

Sanborn Regional School District Budget Committee Meeting
November 18, 2015
Meeting Minutes
JOINT MEETING with SRSD School Board
APPROVED

A joint meeting of the Sanborn Regional School Board and Budget Committee was held on Wednesday, November 18, 2015. The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm by Sanborn Regional School Board Chairperson Jon LeBlanc. Ms. Gannon called to order the Budget Committee meeting.

The following were recorded as present:

SRSD SCHOOL BOARD

Jon LeBlanc, Chairperson
Wendy Miller, Vice Chair
Janice Bennett
Dustin Ramey
Corey Masson

SRSD BUDGET COMMITTEE

Cheryl Gannon, Chairperson
Barry Gluck
Patricia Stephan
Ami Faria
Beth Scanlon
Anne Collyer

ADMINISTRATORS

Dr. Brian Blake, Superintendent of Schools
Carol Coppola, Business Manager
Jodi Gutterman, Student Services Director

EXCUSED:

Nancy Ross (School Board)
Roberto Miller (School Board)
James Doggett (Budget Committee)

The joint meeting began with a salute to the flag.

MANIFEST AND EXPENDITURES REGISTER

The manifest and expenditures were reviewed and signed by the Board members.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Dr. Blake introduced the administration. Present were:

Mrs. Ellen Hume-Howard – Director of Curriculum
Mr. Brian Stack – Principal, High School
Mrs. Debora Bamforth – Principal, DJ Bakie Elementary School
Mr. Jonathan Vander Els – Principal, Memorial Elementary School
Mr. Alexander Rutherford –Principal, Middle School
Mr. Steven Riley – Director of Facilities

Mr. Robert Ficker – Director of Technology

Mrs. Donna Johnson – Assistant Principal, Memorial Elementary School

Mrs. Ann Rutherford – Assistant Principal, DJ Bakie Elementary School

Mr. Michael Shore – Assistant Principal, Middle School

Dr. Blake highlighted the District accomplishments this year. The Sanborn Regional School District was named the 2015 Larry O’Toole Award Winner of \$100,000 to be put toward the innovative work we have been recognized for. In SY 2014-15, Sanborn qualified for an additional \$300,000 of grant funds.

Dr. Blake referred to the Smarter Balance assessment which was given in certain grades. He pointed out that in the grades which took the Smarter Balance, we are seeing some anomalies. He has not made the results public yet, because he is questioning the accuracy at this point. The numbers don’t add up based on the number of kids who took the assessment and what is being reported. There is a problem there and the State is sorting that out.

Dr. Blake was proud to say that all four Sanborn schools are NEASC accredited.

Sanborn’s high school band has grown from 108 to 252 members in five years.

Memorial School was recognized as a National PLC school.

The Sanborn Regional School District was selected as a pilot district for the NHPACE project based on the work by the district to implement the state’s requirement of being a competency-based educational system.

Dr. Blake referred to the operational goals of the district and the nine characteristics of high performing schools which serve to be a compass for us to keep on track. The current operational goals include a Seminary Campus Plan, Community Partnership, Measurement of Academic Progress and Fiscal Responsibility.

District goals were highlighted. Dr. Blake stated we are showing growth with early intervention for students, utilizing differentiated instructional strategies within the responseto the intervention model. Another goal of climate and culture is a big focus for us in developing a more positive climate.

Dr. Blake reviewed the NH State Standards and how they fit in with the bigger picture. He provided a District overview. We are the 30th largest school district in the State. The median household income suggests a significant improvement in our local economy.

The number of children who are eligible for free and reduced lunch has dropped significantly and we barely meet the state requirements for assistance.

Dr. Blake described the Curriculum Cycle in each area and that the sequence works.

1. Research, 2. Development, 3. Implement, 4. Support and Monitor. It is not a haphazard situation, it is well thought out and planned ahead.

The NWEA (Measure of Academic Progress) MAP assessment has been used in the district for eleven years. It is a stable piece of data. Our students are scoring above the established norms across all grade levels and we continue to monitor that on a regular basis.

Dr. Blake talked about the Special Education programs and how we work to keep our students in district as opposed to sending them out of district which can come at significant costs. The programs we have in district are meeting the needs of the vast majority of our students with special needs. He mentioned that a big chunk of left over funds at the end of the year are because we are either bringing kids back into the district or not sending them out of district.

Sanborn participates in the “Life of an Athlete/Student Program” at the high school and middle school level. Dr. Blake mentioned that it is important for the Boards to see and understand what the needs are. We have \$40,000 plus in sports programming. The number of students participating in our programs increase every year.

Blended learning was described. We provide our students with a wide variety of opportunities which consists of programs that are personalized for students, to include learning experiences with digital media, peers, online work and small group instruction. We are headed in that direction and he informed the Boards they will see that in some of the budgets.

Dr. Blake described some of the improvements that have been done in the District. There was the installation of a solar hot air system saving thousands of dollars each year. An attic insulation project was performed at both elementary schools. There were lighting upgrades at the Swasey Gymnasium. There was an installation of air controls systems which are all energy efficient ways of saving costs for the district. At Memorial Elementary School, they installed Air Source Heat Pumps and ERV Units. The manner in which the units handle the air means a much healthier environment and savings on oil costs. We are always taking a look at how we can better utilize the funding we have.

Dr. Blake provided a budget overview and described the various funds utilized by the district in an effort to help the Boards understand what they need to in reviewing the budgets.

The Five Year Capital Improvement Plan was described. The entire plan has been approved and the budget includes just the projects listed for next year. He described the Capital Replacement Plan. Examples of what is included in this plan are text books, furniture, desks, chairs, athletic equipment, etc. Everything is laid out in a 5 year plan with minimal guess work. Aside from the salaries and benefits and capital projects, Dr. Blake stated there is not a lot of other things in the budget that isn't already developed through these replacement plans. He added that we take very good care of what we have.

Dr. Blake informed the Board that enrollment is on a slow decline. The decline is widespread throughout the District and that it is not an even distribution. It doesn't necessarily equate to reducing teachers. However, we have reduced teachers as the need has arisen.

The district is celebrating some long term staff in the district and Dr. Blake pointed out that FTE's are increasing by one.

Dr. Blake reviewed the property tax structure and the school district taxes. He stated that all properties are reappraised within a five year cycle. Sanborn Regional School District receives operating budget revenues from three primary sources – State aid for public education, federal grant funding, and local property taxes. We also receive revenue from non-resident tuition, fees and receipts from other miscellaneous activities.

Most of the funding comes from local property owners. He questions whether it is a spending problem or a revenue problem and believes that perhaps we need to look more at how we are generating revenue rather

than just look at what the costs are. He encouraged the Boards and the public to be vocal with our state and local legislatures on ways to support our schools. It is hard to continue just on the backs of our local property owners.

With regards to the Fund Balance, the school district is able to retain a fund balance of up to 2.5% of the net property tax assessment each year. Dr. Blake explained when we receive additional revenues; we are not allowed to spend it. Last year, \$215,000 was not allowed to be spent. He explained we budget for special education. Any unexpended special education money must be returned. Last year the amount returned was \$649,000. There was only \$186,035 left from the general fund budget we could access. That is cutting it very close. We are not over budgeting.

Dr. Blake highlighted the significant budget increases and decreases the district has. These figures are from capital projects, health insurance, new budget requests, transportation, utilities, special education tuition and vocational tuition for a total of \$1,135,760. He also noted that we have a very large bond on the high school of a \$2.3 million which is important to keep in mind as a contributing factor to the budget. It will not be paid off until the year 2025; however, the amount will decrease over time.

Dr. Blake discussed the Capital Improvement Plan and stated that \$652,350 is for projects included in the plan for this first year.

Dr. Blake mentioned a reference sheet has been included in their budget books to assist them in deciphering the budget codes and the functions.

Dr. Blake noted that tonight's budget represents a 3.46% increase over the current year's budget. It is lower than the increase last year. He stated the leadership team worked hard putting this budget together.

Dr. Blake introduced Mrs. Deborah Bamforth, Principal at the DJ Bakie Elementary School. Mrs. Bamforth addressed the Boards. She explained they average 3 classrooms at each grade level but they have four classrooms at first grade and two classrooms in fifth grade. She indicated we have permanently eliminated 4 classroom positions, but last year temporarily eliminated a 5th grade position because we had a tiny bubble that came up to 5th grade and she is requesting we reinstate that position because our current 4th grade enrollment supports the need for it. That is really the only thing they are asking for in their budget. She worries that because we have high expectations of staff and students, we need to provide our professional staff with what they need to meet those high expectations. She worries about just looking at the number and not at the need and how that will affect our progress.

Mr. Jonathan Vander Els, Principal at Memorial Elementary School addressed the Boards. He is requesting a 1.64% increase which is a \$36,000 increase in the budget. He didn't hire any professional staff last year. The \$36,000 is mostly due to the salaries and benefits for the teachers who have stayed in our school district. There is over a \$56,000 increase regarding transportation specific to out of district placements and transporting preschool students. This is a cost that used to be with the Bakie School and is now a shared cost. His concern is if they are required to cut additional staff it will impact their ability to provide interventions and the extension for our students with our school.

Mr. Alexander Rutherford, Principal of the Middle School addressed the Boards. He explained his budget has a 2.05% increase which equates to a \$117,000 increase; \$95,000 of that is special education tuition and transportation, and \$14,000 is for new programs. He stated they should be back in their building after Christmas break. There are a large number of identified and unidentified special education students with

significant problems. There has been an increase in their special education students of almost 16%-17% to almost 25%. He added there are some complex students moving up next year.

Mr. Brian Stack, High School Principal addressed the Boards. He explained his budget increased \$17,500 over last year and it is very close to a level funded budget. He worries about making cuts in the budget to either people or programs. Neither one of those they want to look at because that will impact the kids. He doesn't believe the same level of expertise will be achieved with on-line classes as they experience with a classroom teacher. He states we can look at programming, but reminded the members that we are the center of what kids do.

Ms. Carol Coppolla presented the district wide budget. She explained the School Board voted to approve the 5-year Capital Improvement Plan. There is funding in the general fund to support that decision. There is \$606,350 for this year and there is a list of those projects in the budget book along with the other 4 years of projects. When the projects actually occur, the expenses get spread out to the schools and they do a budget adjustment. Other areas where this is present are with collective bargaining agreements, tuition funding in addition to ACP's. Other areas included in the district wide budget are personnel who work throughout the school district. We will track all the costs associated with maintaining software programs for the district. Previously it was unorganized so they have been placed in one sole department which is called "Information Management Services". They just purchased a student identification system which has on-going maintenance costs. Those are the significant increases in the budget.

Dr. Blake explained the School Board provided a list of priorities and needs they wanted included in the budget. Those items included are: The Drug and Alcohol Counselor which came to us as a grant but needs to be planned for when the grant money runs out, Enrichment Activities, CIP, and slowing the growth of salaries and benefits which is ongoing. We have a proposed budget of \$35,407,950. The default budget is \$34,412,230. That equates to a \$995,720 difference between the two budgets.

The meeting recessed for 5 minutes at 8:35 pm. Dr. Blake opened the meeting up to questions at 8:41 pm.

Mr. Stack explained how the student drug counselor is helping with some mental health and drug prevention and he described how the services are adding to the value at the high school. She works on a referral system for the students and will provide us with a host of counseling services and other things as well. She is involved in preventative programs, in Life of a Student program and she works closely with other community partners and other organizations to help look for funding and programming sources to bring here. She is very busy and it is refreshing to have someone dedicated full time to finding ways to address this problem and help the kids.

Ms. Gannon stated that assuming, since that position was grant funded, there are some statistics, such as, does she keep a log of referrals on how many kids she serves. Also, what particularly are the concerns. She asked if we know how many drug related and health issues are to quantify the services that have been provided.

Mr. Stack says she does keep a log and that information is available. She is required to work with the State to make sure she is tracking certain data on kids and providing a certain subset of services for the students.

Ms. Gannon asked if there is a job description. Mr. Stack said she does have a job description with her roles and responsibilities and Ms. Gannon asked if that is expected to remain the same. Mr. Stack expects it to remain the same. It is based on best practices and what the state believes should be part of the successful

program. He doesn't foresee adding to her plate and commented that it might take a few years before we see some real impact, as it is with any new initiative.

Ms. Stephan questioned transportation and the costs for special needs over the summer. She noticed a lot of costs and asked what the district's responsibilities are for transportation over the summer.

Dr. Blake explained it is IEP driven and some of the costs are from trips back and forth to the summer school programs and for the students with out of district placements back and forth for them if they are in a day placement. That varies by distance and location of programs.

Ms. Miller questioned Ms. Coppolla about the \$500,000 for roof repairs.

Ms. Coppolla explained that money was approved in May or April so we set that up as an encumbrance. It didn't come from the unreserved fund balance because it was already used.

Ms. Collyer questioned a line item to restore an administrative position from contracted services. Also, she asked if the \$500,000 would have been designated a one-time expense and therefore was reduced from the default budget.

Ms. Coppolla explained the district contracts out services for her position and every year they budget for the position, they are restoring that position.

Dr. Blake explained the \$500,000 was out of last year's budget and wasn't a one-time expense. It was part of the approved budget. The default is taken from this year's budget minus one-time expenses but the \$500,000 was budgeted from last year's budget.

Ms. Collyer questioned whether this default budget contains the \$500,000 from the prior year. Ms. Coppolla said no, it does not. It is not included in this year's budget.

Ms. Gannon questioned transportation for preschool because she feels it seems high. She asked how many preschool students are transported, the number of buses, and how many runs per day.

It was explained it includes 3 and 4 yr. olds at each location, with one bus for each school totaling 2 buses each that are doing 4 runs per day.

Ms. Miller asked Mrs. Parady-Guay about the hockey program and how many students are participating in that.

Mrs. Parady-Guay stated there is an average of 20 students but 25 students this year. It is now a Varsity team. She explained it is a solid program that keeps growing and if it continues to grow, they might have to look at a JV program or make some cuts.

Ms. Stephan asked what type of telephone service is used in the district.

Mr. Ficker, Director of Technology, indicated they currently use a telephone line because it is good for disaster recovery. He explained they did look at voice over IP but stayed away from that because he explained to host it would cost \$5,000 - \$5,500 a month. He stated the current phone system is working well

which also includes 911 in each classroom. He doesn't believe there is any real reason to invest in something else.

Ms. Gannon questioned what the line for Cell was for in the Bakie budget.

Ms. Coppolla explained we provide administrators with a monthly stipend for their own cell phones. It is taxable benefit and we pushed as many off the school district plan that we could and now we provide a stipend.

Ms. Collyer questioned Mr. Stack about classes with fewer than 25 kids and whether he has looked at ways to reduce course offerings and/or sections and, if so, what would the results of that be.

Mr. Stack explained the master schedule process starts a year in advance. Students will begin selecting soon and a program of studies will be created. We will look at the requests to try to determine how many sections and course offerings there will be based on staffing. He stated the high school is just big enough where we need to have a wide course offering but yet it is not big enough that when we do offer them, we can fill all of them up. Some electives run every other year. He discussed some are not available based on the number of kids choosing them and that we do have small class sizes in some electives. He stated those would be some we would look at if there were cuts.

Mr. LeBlanc questioned the increase in Adequacy Aid.

Ms. Coppolla said the numbers just changed again this week. Historically, the State would look at the previous 5 years but are now looking at real time information and are looking at numbers from last year for this year. The final adjustment is done in April. For next year, they are estimating it to be down \$30,000 based on certain factors including enrollment, demographics and demonstrated need.

Ms. Faria asked Mrs. Bamforth to explain how the class sizes that are currently in the 4th grade are necessitating a 5th grade teacher next year.

Mrs. Bamforth explained that currently 5th grade is 24 students and 25 students in each of the two rooms. Space is very tight. We need classroom space to have a carpet space away from desks. There is an empty classroom in between which they can use and that helps. Currently 4th grade has 19 students and 20 students in each of the 3 rooms making it almost impossible to have only two for 5th grade next year.

Mr. Mason questioned the new line item in the district wide budget of \$294,000 and how that line is different from other on lines including fees and technology and software.

Ms. Coppolla explained the accounting program, facilities program, student assistance program, and anything of that nature is considered district wide because they are not school specific.

Mr. LeBlanc stated for clarification that one position is grant funded so we only went up one position in 2016-2017 and Dr. Blake said that was correct.

Ms. Gannon asked about the fact since we no longer have the charter school, how has that impacted our revenue or expenditures.

Ms. Coppolla stated it has impacted both significantly. Right now, we are working on construction projects, severing ties with the building that the charter school occupied, and we are correcting all the deficiencies in the Seminary building with the water line. There will be a significant savings in utilization costs; however, the revenue stream of \$125,000 has dried up.

Ms. Miller questioned the PT Speech and Language pathology at Memorial and Bakie and whether this is new this year.

Dr. Blake indicated that additional services are based on the IEP's. We have students entering the system so the services wouldn't necessarily move up. He also mentioned that with the closing of the charter school, we have a number of students from there who are now in our system with special needs.

Ms. Scanlon added that we are required to provide those services and that we also must provide transportation for the preschool.

There were no further questions from the Board members.

Dr. Blake stated that we at the beginning of the budget process which will take the next couple of months. He requested from the board members to funnel any further questions they may have through their respective Chairpersons.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Jim Baker of Newton, NH asked if he can ask questions at this meeting or if he is only allowed to comment. It was stated he was only allowed to make comments.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The next Sanborn Regional School Board meeting will be held on Wednesday, December 2, 2015 at 7:00 PM in Room 137 in the Sanborn Regional High School, Kingston.

Ms. Gannon temporarily adjourned the Budget meeting. Mr. LeBlanc temporarily adjourned the School Board meeting.

Mr. LeBlanc announced the school board will take a 5 minute recess and then enter into non-public session according to RSA 91-A:3 II.

The joint meeting adjourned at 9:25 PM.

Minutes submitted by,

**Linda Mahoney
Recording Secretary**

Budget Committee Reconvened: 9:32 PM

Upcoming meetings are scheduled for Thursdays
December 3, 10, 17 at 7:30 pm at the high school library

The public hearing is January 14, 2016. A meeting will be held on January 7 to review the presentation for the public hearing. The school board will meet on January 6.

Ms. Collyer asked for clarification of the process after the budget is approved by the committee.

Ms. Gannon responded that after the public hearing, the committee may have a brief meeting to discuss the public input and can change the dollar amount of the budget. There may also be another meeting prior to the first deliberative session to revise the presentation if desired.

Ms. Stephan asked if the public hearing is typically well attended and veteran committee members responded that it is not. She recalled that the deliberative was well-attended due to rumors that someone from the public was planning on proposing the budget be cut significantly.

It was decided that we reserve time for a meeting on Tuesday, January 5, in the event that the presentation needs additional honing.

Ms. Stephan asked if she could review the presentation from last year and begin looking at slides which may be used but would need updating for dollar amounts. The consensus was that it would be fine for her to get started on that. She will contact Ms. Coppola for needed information for the 2016-17 budget.

Ms. Faria asked if the committee could get copies of the questions the committee asked the administration last year to get a feel for the types of questions and answers. Mr. Gluck indicated he had sent these to Ms. Gannon several weeks ago. Ms. Gannon will disseminate them to the committee.

The committee should submit questions on the current proposed budget no later than November 28 so Ms. Gannon can compile them and email them to the administration by Monday, November 30 to get responses for the December 3 meeting.

Another "Did You Know" article will go out to announce the Superintendent's proposed budget has been presented and the video is available on the website as well as in pdf format . This article should also remind people about the survey and upcoming meeting dates and other boilerplate information about the minutes and contact information.

Ms. Stephan asked if a link to the survey could be added to the district home page as it may not be well-viewed on the budget committee page. Ms. Gannon will contact the SAU to make this request.

PUBLIC COMMENT - None

COMMITTEE COMMENT - None

Ms. Collyer made a motion to adjourn.

Ms. Scanlon seconded.

Vote: unanimous

Meeting adjourned at 10:00 pm

Respectfully submitted

Cheryl Gannon, recording secretary pro-tem