

SANBORN REGIONAL BUDGET COMMITTEE

**APPROVED MEETING MINUTES**

**THURSDAY, January 5, 2017**

A meeting of the Sanborn Regional Budget Committee was held on Thursday, January 5, 2017. The meeting was called to order at 7:30 pm. The following were recorded as present:

**SRSB BUDGET COMMITTEE**

**Annie Collyer, Chairperson**  
**Charlton Swasey, Vice-Chairman**  
**Cheryl Gannon**  
**Sandi Rogers-Osterloh**  
**Jack Kozec**  
**Tammy Gluck, School Committee Representative**  
**James Doggett**  
**Ami Faria**

The meeting began with a salute to the flag.

Ms. Collyer said she attended a School Board meeting on January 4<sup>th</sup>. The School Board (SB) has spent one meeting and part of a second on the budget. They are now campaigning over coming weeks for their budget proposal that is the same as this year, even though the District is spending at a level that is \$800,000 lower than that, and there are no new proposals from the Administration for next year. One of them is saying that the Budget Committee is making derogatory remarks about them and about the schools, and is denigrating the BudCom work. The majority of the SB members also do not exhibit any trust toward the District's voters. I question whether they believe in the true democracy we have in New Hampshire, and believe only in representative democracy- or their representation, not ours.

They are very uncomfortable with giving the voters in Kingston and Newton choices. They would like to have the vote on March 14 be between a budget of \$34, 500, 000 and \$34, 700,000, not between one of \$34, 700,000 and \$33, 700,000. They do not trust at all the work we on the Budget Committee have done over the past ten months.

They are putting forward two warrants for Capital Improvements – one for ADA compliance at Swasey and Chase, and one for windows. They do not want to put the other capital improvement plans they adopted a month ago in warrants, for fear voters will reject them and no means no. The School Board seems confident that they will have money left over at year end to spend on the \$400,000 or so in capital improvements needed without putting them in next year's budget or in warrants.

I for one value and trust our democratic process. I believe the reason we have years of failed budgets is not that voters do not support schools, but that there is a lack of trust with the District Administration and the School Board. I believe that a true choice for a budget will help alleviate that distrust. I believe that putting warrants before the voters will help the distrust. I believe that alleviating that distrust will result in a passed budget, passed teacher and staff contracts, perhaps passed warrants for CIP and

hopefully for healing within the District. I believe the actions of the SB last night underscored the distrust in the District and set the District back once again. I am saddened by their scurrilous statements and lack of trust in the voters of our District. If the teacher and staff contracts fail, it will be because of School Board actions last night and in the coming weeks. If warrants fail, it will be because of School Board actions last night and in the coming weeks. I believe the majority on the current School Board are performing a bad disservice to the District.

she attended a School Board meeting last night and informed the members of the actions taken by the School Board in regard to the budget.

#### PREPARATION OF THE PROPOSED BUDGET

The Budget Committee reviewed the answers to the questions they still had outstanding so they can finalize the budget proposal for their public hearing. They reviewed the information regarding co-curricular activities. They should be receiving the November YTD in a couple of days.

Ms. Gannon asked if they will be discussing the professional staff contract. Ms. Collyer said they will discuss it on January 19, 2017 when they may be hearing the presentation on it at the Public Hearing. The proposed changes to the contract are not on the website. They have access to the existing contract on the website and they have only received the changes to that contract. Ms. Collyer will ask where they can find the information they are looking for.

Ms. Collyer asked if there are any members who have any additional adjustments from last week who want to bring it to the table to make adjustments to the proposed budget that will be presented at the public hearing.

Mr. Doggett stated he has a problem with the \$17,500 NECC. He said this year there were only 12 students taking that course. He believes paying for college credits is above and beyond the requirements of a high school diploma.

Ms. Gluck read the definition of that line item and the details that is involved regarding the credits.

Ms. Faria questioned Mr. Doggett why not discuss changing requirements for reimbursement to the District or changing the fee instead of just stopping it all together. She suggested he, instead, come up with a solution to help make it equal to what the other credits are.

Mr. Doggett said that is not within their prevue.

**Mr. Doggett made a motion to reduce the proposed budget by \$17,500. Seconded by Mr. Swasey.**

After some discussion, it was stated the Budget Committee's new number is \$33,717,000.

**VOTE: 2-6 (Gannon, Faria, Gluck, Rogers-Osterloh, Kozec, Collyer opposed) Motion fails**

The Budget Committee discussed the healthcare costs. Mr. Kozec explained this is a serious issue for him. He said the teacher's contract has to get on board with the rest of the world. Contributions from employees are 25% across almost the whole country and our teachers pay only 10% in healthcare.

Ms. Collyer offered a suggestion. Non-union employees only go up by the 1%. They will be paying for a contribution of 11% for health care. She would like to look at administrators to be at a higher percentage. She is interested in showing support to get the teacher's contract passed. She suggests 20% contribution from the administrators instead of 10%.

**Ms. Collyer made a motion to change the proposed budget by \$36,414 to reflect a 20% contribution from Administration and 11% contribution from non-union staff. Seconded by Mr. Doggett.**

Ms. Rogers-Osterloh asked if she could make an amendment to the motion and change the 20% contribution down to 15% which would be a better transition for the administration and to keep the non-union staff increase to 1%.

Ms. Collyer accepted her friendly amendment.

**Ms. Collyer amended her motion to reduce the amount they had last week by \$21,414 to reflect a 15% contribution from Administration and a 1% increase for non-union staff. Seconded by Mr. Doggett. VOTE: 5-3 (Gannon, Faria, Gluck opposed) Motion carries**

Ms. Collyer referred to the administrative travel allowance. The administrators receive a travel stipend of \$3,000 per year. She would like to cut that in half which would be a School Board policy change they would recommend.

Mr. Doggett would recommend 100% removal of that stipend.

Mr. Kozec said there are only a handful of administrators getting the stipend. Mr. Doggett believes there are 9.

Ms. Faria said they need to look at the line item breakdown they asked for. The information is in there. She believes the maximum is \$3000, and it is already on a travel expense form basis.

Ms. Collyer said there are only 5 or 6 people receiving the stipend which totals \$7,500, not \$22,500. Mr. Kozec would prefer to see the stipend stopped and have administrators fill out a travel expense report form.

Ms. Collyer would like to get some clarification on this.

Ms. Gannon explained after attending the School Board meeting last night and listening to the discussion about putting items in warrant articles and removing capital improvements from the budget, some of which were life safety issues, was concerning to her. One of those life safety issues was the window replacement at the Middle School.

Ms. Collyer informed her that probably after Ms. Gannon left the meeting, the School Board did make a motion to put forth a warrant article in the amount of \$161,300 for the Middle School replacement windows and blinds.

**Ms. Gannon made a motion to add the cost indicated in the CIP for replacement windows at the Middle School in the amount of \$148,600. Seconded by Ms. Rogers-Osterloh. VOTE: 3-5 (Collyer, Swasey, Rogers-Osterloh, Doggett, Kozec opposed) Motion fails**

Ms. Gluck referred to the reduction from the Budget Committee for the Guidance Director. She stated that position has a 4-page job description. The amount for that position is \$127,900. She read highlights of what this position involves.

**Ms. Gluck made a motion to add \$127,900 back into the figure to restore that position. Seconded by Ms. Faria.**

Ms. Gluck stated there are over 100 students with 504 Plans that the Guidance Director is responsible for. Ms. Gannon explained what a 504 Plan is and the students who need it.

Ms. Collyer has asked to table this until they can get further detail on the number of students in the high school with a 504 Plan.

Ms. Faria stated the information they have received at this point in time, states that the Guidance Director is touching at least 100 individual students in the school. The idea of cutting that position and adding 100 students to a caseload onto someone else is a large thing to ask.

Ms. Rogers-Osterloh referred to declining enrollment and explained the legwork she did in looking at other districts. This is about a position, not a person, and how this is handled currently. She questions how many items in the job description are handled by the secretary and counselors with oversight.

**VOTE: 3-5 (Collyer, Rogers-Osterloh, Swasey, Kozec, Doggett opposed) Motion fails**

Ms. Collyer stated the Budget Committee proposed budget is \$33,695,968 which is \$1 million less than the proposed School Board budget. The proposed operating budget is \$32,422,467.

Ms. Collyer proposed some warrant articles that she is hoping the Budget Committee would support.

1) To raise and appropriate \$573,200 for capital improvements to Swasey and Chase Fields.

- 2) To raise and appropriate \$91,800 for the purpose of retaining or hiring a Math Coordinator for K-8.
- 3) To raise and appropriate \$102,900 for retaining or hiring a Public Relations Coordinator for the District.
- 4) To raise and appropriate \$369,730 for capital improvements listed in the CIP for the Middle School (except the windows and blinds), Bakie and Memorial School.

Ms. Collyer stated these will all be petitioned warrant articles and she will obtain the 25 signatures that will be necessary.

Ms. Faria asked why the School Board did not propose warrant articles for these things. Ms. Gluck said there was a lot of discussion during the School Board meeting about this and they had to balance priorities.

Ms. Collyer asked if any Committee member would like to make a motion for any one of these warrant articles she proposes.

Ms. Faria clarified these are going to be done as petitioned warrant articles from citizens and not the Budget Committee.

Ms. Collyer said that is true, however, they can put on the warrant article "recommended by the Budget Committee". Ms. Gannon stated these are not being put forth by the Budget Committee though.

Mr. Doggett stated the Budget Committee is only allowed to put one warrant article on the ballot. Ms. Gannon asked why they are discussing putting a petitioned warrant article at the Budget Committee meeting.

Ms. Collyer said it is to get endorsement from the Budget Committee.

Ms. Collyer suggests tabling these warrant articles until they are written up and signatures are obtained. They are due on Tuesday and will be voted on as a group on January 19<sup>th</sup>.

#### REVIEW PRESENTATION FOR PUBLIC HEARING

The Budget Committee discussed the information and slides they need to have for the public hearing. Committee members made suggestions and amendments to the information on the slides and made suggestions for additional slides.

Ms. Gannon believes it is important for the public to know the things that were recommended by the Superintendent and that should be included in the presentation. She stated without including that information, she doesn't believe this is being transparent.

Mr. Swasey referred to the RSA which refers to the governing body. He added that the Superintendent is not the governing body.

Ms. Collyer explained she wants to be clear what they, as a Budget Committee, are presenting and the information behind it. She said they are not hiding anything; they are just not featuring it on a slide.

Ms. Gannon requested some additional slides be added. She stated a slide should be prepared outlining the specifics of the default budget. Ms. Collyer is not sure if they have to dig into how it is calculated but she will ask for clarification.

Ms. Gannon suggests having a slide on the history of the approval for the budgets in the past 10 years. She stated 4 out of the 10 years voters approved the budget.

Ms. Gannon also believes a slide be prepared including the history of the amount of funds that are returned to voters to offset taxes.

Ms. Gannon would also suggest a slide to show the enrollment projections.

Mr. Swasey referred to the suggestion of including a slide regarding the return of money to the voters. He believes it needs to be presented clearly. Ms. Gannon responded to Mr. Swasey it is legitimate money and is not a slush fund or spun in any way.

Ms. Faria said it is the responsibility of the chairperson to present this information without spin and to put the information out factually. Every year the Budget Committee tries hard to present information to the voters in a way they can understand what they will see when they vote. This is one of those opportunities. This is a disservice to folks if they don't have at least a number in their hand of what the Superintendent originally proposed and what the Budget Committee proposes and the process it took to get there.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Michael Giordano, a resident of Newton felt there were some comments made between members tonight that were inappropriate and was disappointed in them. He spoke on some reductions made by the Budget Committee he does not agree with.

Vanessa, a resident of Kingston spoke in support of the Guidance Director position and asked the members to understand the details of the 504 Plan. She has children on a 504 Plan. She commented that she doesn't think it is the public's responsibility for the life safety items, but they should be including anything regarding safety in the budget.

Dr. Pam Brown, a resident of Newton referred to the windows at the Middle School and said they are serviceable and asked for additional information from the Fire Chief at the Deliberative Session to determine if they are truly a safety issue.

### **SCHOOL BOARD COMMENT**

Ms. Gluck said there will be two warrant articles from School Board for Swasey and Chase Fields and window replacement and blinds at the Middle School. The Deliberative Session will be at the high school at 7:00 pm.

### **COMMITTEE COMMENT**

Mr. Kozec asked about whether the School Board talked about the petitioned warrant articles that were passed by the voters last year. Ms. Gluck stated there was no discussion about them.

Mr. Doggett said he is entitled to his opinion on whether people are willing to compromise or not.

Mr. Swasey referred to the budget amount and the windows and Guidance Director. He proposes a School Board challenge to Ms. Gluck to take back to the School Board the message that if they add the revised budget figure of \$33,828,000 as now proposed and the School Board agrees and gets a unanimous agreement, he will get the votes from the Budget Committee.

Ms. Rogers-Osterloh said the scholarship news is on counseling website. She reiterated the reductions are not related to people. She would like more information on the Guidance Director and would have preferred the motion was tabled. The Superintendent's budget was \$1.2 million less than he would have liked to have seen in his budget. She stated he would have liked to have seen the CIP in the budget. She would like to proceed with the window replacement.

Ms. Gannon referred to Ms. Collyer's statement at the beginning of the meeting when she stated the School Board seems to believe the voters aren't smart enough to vote for what is right, and that they should have opportunity to vote on warrant articles for capital improvements that include potential life safety issue improvements. Ms. Gannon said it is the responsibility of the School Board and the District to make sure buildings are safe.

Ms. Gannon said she doesn't agree that the voters are not smart enough. She explained the windows at the Middle School are code violations which have been cited by a professional company who looked at that building. She also explained there are certain things we can't predict and some things need to be addressed and shouldn't put off with regards to life safety issues and the CIP.

Ms. Faria explained she was watching recorded videos of the meetings and reminded the members the closer they are to the microphone, the clicking and paper shuffling is louder and makes it difficult to hear what others are saying. She said this is something to think about with new microphones. She stated she appreciates Chairperson's comments but they are her point out her view and not Committee at large. She was bothered by the way Ms. Gluck was treated at the January 22nd meeting. As the School Board Representative, she has not been treated with the same respect that they showed to Mr. Miller and Ms. Ross. Ms. Faria believes Ms. Gluck should be treated with same respect.

Ms. Collyer commented there is a lot of passion on the Committee and conflict can arise. We are human and do things we wish we wouldn't. She didn't say 'not smart enough' and clarified she had said the School Board, as a whole, doesn't exhibit trust in voters to make correct decisions. She said it isn't a matter of 'smart enough' and she didn't say those words. She wants to see them put a budget put out that everyone can get behind. She explained her opinion on placing safety issues in the operating budget versus putting them out as warrant articles. She wants them to take care of the safety of the students and hopes the School Board and Budget Committee can come to a compromise to present a budget to the whole town and get the best thing done for the kids.

Ms. Gluck believes the process Budget Committee took this year was very thoughtful and thorough. She recognizes all the hard work this Committee has done. The issue is the voters need to be provided with the best available and accurate information and to be transparent in order for them to be able to make decisions.

#### APPROVAL OF MINUTES

**Mr. Doggett made a motion to approve two sets of minutes from December 22, 2016 and December 29, 2016. Seconded by Mr. Swasey.**

Budget Committee members offered a few amendments to the minutes.

**VOTE: 7-0-1 (one abstention) Motion carries**

#### UPCOMING MEETING

The next meeting will be a public hearing. Ms. Collyer will email the amended presentation to the Committee members. Ms. Collyer welcomes their comments via email.

The Public Hearing will be held on January 12, 2017 at Sanborn Middle School at 7:00 pm. Snow date will be on Friday, January 13, 2017 at 7:00 pm.

#### ADJOURNMENT

**Mr. Doggett made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Ms. Faria. VOTE: 8-0 motion carries**

The meeting adjourned at 10:45 pm

Minutes submitted by,  
Linda Mahoney  
Recording Secretary