

Sanborn Regional School District Budget Committee Meeting

May 8, 2015

Meeting Minutes – APPROVED

Call to order: 7:02pm

Attendance:

Annie Collyer, Jim Doggett, Ami Faria, Barry Gluck, Cheryl Gannon, Nancy Ross (School Board), Beth Scanlon, Patty Stephan

Administration: none

Public Comment:

Mr. Baker: likes the concept that the board is responsible for “controlling taxes” and is accountable to taxpayers. Town budgets are going down but school portion of tax bills is increasing. Up \$1.2M last year. Glad that Budget Committee came up with \$500K in savings last year, but that’s still not enough according to voters. Said that School Board has said that if budgets are not getting passed, it is because voters do not understand what goes into them and that voters are not educated. If they did, they would come *en masse* and support them. The School Board feels bad that the budgets are not passing. *Mr. Baker feels, however, that voters are* educated. There has been lots of outreach. Voters simply cannot afford the steady increases and cannot be “sold” on the budgets because they cannot afford them.

Committee Comment:

Quick introductions of the committee to our newest members: Annie Collyer and Ami Faria.

Mr. Gluck: Procedural reminder that none of us can speak as a representative of the Budget Committee without authorization from the Chair or the committee. Question for the administration from committee members should be submitted to the Chair for submission to the administration. The Budget Committee does not decide how money is spent. We determine what figure will be presented to voters, balancing voter and district needs. The Administration and the School Board are tasked with determining how that money will be spent.

Mr. Doggett: Point of clarification. We are not the public. We are duly elected board members. We have no power individually, outside this committee and cannot represent the Budget Committee as individuals. Mr. Gluck agreed.

Prior meeting minutes: None

School Board Report:

Ms. Ross provided an update to the committee pertaining to the school board’s May 6, 2015 meeting. There was an informative discussion of the discipline policy. Discussion regarding the recent budget cuts that were made and why. The specific recommendations came from the administration after they solicited input from many district sources. The vote was unanimous to approve the cuts proposed.

School Board’s one-year goals will be fine-tuned next week. They center on the concept of transparency. People moving to this district want to know what is going on. Possibly will be creating a short reference guide that might link with the town hall’s initiative and be part of a new resident packet.

Ms. Ross will request details regarding the cuts that were recently made to personnel and technology and send the information to the new chair for distribution to the Budget Committee. Ms. Gannon requested that Ms. Ross elaborate on the previous School Board special meeting where the lease to the charter school was discussed. Ms. Ross said it has been made clear to the charter school that they should have been looking for new space, as there were so many deficiencies in the existing district location (fire code issues, mold). Fire Marshall then found

additional deficiencies that required resolution. Charter school planned to address the issue with parent construction volunteers, which was not an acceptable solution to the district due to liability issues. Also determined that we **lost** money renting to the charter school this past year. Seems to have been lots of miscommunication between the previous charter school administration and the district administration.

Mr. Doggett: What happens to the money in the revolving account for facilities? Ms. Ross will look into the verbiage and intent with Ms. Coppola to see if it is relevant in this situation with the charter school.

Ms. Collyer: Estimates for making the building habitable were over \$300K, which is far more than we would have recovered as a district with the rent.

Ms. Ross: There is a special School Board work session next week.

Old Business: None

New Business:

Election of Officers

Motion: Mr. Doggett nominated Ms. Gannon as Chair

- Second: Ms. Scanlon
Immediately before the vote, Ms. Gannon wanted to share her goals were she to be elected Chair.
 - Assign mentors to new members
 - Look into state-level training for the NH Municipal Association for new members
 - Continue community outreach initiative and survey from last year
 - Videotape these meetings
 - Use social media judiciously
 - Initiate budget review process earlier in the year
 - Further revamp slide show presentation for voters, which had a facelift last year
 - Encourage debate, but remain respectful
- VOTE for Chairperson: Unanimous for Ms. Gannon

Motion: Mr. Gluck nominated Ms. Stephan as Vice Chair

- Second: Ms. Ross
- VOTE: Unanimous

Motion: Mr. Gluck nominated Ms. Scanlon as Secretary

- Second: Ms. Gannon
- VOTE: Unanimous

Ms. Stephan: Has there been any decision made on expenditure of unexpended funds? Ms. Ross said that no decision has been made at this time as invoices will continue to come in through June. End of June is a better target to aim for. And when the amount available becomes final, recall that any plan needs approval from the state DRA before the School Board can make any expenditure.

Ms. Collyer: We cannot review all of the details of historical district budgets for the past three years online because of privacy issues. Ms. Collyer has requested these documents from the district, which has made them available for review during specific hours at the district offices. Very challenging due to limited time and limited space. Ms. Gannon will reach out to Ms. Coppola regarding this issue and access for Bud Comm.

Ms. Stephan: Has heard many questions regarding state and cost of the Middle School roof repair. As it turns out, FEMA may cover a percentage of the snow removal and whatever insurance does not cover from the repair.

Ms. Gannon: Mentors volunteered for new Bud Comm members. Mr. Ross will mentor Ms. Collyer and Ms. Scanlon will mentor Ms. Faria.
Brief discussion of possibly having Bud Comm members study specific areas of the budget to be “experts” on that line item.

Public Comment:

Jim Baker, Newton, NH: When the proposed budget did not pass, the administration went to the principals and school administrators and asked for recommended cuts for savings. Perhaps the budget committee can do the same thing. They might have great ideas.
Mr. Gluck thanked the public.

Committee Comment:

Ms. Collyer: The Newton Rec committee is arranging a Memorial Day parade at 10am in May 28 in Newton. Invited Bud Comm members to participate. Followed by parade later in Kingston.
Ms. Stephan: asked Ms. Gannon to be sure the district web site is updated and outdated documentation is removed. And Ms. Stephan agreed to check to see if the district survey from last year is still open.

The Budget Committee’s next meeting is scheduled for June 11, 2015 at 7:30pm. A second meeting was scheduled for September 10 at 7:30.

Ms. Ross motioned to adjourn.
Mr. Doggett seconded motion.
The Budget Committee meeting adjourned at 8:43pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Patty Stephan, Recording Secretary Pro-Tem