch roof, and maintenance areas
- Accountability and vigilance towards attendance taking
- Sign in/ out procedure could be more efficient; another school saw a swipe system. The system can tell electronically that students are here or not.
- Adults and students are always continuing conversations around the Souhegan Six
- Caller ID system to help identify outside threats. This is not a problem now, but if it is not expensive maybe it is worth having.
- Get bigger lockers. The Annex lockers are bigger, but the main building lockers are 6 inches in width. The backpacks do not fit in the lockers, not to mention band and athletic equipment. New locking system
- Move the SRO’s office near the main entrance. His office is currently in Division 1.
- Noble has a sign in/ out system and checks for sex offenders on the spot.
- Install cameras in parking lot. The discussion was around vandalism. There was a discussion about entrances and hallways and the cameras in these areas were voted down.

The board discussed with the community council members present many of the proposals including the bigger lockers, the main entrance, what happens to account for students during a fire alarm, the sign in/ out policy and procedures for students, the locking system of classroom doors, and security cameras.

The board discussed giving the recommendations to Gale and Associates. They also discussed the security in Bedford and Milford high schools. The board indicated that having conversations with students and signage maybe a good option, but not the only alternative. The board gave approval to how bigger lockers and an anonymous tip line will help reduce theft.

366 **Public Time**

367

368 Karen Tuthill, Amherst:

369

370 Stated that these recommendations are good. She discussed cameras and getting  
371 parents support in having students be more responsible for their own things. She  
372 also discussed the buzz in system and a swiping system for students.

373

374 Mr. Coughlan explained that the district has an outside company looking at  
375 renovations and the board would like to integrate these recommendations with the  
376 Master Plan.

377

378 David Villiotti, Amherst:

379

380 Expressed his concern that when you walk into SHS a person can easily get confused  
381 on which way to go to the office. He wanted to better understand the drawbacks to  
382 cameras and a buzz in system.

383

384 Mr. Proctor stated that the discussion was about paying someone to watch the live  
385 feed and does the camera get over worked. The conversations were also around the  
386 philosophical practices here. If the school is not catching people then a camera is a  
387 reactive use, which is against the school's philosophy.

388

389 Ms. Mullens stated that the community council tried to look at things that were  
390 preventative and not reactive. The buzzing system is not feasible because of all of  
391 the entrances.

392

393 Ellen Cuness, Amherst:

394

395 Asked about the time frame to accomplish the proposals. She also stated that she is  
396 uncomfortable that you can enter the building with out anyone seeing you.

397

398 Mr. Coughlan stated that the school board is currently reviewing the draft of the  
399 master plan with the Gale Company and the Facilities Management Committee. This  
400 is the draft of recommendations and they will be phased in. The locking system is  
401 several thousand dollars so it must be phased in. The board needs to have the  
402 experts tell us how to do this over a reasonable timeframe with out huge tax hit.

403

404 Mr. Villiotti asked if it makes sense to install cameras in the entranceways if we are  
405 going to install them in the parking lot.

406

407 Ms. Ludt stated that this was voted down because the cameras felt threatening to  
408 the students.

409

410 Ms. Tuthill asked why are the cameras threatening and about how attendance is  
411 taken.

412

413 Mr. Proctor and Mr. Thompson explained how attendance is taken and what  
414 happens if it is not taken.

415

416 Mr. Coughlan stated that he wants to move these recommendations to Gale and  
417 Associates and let them determine the priorities.

418

419 **Discussion**

**Discussion**

420

421 Gale Report – Next Steps

422

423 Mr. Redmond stated this is an extremely involved plan. We need to get Gale back in  
424 here for a work session because there is so much information.

425

426 The board decided to meet with Gale to ask questions and then try to go public with  
427 the plan in September.

428

429 Dr. Jennings discussed the feasibility study the Amherst school district did three  
430 years ago. She suggested the board meet with the Amherst board to get some  
431 insight.

432

433 Mr. Redmond stated the study for SHS is more expansive. The board needs a very  
434 involved group and get people that do not have kids involved. If there was ever a  
435 time to reduce the tax rate and renovate schools now is the time.

436

437 Mr. Coughlan stated that the board could learn something from Amherst. Mr.  
438 Redmond and Ms. Ludt will arrange a work session with the Amherst committee.  
439 We will schedule a work session with Gale for 3 hours.

440

441 Ms. Shankel stated that the state will decline building aide for 1 year and that is  
442 going to be extended. The long-term plan of the state is unknown.

443

444 Committee Assignments

445

446 Mr. Coughlan stated we need a member on PPC.

447

448 The board discussed what PPC is.

449

450 Ms. Mullens volunteered to be on PPC.

451

452 Mr. Coughlan stated the policy committee is currently Mr. Brown and Ms. Ludt. We  
453 need more attention paid to the SHS policies and should add more people to the  
454 policy committee for SHS

455

456 Ms. Ludt and Mr. Brown volunteered to work both on the SAU policies and on the  
457 SHS polices.

458  
459  
460  
461  
462  
463  
464  
465  
466  
467  
468  
469  
470  
471  
472  
473  
474  
475  
476  
477  
478  
479  
480  
481  
482  
483  
484  
485  
486  
487

Mr. Grondstra will talk to Ms. Mullens and Ms. Ludt to be on a committee.

Ms. Mullens is on the School calendar committee.

**Review of Meeting**

**Review of Meeting**

Mr. Brown stated that he wants to apologize to the staff. The staff does everything that asked of them. He expressed that he was upset because the public did not trust the board to do the right thing.

Ms. Silva stated that there were over 100 people here tonight of which 18 spoke. It helps to recognize how few people there were. It would behoove the board to remember that.

Ms. Janson stated the issue seemed not to effect what happened in this building. She expressed that her kids were not affected by it and she gives the staff credit because the kids were isolated.

Ms. Mullens stated she hopes there is better communication going forward. She hopes the board keeps this mutual respect in mind when it comes to communication.

**Adjourn**

**Adjourn**

**Mr. Grondstra made a motion to adjourn and Mr. Brown seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous at 9:27pm.**