

**SANBORN REGIONAL SCHOOL BOARD
MEETING MINUTES**

February 1, 2017

A regular meeting of the Sanborn Regional School Board was held on Wednesday, February 1, 2017. The meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m. by Sanborn Regional School Board Chairperson, Corey Masson. The following were recorded as present;

SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS: Corey Masson, Chairperson
Nancy Ross, Vice Chair
Jan Bennett
Dr. Pamela Brown
Peter Broderick
Sheila Pierce
Tammy Gluck
Michael Giordano-Student Council Representative

ABSENT: None

ADMINISTRATORS: Dr. Brian Blake, Superintendent of Schools
Carol Coppola, Business Administrator

The meeting began with a Salute to the Flag.

REVIEW AGENDA

The following changes were made:

- Add the Overnight Field trip under “New Business” as letter “a”

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Masson asked for a Motion to approve the Minutes of January 18, 2017. Motion moved by Ms. Ross and seconded by Ms. Pierce. No changes.

Vote: All in Favor.

Mr. Masson asked for a Motion to approve the Minutes of January 25, 2017. Ms. Bennett moved the Motion, seconded by Pierce. Dr. Brown asked for the following changes: On page 7, under Article 13 discussion, “Dr. Brown commented that she is not opposed to deferring this ~~for a while based on her conversation with~~ until the Board receives

the "Fire Protection Engineer's Life Safety Report" as per the Newton Fire Chief. On page 8, Dr. Brown asked for an insertion regarding Warrant Article #3 which is Attachment #1. Dr. Brown also asked that the following quotes be added to Dr. Blake's comments on how the Budget Committee approached the budgetary process. "Their decision to eliminate two positions was based on personal vendettas, one of whom is a disgruntled former District employee. I don't think much thought was put into it."

Vote: All in Favor as amended.

Mr. Masson asked for a Motion to approve the Non-Public Minutes of January 25, 2017.

Ms. Bennett moved the Motion, seconded by Ms. Pierce. No changes.

Vote: All in Favor.

EXPENDITURES REGISTER & MANIFEST – REVIEW AND SIGN

The Board reviewed and signed the Manifest Check Register #14 -\$1,052,626. 47 dated 2/1/17 and the Payroll Check Register#15-\$801,339.87 dated 1/26/17.

Dr. Brown requested line item detail on the on the *Center for Collaborative Education* in the amount of \$23, 449.76 for the Pace initiative, asking if it was related to training. Ms. Coppola will get back to her with that detail.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

Public Hearing Dates/Kingston & Newton- Dr. Blake explained that the RSA requires that Public Hearings be held in each town regarding Petition Warrant Article #16. The hearings must be held after the Deliberative Session and before the March 14th vote. He added that one of those dates can be held as part of a regular School Board meeting. After discussion, the group decided that the Kingston hearing would be held as part of the next School Board meeting on Wednesday, February 15th at 7:00 PM. The Newton hearing will be held at the Sanborn Regional Middle School on Wednesday, February 22nd at 6:30 PM.

SCHOOL BOARD CHAIRPERSON'S COMMENTS

Mr. Masson brought up the topic of the Middle School windows to clarify some misinformation in the community. Although installed in 1978, the windows today have been grandfathered in to the life safety codes and are fully functioning until they are replaced. He added that the rumor circulating that the Newton Fire Chief wants them replaced is untrue and he reminded the

School Board to be cautious about what is said in meetings. Another topic Mr. Masson addressed is regarding the warrant articles discussed at the last meeting. He informed the

group that the Budget Committees proposed operating budget did have a tax impact increase due to the \$120,000 in reductions they made at the high school, which resulted in a recalculation of the estimated Fremont tuition billed to them. The new property tax for Kingston would be a reduction of .02 and for Newton an increase of .05.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Robert Jeffrey (Newton) asked whether Math and Science staff have been let go due to falling scores.

Jim Baker (Newton) commented about the .05 Newton tax increase due to the Fremont tuition adjustment saying that it a far cry from the .89 that it would be with the Default Budget. In Kingston, the decrease will be .02 instead of the .72 it would be with the Default Budget. So, the Operating Budget would be a savings.

Annie Collyer (Kingston)-commented that the \$120K reduction made by the Budget Committee is not the whole story and Mr. Masson’s account is not an accurate representation. She also addressed the comments made by Dr. Blake in the previous meeting of 1/25/17. (See Attachment #2)

Cheryl Gannon (Kingston)-commented that the language in some -warrant is confusing where it reads “not recommend” in the body of the warrant and then School Board “In Favor”. She hopes that in future warrants this language can be amended so that the public is not confused.

SCHOOL BOARD COMMENT

Mr. Broderick asked about Ms. Gannon’s request and the group informed him that it was too late to change the wording. He also queried the group about taking the word “sale” out of the language for the warrant and using “property transfer” instead. Ms. Coppola pointed out that the Department of Revenue reviewed the warrant language as did legal counsel but it is still up to the Board if they want to make a change. Also, Deb Powers, Chair of the Heritage Foundation and instrumental in the Envision Kingston Charette will be presenting at the Town of Kingston Deliberative this coming Saturday and has offered to present Warrant Article #8 regarding the Seminary conversation at the Deliberative. It was decided after discussion, that Mr. Masson would reach out to her to accept the offer. Lastly, Mr. Broderick brought up that he received 3 calls regarding signs being used during an athletic event game promoting how to vote on the Chase Field /Swasey Gym issue. His feeling is that it should be neutral territory.

Ms. Pierce clarified by explaining that the Booster Club asked the Athletic Director if they could put up a poster in support of Swasey Gym and Chase Fields. She allowed them to place it and if it is a problem, she will take it down. Mr. Masson added that if a public person were to bring a sign it would be OK but other group members disagreed and said we should be neutral.

Dr. Brown is commented that she is not looking forward to the Deliberative as she expects it to be quite contentious. She went on to say that despite our average class size continuing to trend below the State average and our performance indicators not rising for all types of learners, we continue to spend more each year. She is not convinced that increasing the budget to shore up an ailing program is the answer to our District's challenges, which is why she supports the Budget Committee's Operating Budget. Dr. Brown added that although we have heard from plenty of Administrators and quite a bit from our students over the last three months, we have not heard from teachers. Her belief is that the PACE Common Core Individualized Instruction model has caused our teachers to scramble each week to our help low proficiency students, while those proficient or higher are neglected. While teaching children as unique self-paced learners has its benefits, but students also share many unique abilities in common and those commonalities allow for rapid educational progress in a classroom run by a skilled educator. The Move When Ready individualized learning model has produced tremendous academic costs for our District in terms of lost progress for a large percentage of our students. Dr. Brown suggested that in the future, having "Listening Sessions" with our teachers so the Board hear from them about what they feel has been working and what has not, as well as to hear what they recommend since they are the experts. She closed by saying that many districts are moving away from Common Core and it is still experimental.

Mr. Giordano agreed with Dr. Brown that bringing teachers in would be very beneficial. He encouraged the public to educate themselves before voting by looking at the issues and added that Mr. Masson had shared some important information in Facebook.

Ms. Gluck commented about the importance of transparency on the School Board and on the Budget Committee. She is appalled with the posts she is seeing on social media, especially on the site of a certain taxpayer's citizens group by some members who also sit on the Sanborn Regional Budget Committee. This conflict of interest is apparent as one member writing on the forum is the Chair of the Budget Committee and there seems to be no separation of her roles. Ms. Gluck compared it to the Wild, Wild West in that it seems like "anything goes". She added that she also noticed this behavior while sitting on the Budget Committee as the School Board representative because certain members of the Budget Committee were allowed to make "disrespectful and false accusations" regarding the Superintendent and Business Administrator. Their remarks have called into question their effectiveness, professionalism and the accuracy of the data they reported. She fully supports the inquiry process, but not this kind of behavior. She added that the lip service given by the Chair of the Budget Committee shows no follow through in finding a previously voiced wish for compromise, nor did they spend as much time analyzing the budget as they professed to doing. Ms. Gluck feels that the million dollar reduction brought forth by the Budget Committee in their Operating Budget, if passed will severely affect the educational system, program and staffing at Sanborn.

STUDENT COUNCIL REPORT

Mr. Giordano shared that Winter Carnival is being planned which is like Homecoming with a rally and games. The themes this year is as follows:

Monday Feb 20th - Disney day

Tuesday Feb 21st - Twin / Squad day

Wednesday Feb 22nd - Fancy - Dress up day

Thursday Feb 23rd - Throw back day - dress like you did in HS - or Dress like a historical figure

Friday Feb 24th-Class Color day

Freshmen - orange, sophomores - pink, juniors - purple and seniors yellow

The prom Chair (Abigail Parrot) would like to announce a "Prom -pose" that invites chaperones to the prom.

SCHOOL BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS

- a. **Finance**-Ms. Ross informed the group that their recent meeting involved taking care of some "housekeeping" of line items transfers and budget adjustments. One in particular line item was Homeless Transportation (27, 500K) which had to be taken from nine different line items to be paid. In closing Ms. Ross informed the group that the SAU 17 Audit Report came back with no findings.

Mr. Giordano is concerned about the Drama Club, arts programs and other co-curricular activities and whether they will be affected by budget cuts in the future.

Mr. Masson answered that we have 18 months to plan ahead for programming.

Ms. Gluck added that we do need to be concerned given her previous comments about cuts being made in general

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- a. **Deliberative Session**-Mr. Masson asked introduced several reports that he has been sharing with the community via social media as follows in summary:
 - **Enrollment**-based on the comparison of other PK-12 schools (like ourselves) which equals 45 schools show that the State's enrollments have decreased by 14% over the last 10 years while the facts show that Sanborn's enrollments have decreased by 12% for the same period.

- Average Class Size-based on a comparison of grades 1-8 shows that Sanborn ranks 95th of 138 schools with an average class size of 18.7 while the State's is 16.8 and the highest is class size is 23.1.

- Ratios-Student to Teachers- based on K-12 State reports and 161 districts, Sanborn ranks 85th out of 161 schools with 10.8 students to teacher ratios. The highest is 14.9 in Hudson and the lowest is 4.4 in Errol. Mr. Masson pointed out that it is hard to compare "apples to apples" as towns vary in size. We are in the middle compared to the rest of the State.

- Average Teacher Salary-Sanborn is 5,000 dollars less than those in the State (all steps are folded in). Average salary statewide is \$55, 771 and Sanborn is \$50, 707.

Discussion ensued on statistics that are available by the State, the Step levels and what is published. Dr. Blake informed them that we report to the State are the beginning salaries and those at the higher levels. Mr. Masson reiterated that we must delve into the research because every data element is critical, hence the detail produced tonight as a starter. Mr. Broderick cautioned paying attention to defense and not offense. Ms. Bennett added that not passing contracts and having incredible turnover will begin to have a cumulative, detrimental effect. She pointed out that other districts (like Exeter) don't question passing the budget and the culture is completely different.

Mr. Giordano expressed concern over the facts being voiced such as turnover, loss of contracts, declining enrollments, and hopes the community can change this culture for the future by showing their support of the teacher contract

Dr. Brown commented that there are ways to increase class size slightly as enrollments continue to decline to get better performance and reward teachers, but unfortunately contract negotiations take place in non-public sessions, so she cannot divulge her excellent ideas for that. She added that she completely understands that teachers are underpaid. Also, there is a narrative in the room that teachers are leaving purely due to the contract but her discussions with teachers and paraprofessionals that she has encountered, have relayed to her that there are other reasons they are leaving besides the contract and pay, such as discipline issues amongst others. So, there should not be one message when there are many.

Mr. Masson encouraged everyone to do their part to help support the causes of the School Board at the Deliberative.

Ms. Pierce asked if she can place a flyer at the Booster Club table prompting people to attend the Deliberative. There would be no verbiage regarding how they should vote. Dr. Blake agreed that it would be fine if it was informational only regarding the Deliberative. Discussion ensued on the topic.

NEW BUSINESS

- a. **Overnight Field Trip**-Dr. Blake introduced a request for an overnight Field Trip to Springfield, MA for the Annual Key Club Convention. There would 30 students attending and 3 chaperones. **A Motion was made by Ms. Gluck to support the trip, seconded by Ms. Ross. Vote: All in Favor.**

- b. **Facilities Usage**- Dr. Blake informed the group that over the last couple of years, some large groups renting our High School for events has caused significant concern for the Police and Fire Departments due to crowd control and parking issues. This issue is at the point where it is hard to manage (most recently the Police and Fire almost closed a gymnastics event from Derry) and Dr. Blake would like to explore the idea of scaling back. First, he recommended reviewing the Policy and discussing the prospect of how to curtail the problem. After discussion, it was agreed to review the Policy, investigate the number, size and revenue generated from past events.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED/SENT-None

WRITTEN INFORMATION-- None

AGENDA ITEMS FOR NEXT REGULAR MEETING 2/15/17

Dr. Blake requested a meeting of the Personnel Subcommittee before the next meeting.

- a. **Deliberative Review**

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The **First (Deliberative) Session** of the Annual School District Meeting will be held on **Wednesday, February 8, 2017** at 7:00 p.m. in the Auditorium at Sanborn Regional High School.

The **Second (Voting) Session of the Annual School District Meeting** will be held on **Tuesday, March 14, 2017** from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. in the **Swasey Gymnasium** (Sanborn Seminary Campus) for Kingston voters and in the **Newton Town Hall** for Newton voters.

The next Sanborn Regional School Board will be held on Wednesday, February 15, 2017 at 7:00 PM in the School Board Conference Room, 17 Danville Road, Kingston, NH.

The Excellence in Student Achievement (EISA) Subcommittee meeting will be held at 5:30 PM on Wednesday, February 15th in the Sanborn Regional School Board Room, #137.

The **Second (Voting) Session of the Annual School District Meeting** will be held on **Tuesday, March 14, 2017** from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. in the **Swasey Gymnasium** (Sanborn Seminary Campus) for Kingston voters and in the **Newton Town Hall** for Newton voters.

The **Filing Period** for positions on the Sanborn Regional School Board, the Sanborn Regional Budget Committee and the District Moderator will open on **Wednesday, January 25, 2017**, and ends on **Friday, February 3, 2017** at 5:00 p.m.

The candidate filing forms may be obtained at the SAU Office from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. The School District Clerk will be available on the last day to file from 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. at the SAU Office located at the Sanborn Regional High School, 17 Danville Road, Kingston.

ADJOURNMENT- Mr. Masson asked for a Motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:10 PM, moved by Ms. Ross and seconded by Ms. Bennett. **Vote:** All in favor.

NON-PUBLIC Meeting--RSA 91-A: 3-(a) Personnel. A Motion was made by Ms. Ross to enter into the Non-Public session, seconded by Bennett. A roll call vote was held by the secretary. **Vote:** All in favor.

Minutes respectfully submitted by,

Phyllis Kennedy
Recording Secretary

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

Attachment #1

Dr. Brown defended Article 3's operating budget. She noted that the Board's approved budget number, an "arbitrary" figure, was based on the FY 2017 Budget and not on Actual expenditures; that the FY 2017 budget included CIP expenditures of \$181,750 and \$153,621 (p. 332 of Budget book) which are now treated as separate warrant articles for FY 2018; and, that our enrollment is again expected to decline another -2% in 2017-18 with an overall decline of -16.5% by 2022 (p. 61 BB). The District has been running unexpended balances of between \$ $\frac{1}{2}$ and $\frac{3}{4}$ s of a million dollars for several years, she said. Brown added the Board should consider no administrative raises after the raises enjoyed for several years (saving -\$150.8K), adjust insurance contributions to enact small increases of 1% for non-union employees and 5% for administrators, and defer or cancel the proposed "Public Relations" position, saving -\$102.9K per annum. Brown questioned the value of retaining the Math coordinator position when Sanborn has experienced a drop in Math Proficiency outcomes for five of its seven grade levels (3rd, 5th, 6th, 7th and 11th) according to the most recent indicators on the NH DOE website, and asked that our Math teachers instead work directly together to share best practices and develop curriculum improvements for our students. Brown said that a final area for cost savings in FY18 is the High School Master Schedule which she says shows significant "excess capacity" along with shrinking class sizes. While a few classes do exceed or are at the mandated 25 per class, dozens of other class sections have 14 or fewer pupils this academic year, she suggested the schedule be immediately reviewed by the Board this spring.

Attachment # 2

Last week, this School Board and its Chair, allowed, and even encouraged politically-motivated remarks by one of the District's employees about members of our communities, who serve as elected representatives in volunteer capacities. Dr. Blake did a whole lot more than express his disappointment last week, with the budget process. There is nothing in the mission of the budget committee that says it is appropriate for the budget committee to align themselves in lockstep with the Superintendent. It is his job to advocate for as much as he can for the schools, but his remarks last week were far beyond advocacy. His remarks were personal attacks on individuals, on their work and on their motivations. The remarks Dr. Blake made were not only uncalled-for, but ascribed false motivations, were untrue and ascerbic. For one of his aspersions, he attacked one person as an "embittered former School Board member". He attacked another person as a 'disgruntled former District employee,' skirting if not outright violating her personal employment rights. BudCom members have invested 10 months of volunteer hours to comb through the budget. There was nothing arbitrary or vindictive. There were no vendettas. There were carefully thought-through decisions made. Your Chair talks about the culture in the District. The kind of divisive comments Dr. Blake was allowed to make contribute nothing positive to the culture we have for the children of the District. In each of our towns, there are few who are willing to volunteer to give the hours of service the towns and the District needs. No wonder, when the result of service is to be subject to such attack, not only from fellow citizens but also from employees who do not even live here. We can have different opinions, come to different conclusions, but the vitriole countenanced by members of this Board toward your fellow citizens is something to reverse. For Dr. Blake, an employee of this District, to be allowed – even encouraged – to disparage your fellow citizens, is a real blow to the culture of the District you expound and promote. To have your fellow citizens be subjected to the political castigation from someone whose salary we all pay is completely inappropriate.