

Results of the Sanborn Public Hearing

by Annie Collyer, Chairman of the Sanborn Regional School District Budget Committee

Did you know that the Sanborn Regional School District Budget Committee held a Public Hearing on the preliminary budget proposal for Fiscal Year 2018-19, on Thursday, January 11?

The preliminary budget was a 0.6% increase in spending over the current fiscal year budget. The budget is the result of extensive discussions both with the Superintendent and his Leadership Team, and with the District School Board.

The role of the Budget Committee is to analyze the funding of the educational needs and priorities of the District, balanced by a concern for efficient use of taxpayer dollars, and thorough consideration of the ability of the community to pay. They stated awareness that more than 70% of local property taxes support the school district budget.

This year and last year, one consideration for Budget Committee members is awareness of past budget voting, and the frequency of voter rejection of Professional Staff (teacher) contracts. The members often stated throughout the budget preparation, how important to the District and its students it is, to help voters pass the new teacher contract that will come before them next year.

Enrollment in the District has been dropping for many years, and continuation of that trend is predicted. Yet, staffing has not been reduced commensurately, members noted. With this proposed budget, there will be a staffing adjustment, as well as some shifting of spending to other high priorities for the District.

The Superintendent has identified two major areas for future investment to benefit education in the District: more professional development and better pay for our teachers. The proposed budget provides more professional development monies, and contains the pay raise for staff voted in last year.

Superintendent Ambrose is advocating for restoring teacher pay parity in the near future, lost by past contract vote failures. He has identified passing a new contract next year as one top District priority.

The proposed budget, affirmed unchanged following the Public Hearing, comes before the voters at the first voting session, called the Deliberative Session, on Wednesday, February 7. Only voters present get to debate and then vote whether to change the final budget number to go before the voters at the second session, at the voting booths on March 13.

A recording of the Public Hearing is available on the SAU17.org website.

The Sanborn Budget Committee urges District voters to attend the Deliberative Session on February 7. Voters will hear details of the budget proposal in a succinct 20-minute presentation, following which motions to alter the proposal can be made and voted on. Please plan to attend. February 7, 7 – 9 PM at the High School Auditorium.