

**Sanborn Regional School District Budget Committee Meeting**  
**October 30, 2014**  
**Approved Meeting Minutes**

**Call to Order:** 7:34 PM

**Attendance:**

<b>Bud Com Members:</b>	Barry Gluck, Chair	Allen Felisberto, Vice Chair
	Beth Ann Scanlon	Cheryl Gannon
	Roger Clark ( <i>excused</i> )	Patty Stephan, Secretary
	Jim Doggett	Nancy Ross, School Board Rep.

**Administration:** Carol Coppola, Business Administrator  
Brian Blake, Superintendent (*absent*)

**Public Comment:** none

**Committee Comment:**

Mr. Gluck requested hard copies of the new Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) from Ms. Coppola.

**Prior Meeting Minutes:** Reviewed and amended.

- Motion: to accept October 20, 2014 meeting minutes as amended (Ms. Ross)
  - Second: Ms. Scanlon
  - Vote: 7-0 (motion carried)

**School Board Report (Ms. Ross):**

Meeting held 10/29. Ms. Ross has requested BudCom's receipt of budget prior to next meeting. Reported that among Dr. Blake's concerns are a forecasted \$100K increase in the cost of electricity, an anticipated increase in health insurance costs, and \$100K+ in requested capital improvements. Even with a default budget, this represents a spending increase. Dr. Blake is planning to bring forward a scaled-down version of the budget. Ms. Ross requested that, at some point, the BudCom see what the department heads requested that Dr. Blake does not choose to bring forward.

Ms. Scanlon asked the reason for the increase in the cost of electricity. Ms. Coppola explained that for the past two years the district was locked into a contract rate of \$0.06 per kilowatt hour (kWh). The cost per kWh has increased substantially. We are now in a contract for \$0.11/kWh. Had we not entered into that contract with Unitil, we would be at \$0.24/kWh. This increase has impacted the entire region. The \$100K increase is a result of the district having previously been at such an extremely low price point. Discussion of the solar panels ensued with Ms. Coppola clarifying that at both Memorial School and SRHS, the solar panels provide heat and not electricity.

Ms. Ross also reported that Support Staff contract negotiations just started last week.

Ms. Scanlon also asked if there is any sense of the amount of the insurance increase. Ms. Coppola reported that we do not at this time. Also, for two years the district has had a premium holiday, which had reduced premiums by 8.3%. There will be another premium holiday this year. She indicated she is planning on an approximately 8% increase, but that is just an estimation. She hopes for more information by 11/15.

Ms. Coppola also confirmed that the employer's responsibility for retirement costs is also increasing substantially.

**Old Business:** None

**New Business:**

- The group discussed the award received by Ms. Coppola and Dr. Blake from GFOA in recognition of their superior efforts in budget preparation. The plaque is hanging in the School Board meeting room. Ms. Coppola was congratulated for her fine work.
- Community Outreach Planning Group: Ms. Scanlon, Ms. Ross, and Ms. Gannon met to brainstorm ideas to bring to today's BudCom meeting in an effort to improve community awareness of the issues facing the committee, the district, and the overall budgeting process. BudCom discussed the ideas at length and came to the following conclusions:
  - At the next BudCom meeting we will vote to determine which of the following community outreach initiatives, the committee will undertake this year.
  - Ideas discussed included the following:
    - Creating a SurveyMonkey survey, possibly using the district's account, to ask the public for general information and input (committee members have been asked to think about potential suitable questions)
    - Meet with town leaders from Newton and Kingston (Fremont?) to gain a mutual understanding of our challenges and to better understand what voters across the board are facing regarding the fiscal challenges of meeting the needs of their town and their district
    - Post a press release after each BudCom meeting that would include highlights of the meeting. Ms. Stephan volunteered to write these and submit them to the Chair of the Budget Committee for review and approval. The Chair will also submit the draft press releases to the Superintendent for his review and suggestions. These will be strictly factual.
    - Create a closed Facebook page for posting of information. Comments could be submitted to the administrator of the page (Ms. Stephan), who would bring any and all comments to BudCom and respond on the FB page with BudCom's answer.
    - Post information to the school district web site with links out to pertinent information
    - Post information regarding BudCom meetings to the district's individual school email blasts, which go out on Fridays
    - Post information regarding upcoming meetings to the NCAT, the Newton Cable channel
    - Post information to the local 55+ communities, libraries, town halls, churches, veteran's groups, and other civic organizations
    - Goal is that one message would be created and used many times
    - Use the Alert Now system to inform people of the upcoming Public Hearing, Deliberative session, and voting day. Dr. Blake did this last year for two of these three events.
  - Ms. Ross asked if it was possible to videotape future BudCom meetings. Ms. Gannon tapes the School Board meetings and said that all that would be needed is someone to run the camera and a memory card. The committee discussed changing seating to ensure that all members are visible on camera.
  - Mr. Felisberto asked Mr. Gluck to reach out to Dr. Blake about the possibility of using the district's SurveyMonkey account.
  - If BudCom members think of questions that would be pertinent for a SurveyMonkey survey, please submit them to Ms. Scanlon (cc: the rest of the committee) and she will pull them all together.
  - Ms. Gannon suggested perhaps two surveys instead of one. The first would ask where the public gets their information (if we have information for you, where would you like to get it?). The second would then be more budget specific.
  - For the survey to be free, it would have to be limited to 10 questions. Committee discussed that more than 10 questions would dissuade people anyway.

- Mr. Gluck wondered if the discussion with town leaders is within the purview of BudCom. There was robust discussion on both sides of the topic. BudCom members were asked to think about it and it will be discussed at the next meeting.
- Mr. Doggett expressed continued concern that these ideas were discussed outside of a posted BudCom meeting and said he had discussed the matter with the NH Assistant Attorney General and determined that such meetings may be illegal. Mr. Gluck and Mr. Felisberto expressed that it was not a formal committee function, but merely a brainstorming session to help prepare BudCom to move forward more effectively within the community.

**Public Comment:** none

**Committee Comment:**

Mr. Felisberto requested that the administration ensure voters are aware of the procedural rules and requirements for public hearings versus public meetings. This will help ensure no one feels shorted when it comes time to make comments.

Mr. Doggett requested that a discussion of creating a budget for BudCom be added as new business to the next meeting agenda. He also mentioned the desire to discuss hiring a dedicated secretary to take minutes of the meeting to enable Ms. Stephan to participate more fully in the sessions.

Ms. Gannon agreed to look into initiating videotaping of future BudCom meetings.

**Schedule of Future Meetings:**

- Thursday, November 13 – 7:30 pm – The Budget Committee will vote on a plan for community outreach efforts
- Wednesday, November 19 (time and place TBD) – Administration’s Joint Presentation of the Budget to the School Board and Budget Committee
- Monday, November 24 – 7:30 pm – Budget Committee to begin discussions on the Administration’s proposed budget

**Motion:** To Adjourn (Mr. Felisberto)

- Second: Ms. Ross
- Vote: 7-0
- Meeting Adjourned at 9:26 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Patty Stephan, Budget Committee Secretary