

SANBORN REGIONAL SCHOOL BOARD MEETING

January 20, 2016

A regular meeting of the Sanborn Regional School Board was held on Wednesday January 20, 2016. The meeting was called to order at 7:08 PM by Jon LeBlanc, School Board Chair, in Room 137 at Sanborn Regional High School, Kingston, NH. The following were recorded as present:

SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS: Janice Bennett
 Jon LeBlanc, Chair
 Roberto Miller
 Wendy Miller
 Dustin Ramey
 Nancy Ross

ADMINISTRATORS: Dr. Brian J. Blake, Superintendent
 Carol Coppola, Business Manager
 Jodi Gutterman, Student Services Director

EXCUSED: Monique Ricard, Student Council Representative

The meeting began with a salute to the flag.

REVIEW AGENDA Under Administrative Report add: SB resignation and HS Overnight Field Trip.

MINUTES

Ms. Ross made a motion to accept the January 6, 2016, public and non-public meeting minutes. Ms. Bennett seconded the motion. All in favor.

MANIFEST

The following manifest was signed by the School Board: Accounts Payable #18-\$705,332.91; Payroll #15 - \$756,895.09.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT Dr. Blake reported that SB Vice Chair Wendy Miller resigned Friday due to her family moving out of District. Ms. Miller has two years left in her appointment and resigned in order for someone to be voted into office at the March 2016 election. Dr. Blake also said that Ms. Miller would like to continue to serve on the SB until the March election. Per School District Policy BBBE, which Mr. LeBlanc read aloud, the SB shall fill vacancies on the board until the next official balloting for the election of officers. Ms. Bennett made a motion to

accept the resignation of Wendy Miller from the SRSD School Board. Ms. Ross seconded the motion. Six in favor.

Mr. Masson made a motion to retain/reseat Ms. Miller to the SRSD School Board until the March 2016 election. Mr. Miller seconded the motion. Six in favor.

Upon further discussion, it was agreed that Ms. Miller would not vote on tonight's motions due to the fact she was not yet "sworn in" for her temporary assignment on the school board.

Mr. Masson thanked Ms. Miller for her time and help along the way. Mr. LeBlanc said he appreciated the fact that Ms. Miller resigned in time to advertise the open position on the SB. He told Ms. Miller that he appreciated her service to the SB and the community.

OVERNIGHT FIELD TRIP – HIGH SCHOOL Ms. Candace DeAngelis, HS Language Arts, requested approval of a February 2017 overnight field trip to Puerto Rico, departing the Saturday starting February vacation and returning that Wednesday. Cost is \$1,750.00 per student. Ms. Ross made a motion to approve the February 2017 HS field trip to Puerto Rico. Ms. Bennett seconded the motion. Six in favor.

STUDENT COUNCIL REPORT none

SCHOOL BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS Budget Committee: Ms. Ross reported that the Budget Committee held their public hearing on Thursday, January 14th. She said that BC Chair, Ms. Cheryl Gannon gave a slide presentation of the budget, followed by a question and answer period. Ms. Ross said it was the most well attended Budget Committee public hearing in memory. She said the BC voted to keep the budget number as is.

SCHOOL BOARD CHAIRPERSON'S COMMENT Mr. LeBlanc had two comments which he read from a prepared statement in regards to the CIP:

"Recently, members of a local tax payers group have been making verbal and written references to studies they have done related to classroom size at the Sanborn Regional High School and Sanborn Regional Middle School. Referencing these studies, this group claims they figured out ways to reduce teacher head count by 10 teachers at the High School and 5 teachers at the Middle School in order to save money. The surprising part about these studies is that the group claims that the education provided to the students at Sanborn will not be compromised by the loss of these teachers. The group has posted these studies on their website which is great for transparency and has allowed myself, as well as anyone else, to review how they would implement these cost saving measures. After analyzing the studies created by this group, I would like to present some high level statistics I have gathered on their

proposals and some opinion on the studies and the impact of their implementation. Here are the high level statistics on the changes that are proposed:

Sanborn Regional High School:

- Potential reduction in teacher headcount with these changes 10.2 (was 9.8 but had a math error)
- Reducing the number of sections offered to students by 21% (61 sections)
- 47% (122) of remaining sections will have an increase in class size.
- The average increase in class size for the affected classes is 43% more students per class.

Sanborn Regional Middle School:

- Potential reduction in teacher headcount with these changes 7.9 (was 5.1 but had a math error)
- Reducing the number of sections offered to students by 10% (25 sections)
- 30% (130) of remaining sections will have an increase in class size.
- The average increase in class size for the affected classes is 23% more students per class.

As you can see from the summaries above, the changes being proposed will affect a significant number of classes that are offered at the High School and Middle School. Although this group claims that these changes will not affect students learning, there is no specific information or research papers provided by the group which backs up this claim. As an example of a proposed cut, I will use a High School Psychology class. There are currently 52 students in 3 sections of Psychology for an average class size of 17.3. This group has suggested reducing the sections down to 2, which bumps the average class size up to 26. Expecting a teacher, no matter how good they are, to be able to give the same level of attention/support to students when their class load goes up 50% is an unrealistic expectation. I don't feel that a reasonable person can believe that adding 43% more students on average at the High School across 47% of the sections offered will result in a neutral impact to the students.

In addition to my concern on the impact to the students, I question the math being used in this tax payer group's studies and also have issues with the lack of understanding the group shows in the application of these cuts. The formula used to arrive at these cuts was very mechanical with no deep thought put into it regarding how classes are organized at Sanborn. If a class had multiple sections offered and its average class size was above 18, then the group reduced one or more sections until either the average class size was as close to 25 or the number of sections offered was reduced to 1. All of the reductions in these studies use "fractional" teachers. So, for example, in the Middle School, the study proposed to cut .5 of an English Teacher, .4 of a Math Teacher and .6 of a Science teacher. This is obviously not feasible as teachers are certified to teach in certain areas and we can't just take a portion of one teacher and apply

them to another subject area and reduce head count. There is also no understanding from this group, and I wouldn't expect there to be, of the "team" model that is used in both the Middle School and Freshman/Sophomore levels of the High School. In the team model, each grade level is broken up into multiple teams. Each team has multiple classes which move from subject to subject throughout the day. These small learning communities, a significant underpinning of the Sanborn educational culture, have not been taken into account by this groups study.

I realize that our property taxes in Newton and Kingston, along with any community in New Hampshire who has a small business base, are high since we do not have any income or sales tax in this state to offset the cost of education. I live in Kingston, I pay my taxes and I don't like my tax bill any more than my neighbors. But, I do understand the importance of what this tax money is used for, how it is spent and know that the administration is not asking for any funding that they don't need. I agree with the tax payers group that the current education funding model we have in this state is not sustainable but I don't feel that hurting the schools is the correct way to address this problem. Our state does not fund an adequate education and the local communities are forced to make up the difference on the backs of the property owners. The state legislature needs to address this issue and I hope that someday soon they find the courage to do so."

Mr. LeBlanc's second comment concerning class size:

"During a public comment section of the Sanborn Regional School Board meeting on January 6th, a member of the NKTA, who is also a member of the budget committee, read a statement stating they were "apoplectic" at the "lack of stewardship" that the School Board was showing when it came to the proposed budget. This member of the public specifically pointed to items within the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) which were budgeted in the FY16/17 Proposed Budget as being some of the reasons for this view. In this article, I will address a few of the CIP projects which were mentioned and provide the rationale which the School Board and Administration used when determining these items should be included in the FY16/FY17 proposed budget.

The first CIP item mentioned is a project to install new windows at the Sanborn Regional Middle School at a cost of \$130,000. The NKTA member cited how the return on investment (ROI) on these windows related to the energy efficiency savings would take 27 years to recoup, which is a true statement. What this person fails to understand is that CIP projects are done for a variety of reasons and not just because there is an ROI related to energy efficiency. The School Board has a duty to protect and maintain the buildings and grounds which the district owns to ensure these properties do not degrade or end up requiring more costly repairs in the future. The windows in the middle school were installed in 1978 which makes them 39 years old as of

the FY16/17 budget year in which they would be replaced. Many of these windows are no longer operable and the parts needed to fix them are no longer available due to their age. This CIP Project has been proposed because the windows have already gone past their useful life and need replacement due to their structural integrity. This work was not proposed due to savings in energy costs.

Another CIP item mentioned in public comment was the reconfigured entry way at the Sanborn Regional High School at a cost of \$48,250 and the related additional security cameras for \$30,000 at the High School. The member of the public felt that the double locked entry doors at the High School were sufficiently safe for the students and this was a waste of money. What this person failed to understand when reviewing this project was that over the past 2 years, both New Hampshire Homeland Security as well as Kingston's Chief of Police have identified a safety/security issue with this entry way. People who come to visit the High School during school hours are "buzzed" through the 2nd set of double locked doors. Once they get past the 2nd set of double locked doors, that person has access to the entire High School. The intent of this project is to create a "holding room" or "vestibule" in which visitors are "buzzed" into. Once in this room, it can be determined what, if any, part of the High School they require access to. In this way, visitors are prevented from having unfettered access to the rest of the High School which greatly improves security. The additional cameras will be used to cover areas of the High School which are not currently visible on existing security cameras to also improve safety and security. The School Board places a high priority on ensuring the safety and security of our students and staff. This is the reason why these two related projects have been proposed. In addition, both of these projects are eligible for 50% grant funding which will make them cost effective as well.

I hope that this article has been able to clarify the rationale behind a few of the CIP projects that are included in FY16/17 proposed budget. Please come out and participate at the deliberative session on Wednesday, February 3rd at 7:00 in the High School Auditorium to get involved and stay informed."

PUBLIC COMMENT Mr. Charlie Melvin of Newton stated that he was a JP and could swear Ms. Miller in for tonight's meeting. Dr. Blake thanked Mr. Melvin and said he believed she must be sworn in by the SRSD District Clerk (who was not in attendance). He thanked Mr. Melvin for the offer.

Ms. Annie Collyer of Newton and the Newton Kingston Taxpayers Association (NKTPA) responded to an article in the Carriage Towne News by Mr. LeBlanc. Ms. Collyer said the District is outspending surrounding districts by \$1.6 million to \$2.5 million based on per student costs. She said the current proposed budget is an increase of 9.9% over last year's budget and that the SB "only" found about \$10,000.00 in excess in a \$35.4 million budget. She said she

found that “incredible”. Concerning class size, she said the teacher’s contract specifies no more than 25 students per class. Ms. Collyer said with enrollments declining it was reasonable to expect you can have a reduction of up to ten positions at the HS level. She suggested focusing on the PE classes and bringing the enrollment up in these classes to 25 students per class. She said the State allows up to 30 students, she said let’s aim for 25 students per class. She said they’re not looking for a massive lay-off. She suggested the District cut four positions per year through attrition. She said they do support adding a teacher at Bakie. She stressed hiring “great” teachers and reallocating the salaries. In regards to the CIP, Ms. Collyer suggested replacing only the windows at the MS that do not open. She stated that after listening to the explanation for the security cameras at the HS, that NKTPA supports the expenditure. She commented that the new design of the HS entry is poorly designed and expensive. She said that the taxpayer’s association is not looking to harm education. She asked that the SB members show more “conservative fiscal restraint”.

Ms. Cheryl Gannon of Kingston thanked Ms. Miller for her service to the District and the community. She said that Ms. Miller represented her constituents well. She said she was always willing to put in the hard work and effort. She said Ms. Miller was always open to opinions. She wished Ms. Miller the best of luck in future pursuits. Mr. Jim Baker of Newton echoed Ms. Gannon’s comments and told Ms. Miller that he was sorry to see her go.

SCHOOL BOARD COMMENT Mr. Ramey thanked Ms. Miller for her time. He said he appreciated her rigor and her passion. Ms. Nancy Ross thanked Ms. Miller for her time and service and also thanked her for submitting her resignation like she did in order for the SB to advertise the seat. Mr. Miller thanked Ms. Miller and told her they would miss her.

Mr. Masson said that as a community member he was pleased with the consistent challenges put forth by the NKTA. He also said he was pleased in hearing responses with validation to questions. As a board member, he said he is looking forward to taking the strides to answer questions to the potential ‘rationale’ to the challenges ahead of time. Mr. Masson reported that during the BC Public Hearing: there were from (from his count) 23 Public Comments

- 3 fact finding
- 2 challenging the proposed budget
- 18 Pro-School

UNFINISHED BUSINESS School Calendar Dr. Blake reported that he spoke with his leadership team and they decided to keep the early release days on Wednesdays. It was agreed that school would be closed on the Friday before Christmas and that the last day of school would be June 15th. Ms. Ross made a motion to approve the 2016-2017 school year calendar as presented. Mr. Ramey seconded the motion. Six in favor.

NEW BUSINESS c. Warrant Articles

Warrant Articles need to be posted by Monday. Dr. Blake read the warrant articles. The deliberative session (first session) is scheduled for February 3, 2016, at 7:00 PM at the HS auditorium, 17 Danville Road, Kingston. Voting (second session) is scheduled for Tuesday, March 8, 2016, from 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM in the Swasey Gymnasium in Kingston for Kingston voters. Voting for Newton voters will be March 8, 2016, from 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM at the Newton Town Hall.

Warrant Article #3 Operating Budget: Ms. Bennett made a motion to recommend as written Article 3, Operating Budget. Ms. Ross seconded the motion. For: 4 Against: 2

Warrant Article #4 Professional Staff Agreement: Ms. Bennett made a motion to recommend as written Article 4, Professional Staff Agreement. Ms. Ross seconded the motion. For: 4 Against: 2

Warrant Article #5 Capital Improvement and Maintenance Capital Reserve: Mr. Ramey asked if it was possible to rewrite Article 5 into two separate warrant articles? Yes, Ms. Coppola will work on wording. The SB went on to the next article, Warrant Article 6.

Dr. Blake explained that Articles 6-9 are petition warrant articles and are advisory only. The SB is not obligated to carry through.

Warrant Article #6. List of SRSD Employees: Mr. Masson made a motion to recommend as written Article 6, List of SRSD employees. Mr. Miller seconded the motion. For: 0 Against: 6 Board members were concerned about HIPA laws.

Warrant Article #7. Dispose of the Old Sanborn Regional School Building: Ms. Ross made a motion to recommend as written Article 7, Dispose of the Old Sanborn Regional School Building. Mr. Miller seconded the motion. For: 1 Against: 5

Mr. Ramey noted that he and some members of the town (Kingston) had met with Plan NH earlier in the day and they are interested in working with the District on a plan for the Seminary.

Warrant Article #8. Annual Report: Ms. Ross made a motion to recommend as written Article 8, Deliberative Session. Ms. Bennett seconded the motion. This article would require the SRSD to have the Annual Report available two weeks before the annual deliberative session. For: 0 Against: 6

Warrant Article #9. Deliberative Session: Mr. Ramey made a motion to recommend as written Article 9, Deliberative Session. This article would direct the SRSD to alternate the location of the Annual Deliberative between Newton and Kingston. For: 4 Against: 2

Warrant Article #10. Default Budget: Mr. Ramey made a motion to recommend as written Article 10. Default Budget. Mr. Miller seconded the motion. This article would put the responsibility of setting the default budget with the Budget Committee. For: 1 Against: 5*

*A public hearing has been scheduled for Kingston residents on February 17 at 6:00 PM at the SRSD High School, 17 Danville Road, Kingston. (Snow date February 22)

*A public hearing has been scheduled for Newton residents on February 18 at 6:00 PM at SRSD Middle School, 31A West Main Street, Newton. (Snow date February 19)

Back to Warrant Article 5. Article 5 was rewritten as two articles.

Article 5, Discontinue Facilities Maintenance Expendable Trust Fund. Ms. Bennett recommended Article 5, Discontinue Facilities Maintenance Expendable Trust Fund, as rewritten. Ms. Ross seconded the motion. For: 6 Against: 0

New Article 6, Capital Improvement and Maintenance Capital Reserve. Ms. Ross made a motion to recommend the **NEW** Article 6 as written. Ms. Bennett seconded the motion. For: 6 Against: 0

Ms. Bennett made a motion to change the numbers of the Warrant Articles to reflect the change in warrant article #5 tonight. Ms. Ross seconded the motion. Six in favor.

Ms. Bennett made a motion to accept all the Warrant Articles as discussed and amended this evening. Ms. Ross seconded the motion. All in favor.

d. Audit Report: Mr. Miller asked for clarification on the GASB Statement #68. Ms. Coppola responded that this is the first year that GASB was required. Mr. Miller asked about the MS Student Activity Fund. Ms. Coppola responded that there was a missing receipt from the post office in the amount of \$19.99. It's possible that it was packed up in the midst of the MS move last year during the roof problems at the MS.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED/SENT Dr. Blake reported that he continues to receive requests from other school districts wanting to visit Sanborn to learn about PACE. He said in order to minimize disruptions in the District, he's recommending they attend the summer design studio this coming summer. He said two days are an introduction to PACE and three days would be dedicated to the design studio. He said the Deputy Secretary of Education of Education from the US Dept. of Education will visit in March.

WRITTEN INFORMATION none

PUBLIC COMMENT Ms. Annie Collyer thanked Ms. Miller for her years of service to the SB and community. Ms. Collyer said she thought Ms. Ross' comments about not wanting to move the Deliberative Session to Newton due to the fact that they don't hold their voting at the Newton schools was uncalled for and did not come from a good basis. She said that Newton is not anti-school. In regards to (new) Article 11, Default Budget, she said the Warrant Article is about putting the responsibility of the Default Budget in the hands of people who work on the budget. The SB, she said, sets policy and spends money. She said she was surprised at the Board's suspicions and paranoia. Ms. Collyer said she was astonished that under Communications Received/Sent that the SB doesn't get any communications from citizens of the community. She asked "shouldn't they be read" as if the person were in attendance at the meeting? She said they do read community letters at the Budget Committee and in her position on the Newton Recreation Committee. She said she did not understand why that never happens. Ms. Collyer asked if the summer Design Studio was a money maker? Do people pay to attend? She asked how much the District stood to make.

Ms. Cheryl Gannon said she recently saw on tv Seven to Save had been announced this year and that Sanborn Seminary was listed as one of Seven to Save a few years back. She asked what the status of that was? Ms. Gannon stated that she's attended all the SB meetings since the budget was presented and the SB spent more time discussing which day of the week should be dedicated to early release. She said the BC cut \$350,000.00 from the budget, yet the SB cut \$10,000.00. She said there was no discussion on how a \$350,000.00 cut would affect the schools. She said this leaves her wondering where the priorities of the SB lies. She said that's she's served on the BC for six years (not consecutively) and that the SB always passes the Default Budget with no questions asked. She said questioning the status quo makes for a healthy debate and is as American as apple pie.

SCHOOL BOARD COMMENT none

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The **first (Deliberative) session** of the Annual School District Meeting will be held on **Wednesday, February 3, 2016, at 7:00 PM in the Sanborn Regional High School Auditorium.**

The next **regular meeting of the Sanborn Regional School Board** will be held on **Wednesday, February 17, 2016, at 7:00 PM**, in Room 137 **at the Sanborn Regional High School, Kingston.**

The **Filing Period** for positions on the Sanborn Regional School Board, The Sanborn Regional Budget Committee and the District Moderator will open **January 20 through January 29th, 2016, at 5:00 PM.**

Second Session of Annual School District Meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 8, 2016. Voting to be conducted at the Swasey Gym in Kingston for Kingston residents from 8:00 AM until 8:00 PM. Voting to be conducted at the Newton Town Hall from 8:00 AM until 8:00 PM for Newton residents.

Non-Public Session – RSA 91-E Contractual Issues

Ms. Ross made a motion to enter into non-public session at 9:20 PM. Ms. LeBlanc polled the board. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Gail M. LeBlanc
School Board Secretary

Minutes of the School Board meetings are unofficial until approved at a subsequent meeting of the School Board.