

**Sanborn Regional School District Budget Committee Meeting
December 12, 2013
Unapproved Meeting Minutes**

Call to Order: 7:11 PM

Attendance:

Members:	Barry Gluck, Chair	Tom Gasse, Vice Chair
	Beth Ann Scanlon (excused)	Paul Brisson
	Roger Clark (excused)	Patty Stephan
	Alan Felisberto	Nancy Ross, School Board Rep.

Administration: Brian D. Blake, Superintendent
Carol Coppola, Business Administrator

Public Comment: None.

Committee Comment: None.

Prior Meeting Minutes:

- **Motion:** Accept the minutes from the 12/05/2013 meeting (Mr. Gasse)
 - **Second:** Mr. Brisson
 - **Discussion:** none
 - **Vote:** 6-0 Motion passed

School Board Report (Ms. Ross):

- None. There was no School Board meeting

Old Business:

- **Status of Administrations Prioritized List of Wants and Needs**
 - *Dr. Blake:* In the School Board packets for their review.
- **Status of FAQs for Posting to Budget Committee Web Page**
 - *Dr. Blake:* Being revised now. PowerPoint presentation not appropriate for posting as it consists only of section-opener slides.

New Business:

- **Latest List of Questions to Administration from BudComm**
 - *Mr. Gluck:* Regarding question 2: Seminary Project, there is ~\$2.5M for renovations to the Seminary building. Is the \$2.5M already in the budget?
 - *Ms. Coppola:* As long-term debt, it cannot be included in the budget. It would require a separate warrant article, and the School Board has not yet reached a decision.
 - *Dr. Blake:* District has been approached regarding funding, but no definitive plan has been reached regarding a warrant article for a bond. No dollar amount known. This is a School Board decision.
 - *Mr. Brisson:* Pragmatically, we are missing part of the equation, particularly if there are unknown philanthropists who may supplement the budget.
 - *Mr. Gluck:* It seems too late for this year's deliberations.
 - *Dr. Blake:* We have until 01/15/14. Not able to share details at this time.
 - *Mr. Gluck:* Possible to create if/then scenarios?

- *Dr. Blake:* There are endless possibilities. There is no way to guess what those scenarios would be.
- *Mr. Brisson:* Are there strings attached?
- *Dr. Blake:* That is what us under discussion. Not able to share details at this time.
- *Mr. Gluck:* Bottom line: this money is not currently in the budget.

- *Ms. Scanlon (question submitted to Ms. Stephan to submit on her behalf):* Can there be multiple warrant articles submitted to enable the public to select from different options regarding the future of the Seminary building?
- *Ms. Coppola:* Legally, we can have multiple warrant articles.
- *Ms. Ross:* I would not be in favor of that. I would prefer the School Board to come to a consensus and then submit their single recommendation.

- *Mr. Gluck:* Can you provide details regarding question 5, \$100K for software licensing? Is this a new request?
- *Ms. Coppola:* Mr. Ficker and I made the decision to pull this money from other separate budgets and into a single budget “bucket” to enable better cost control and monitoring. Far more efficient than maintaining separate line items.
- *Mr. Gluck:* Bottom line: this is not an additional budget item.

- **Sanborn Regional School District Budget Deliberations**

- *Ms. Stephan:* Budget seems very reasonable and nothing jumps out as excessive, particularly given the large decrease in state funding and grants for required expenditures. I appreciate Ms. Coppola’s extreme fiscal responsibility and how hard she works to save money for the district.
- *Mr. Brisson:* Has served three years on this committee and sometimes questions his role. Personally, does not look at individual line items, but rather at the aggregate. Has not yet personally arrived at a “number.” It will be difficult for voters to accept if the increase in real estate taxes is 11-12% for just the school’s portion. If something were to change that lessened the burden, it could help. And there is also the challenge of the increasing line items over which we have no control.
- *Ms. Stephan:* It is critical that we present this data in the clearest light, particularly regarding what we can and cannot control. Perhaps split out the numbers that way?
- *Mr. Gluck:* We could definitely address that in our presentation.
- *Dr. Blake:* We must be careful about how we present the information so taxpayers do not regret the passage of the collective bargaining agreement, putting them in a mindset to veto future contracts.
- *Mr. Brisson:* The warrant article in the last election seemed not to represent the amount of the increase pertaining to that agreement accurately.
- *Ms. Ross:* The voters likely did not understand the Step system.
- *Ms. Stephan:* Standing at the polls, I learned that many voters had no idea what they were voting about and made up their minds in the polls. Many said they just selected the lowest number on the ballot, without understanding the implications on anything but their tax rate.
- *Mr. Gluck:* What is the status of the list of prioritized wants and needs?
- *Dr. Blake:* In the School Board packets.
- *Mr. Gasse:* We need a contingency plan if the budget recommendation does not pass. In terms of the budget itself, feels that it “is what it is” and cannot be nitpicked.
- *Ms. Ross:* The administration is very careful to start from a lean position, not requesting anything that is not truly necessary. The questions submitted by the School Board and the

Budget Committee and the answers received from the administration clearly demonstrate that.

- *Mr. Felisberto*: Agreed. Public perception is that enrollment is down but spending is up. Public does not understand the offsetting effect of increased required special education and other spending and the very large corresponding decrease in federal funding. In terms of energy savings, the district has taken every opportunity to save. On paper, the budget request may look like a large number, but is really is not. We have to be prepared for an uptick in enrollment, based on earlier meeting conversations, and cannot be caught unprepared.
- *Mr. Brisson*: Agreed. The current downward trend is only a projection and may not reflect reality.
- *Mr. Felisberto*: People come to our district because of its reputation: the special education program and its supporting paraprofessionals. We need to fund for this and, if it does not come to fruition, the administration can made downward adjustments as they always have.
- *Mr. Gluck*: Does not believe that we should settle on a number that is less than or only slightly more than the default budget. We need to give voters a real choice. We also want to do what we can to decrease the possibility that voters select the default budget. We can't approve the exact amount from the administration, though. We must make cut(s), which we would like to do based on the forthcoming prioritized list of wants and needs.
- *Mr. Felisberto*: It is critical that the Budget Committee and the School Board agree on a budget proposal.
- *Mr. Gluck*: Historically, the Budget Committee votes on a number and then the School Board revotes to match it.
- *Mr. Felisberto*: Are we working carefully to distribute the *Essential News* so it arrives to voters in a timely fashion (not too far ahead of voting, but not too late for them to absorb)?
- *Dr. Blake*: Yes.

Public Comment: none

Committee Comment: none

Schedule of Future Meetings:

- 12/19/13: Budget Committee Meeting (Ms. Stephan will be absent and the committee requests that Ms. Scanlon take notes.)
- 01/02/14: Budget Committee Meeting (vote)
- 01/09/14: Budget Committee Meeting (assemble presentation)

Motion: To Adjourn (Mr. Ross)

- Second: Mr. Brisson
- Vote: 6-0
- Meeting Adjourned at 8:06 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Patty Stephan, Secretary