

SANBORN REGIONAL SCHOOL BOARD MEETING

April 15, 2015

A regular meeting of the Sanborn Regional School Board was held on Wednesday April 15, 2015. The meeting was called to order at 7:18 PM by Jon LeBlanc, School Board Chair, in the auditorium at Sanborn Regional High School, Kingston, NH. The following were recorded as present:

SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS:

- Janice Bennett
- Jon LeBlanc, Chair
- Corey Masson
- Roberto Miller
- Wendy Miller, Vice Chair
- Dustin Ramey
- Nancy Ross
- Isabella Dunham, Student Council Representative

ADMINISTRATORS:

- Dr. Brian J. Blake, Superintendent of Schools
- Carol Coppola, Business Manager
- Jennifer Pomykato, Director of Student Services

The meeting began with a salute to the flag.

REVIEW AGENDA

#11 Public Comment will follow 14. New Business: a. Seacoast Charter School. 14. B. SREA will follow Public Comment.

MINUTES

Ms. Bennett made a motion to accept the April 1, 2015, public and non-public meeting minutes. Mr. Masson seconded the motion. Six in favor to accept the April 1, 2015, public and non-public meeting minutes. One abstained: Ms. Ross.

MANIFEST

The following manifest was signed by the School Board: Accounts Payable #24 -\$322,753.88; Payroll #21 - \$802,820.71.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS none

STUDENT COUNCIL REPORT

Isabella reported that Student Council is working on Earth Week, April 20 through 24, 2015. Some of the ideas: Car Pool Day, Lights Out Day, and a clothing drive. Isabella also reported that she had attended the Key Club DECON conference (District Educational Conference) in Springfield, MA, the past weekend.

SCHOOL BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS none

SCHOOL BOARD CHAIRPERSON'S COMMENT

Mr. LeBlanc reported that there were two important issues tonight and thanked everyone for coming out. He asked that people keep their public comments to three minutes. He explained that public comment was just that – an opportunity to make a comment, but not to expect a response from the SB. Concerning the Charter School, he thanked all the parents, students, and teachers for writing letters. He stated the Charter School has great admiration. The Charter School lease expires at the end of this school year. The building is in violation of several fire codes at a significant cost to the district. The boiler system is ancient. If the boiler system fails, it would be impossible for the district to have it repaired.

The second important issue is the budget cuts. Several positions have been cut. Mr. LeBlanc thanked everyone for supporting the SB. He thanked all the educators whose contracts were not renewed due to the default budget. He stated that the district has been running at or below the default budget for the past several years and that the district has run out of options in regards to cutting staff.

SCHOOL BOARD COMMENT none

UNFINISHED BUSINESS None

NEW BUSINESS:

a. Seacoast Charter School: Peter Durso, Marc Wood and Gordon Mench presented a proposal from the Seacoast Charter School to extend their current lease which expires at the end of this school year. They thanked all the parents for coming out tonight and showing their support. Marc Wood gave the presentation. He thanked the SB for meeting tonight. Mr. Wood stated that the Seacoast Charter School is formally requesting that SRSD extend their lease. He stated that SCS is offering a profitable relationship. SCS will incur the costs associated with remediating fire and life safety issues reviewed with SFC Engineering Partnership, LLC and Ronald Anstey, Fire Investigator. SCS proposed a provision to the lease agreement that would make the lease null and void should the boiler system fail which would shift risk from the SAU to the SCS. SCS is proposing to manage the remediation project and provide updates to the

SAU. Mr. Wood provided the SB with a 4-year net worth trend exhibit. SCS is projecting to be debt free 2015-2016. Mr. Wood provided the SB with a letter from the bank endorsing SCS' credit. SCS offered to provide the district with monthly cash flow analyses. He stated that all SCS expenses are paid on time or early. A facility life safety remediation plan was presented. Total remediation costs are estimated to be \$90,000 to \$140,000 and said that SCS felt this was reasonable and is willing to pay this expense. Mr. Wood stated that it is critical to establish a collaborative governance committee for remediation projects. He stated that most remediation projects will happen on the weekends.

Mr. Wood stated the benefits to SAU would be:

- SAU would continue to make a profit by shifting the facility from an expense to a profitable arrangement;
- Fire and life safety issues will be remediated with no cost to SAU;
- \$126,000.00 revenue not currently in the district budget;
- Renewing the lease does not preclude the SAU from repurposing or demolishing the facility in the future.

PUBLIC COMMENT Several community members spoke. Ms. Renee King of Newton stated that the district needs to look at the entire campus, "not just the scenic building". She stated that the district pays year after year to keep these buildings. Other ways need to be looked at. To keep paying for these buildings year after year does not make sense. She suggested the district "get rid of them". Mr. Masson asked Ms. King, did you say get rid of the campus? Yes Ms. King replied. Sheila from Fremont said she loves the SCS. She stated that she loves the fact that the campus was found long ago. She suggested the district get grant writers to keep the school open. Kelly Twist of Kingston stated it is an emotional issue for a lot of people. She asked that the district look at it in a strictly business view – you have a tenant willing to take on all the financial responsibility. She said she doesn't see any sense in turning down the offer. Jeff from Fremont stated he thought the SAU reason for not renewing the lease was strong, but pointed out that SCS is willing to indemnify the catastrophic liability of the boiler. He stated it would not be a risk to the SAU at this point. Jim Baker from Newton said he agreed with everything that was said tonight and does not see a downside. He said it makes sense to renew the lease for one year. Sheila from Salem has a daughter that attends SCS and stated she is in agreement with the other folks who spoke tonight. She said she appreciates the building. She stated her daughter loves SCS, the grounds and the building. She suggested that they pull together as a community and it will be a win for everybody. Doug from Kennebunk said his son attends SCS. He stated it's amazing how many kids want to be there. He stated the staff goes above and beyond.

Mary of Newton said that the district should accept any revenue that it can get. She stated that the campus has a wonderful history. Kathleen stated that the SCS is the oldest charter school in the state and asked that the SAU continue to make that possible. Tammy Gluck stated that she was on the Ad Hoc Committee for the Sanborn Seminary. She stated that she thought the SAU and Committee should think seriously about the SCS proposal. She stated that by keeping the building empty, there will still be expenses. It appears that SCS is willing to take on the expenses and that made sense to her. She stated it would help the SCS solve their problem and help the district out.

14b. SREA Evan Czyzowski, SREA President, spoke for the SREA. He stated he understood that it was a difficult decision making cuts and where to make them. He said that the SB is sending the message that these positions are not needed and that it is detrimental to student learning. He said that the positions being cut are the positions where students have one-on-one relationships with these staff members and they are essential positions to the needs of the students. One of the cuts was the Special Ed Counselor at the MS. He stated there is a large population in need of these services. MS no longer has the Reach or Bridges program, which were cut previously. He stated this left a gap in the program between the high school and elementary school. There will no longer be an in-house person for students with needs.

Three Speech Language Assistant positions were cut. These are students who are receiving legally binding services from the district. These assistants have special training/certification. He stated that SRSD is getting their money's worth from SLAs. He stated that these services are for the neediest students. Amy Leone, Speech Language Pathologist, said the goal for the speech language student is not to treat the student; the goal is to discharge students as fast as possible. Ms. Leone said these cuts will have far reaching effects and to ask for anything less for these students is irresponsible.

The last cut is an English teacher at the high school – which is already down one position in the last 4-5 years. Mr. Czykowski stated that the person being cut is the newest staff member at the high school. Mr. Czykowski said this teacher connects well with the students and staff. He said you need a particular personality in the classroom and this person has that personality. The Pathways program will need to be reshuffled to accommodate the loss of this position. Mr. Czykowski asked the SB if they really want to cut the positions with the longest tenure. “Students are counting on us.” Mr. Czykowski thanked the SB for their time and consideration.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Ms. Renee King of Newton stated that she had attended the SB meeting two weeks ago to take part in the budget talks that were scheduled for that night. She said that the SB broke into a non-public meeting only to have the budget discussion pushed to the end/after the two hour non-public meeting. She stated that the SB returned to the public meeting and the public was

told that there would be cuts to technology, staff, texts and utilities. Ms. King said she did not appreciate being taken away from her family for two hours only to be told there would be cuts to staff, technology, texts and utilities. Ms. King said that these positions were the last ones that should be cut. Joyce Marrotta said she has two students at SRHS and that they receive speech language services. She stated that her daughter is graduating in June due to the services she received. She said she hopes the SB reconsiders cutting these positions. Mr. Bob Fahey of Newton said his son receives speech language services. Mr. Fahey's son receives services from the Mass. General Hospital, and the staff at the Mass. General are fascinated with the progress his son has made. Will Sable of Kingston, a Sanborn graduate, spoke. Mr. Sable said he does not believe cutting positions is the answer to the budget default. He stated he thought the Administrators salaries are adequate and maybe they should not accept raises. He said the SRSD Superintendent's salary is \$137,893.00 and the salary of the Salem, NH, Superintendent is \$140,000.00. He stated that Salem is a much larger district. He said the district should look for cuts in other places. He also stated he thinks the district should accept the proposal of extending the lease at the SCS.

Kevin Holt of Kingston, SRMS staff member, said that when you remove the SPED positions, you affect all students. He said that anything the SB can do to save these positions "please do". Sara of Kingston, a SRHS staff member said she works with 75-80 students a day and students still need help. Ms. Tammy Gluck of Newton said she attended the last meeting and waited two hours through the non-public meeting only to be told that cuts would be made in technology, texts, utilities and staff. She stated that a bulk of the cuts were in staffing. She said she realizes the SB has choices to make and they are not easy decisions. "Our job is to educate the student." She asked the SB to reevaluate their decisions. Kristen from Newton said that Ms. Leone cannot provide a quality education without an assistant. "Quality services will fail."

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED/SENT: Dr. Blake reported that he received a number of letters concerning the SCS and the SREA. SB members received two packets of correspondence.

WRITTEN INFORMATION none

AGENDA ITEMS

Mr. Masson asked for a report on the discipline statistics.

SCHOOL BOARD COMMENT

Mr. Ramey thanked everyone for coming out tonight. He told the audience that the SB will take everything into consideration going forward. Ms. Bennett stated she has been in education for 50 years and that she recognized these people and their hard work, "I get all that." Over \$1 million was cut from the budget. SRSD is a lean district. She said that a majority of the voters don't have a connection to the school. She said that only 25% of voters vote and there is a

consequence for apathy. If people don't support the budget, this is the result. Ms. Bennett said that the community is better when the schools are strong. "We are all responsible." Mr. Masson stated that staff are operating on less and less – sorry. Ms. Miller said she sympathizes with the SCS, and that there seems to be some confusion as to whether there is a profit from the SCS. She said the district is not set up to be a landlord. Ms. Miller said she has some concerns with the payment history with the SCS and she has safety concerns. She said she wants people to see the whole picture. She said that as far as cuts go, her children are affected. She stated she has trust in the Administration. "We'll get through this." Ms. Miller said she feels confident that kids will get what they need. Ms. Ross thanked everyone for coming out and their support. She said the last thing the SB wants to do is make cuts that affect the schools. She said she empathized with the community and that these are extremely difficult decisions. Mr. LeBlanc thanked everyone for coming out. He stated that this is not a comfortable position to be in. He said that he hopes as a district, we can move forward. He stated that it comes down to community support.

NON-PUBLIC SESSION – RSA 91-A:3

Ms. Ross motioned to enter into non-public session at 9:04 PM. Ms. LeBlanc polled the Board. All in favor.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The next **regular meeting of the Sanborn Regional School Board** will be held on **Wednesday, May 6, 2015, at 7:00 PM**, in the Library **at the Sanborn Regional High School, Kingston.**

The next **regular meeting of the Sanborn Regional School Board** will be held on **Wednesday, May 20, 2015, at 7:00 PM**, in the Library **at the Sanborn Regional High School, Kingston.**

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.