

## **SANBORN REGIONAL SCHOOL BOARD MEETING**

**January 6, 2016**

A regular meeting of the Sanborn Regional School Board was held on Wednesday January 6, 2016. The meeting was called to order at 7:04 PM by Jon LeBlanc, School Board Chair, in Room 137 at Sanborn Regional High School, Kingston, NH. The following were recorded as present:

**SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS:**

- Janice Bennett
- Jon LeBlanc, Chair
- Roberto Miller
- Wendy Miller, Vice Chair
- Dustin Ramey
- Nancy Ross
- Monique Ricard, Student Council Representative

**ADMINISTRATORS:**

- Dr. Brian J. Blake, Superintendent
- Carol Coppola, Business Manager
- Jodi Gutterman, Student Services Director

The meeting began with a salute to the flag.

**REVIEW AGENDA Under Administrative Report a. PACE/Smarter Balance will be moved to follow the School Board Chairperson's Comment.**

Dr. Blake noted that the non-public meeting scheduled for 6:00 PM tonight did not take place and that this is the first meeting of the evening.

### **MINUTES**

Ms. Ross made a motion to accept the December 16, 2015 public and non-public meeting minutes. Ms. Bennett seconded the motion. Six in favor, one abstained – Ms. Miller. Mr. Masson would like it noted that he stayed for the entire December 16, 2015, meeting.

### **MANIFEST**

The following manifest was signed by the School Board: Accounts Payable #16-\$1,534,270.96; Payroll #14 - \$797,252.80.

### **STUDENT COUNCIL REPORT**

Monique Ricard reported that the HS is preparing for winter carnival. Mr. LeBlanc asked Monique if she liked the extra day off following vacation. She responded she was ready to come back.

## **SCHOOL BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS**

a. Budget Committee: Ms. Ross reported that the Budget Committee had met on December 17th. She reported it was very organized by the Chair and a lively discussion was held concerning the budget. Everyone had a chance to go over the budget. People were asked to submit a reasonably reduced budget amount. Reductions ranged from a low of \$10,000.00 to a high of over \$1 million. The vote was 5-3 to cut \$350,000.00 from the budget. Ms. Ross said specific cuts were not made. Some suggested cuts: DDC controls at Bakie, HS tennis courts resurfacing, MS window replacement, district truck, \$30,000.00 in salaries, the math coordinator, ice hockey, cameras, Chromebooks, books, and Special Ed. She said the meeting was handled very professionally and in the end they were able to come up with a number. The BC will meet tomorrow night.

**SCHOOL BOARD CHAIRPERSON'S COMMENT** Mr. LeBlanc read from a prepared statement: "My comments this evening are on community involvement. This is a great time of year to become involved with your local towns and schools on many levels. There are many opportunities to get involved, all we need is an engaged public who is interested in performing their civic duty. Next week, the Budget Committee will hold its Public Hearing Thursday, January 14, 2016, at 7:00 PM. This is a great night to come and be informed about the budget that has been proposed by this committee of involved citizens. The next opportunity for people to become involved is the filing period for positions on the School Board and Budget Committees. Starting on Wednesday, January 20<sup>th</sup> through Friday, January 29<sup>th</sup>, candidates may file for positions whose terms have come to an end. On February 3<sup>rd</sup>, the First (Deliberative) session of the Annual School District meeting will be held. This is an important meeting where modifications can be made to warrants that are placed on the ballot. This meeting is rarely well attended, even though significant decisions can be made that affect what is put onto the ballot in March. On March 8<sup>th</sup>, there is the second (voting) session of the Annual School District, where voter turnout is always low."

"We live in a country that is free and democratic and many have lost their life protecting our liberties. We have a right and an obligation to get out and vote in all elections, no matter how small. I hope that all members of our community get involved and perform their civic duties in the coming months and years to continue making Newton and Kingston great communities to call home. Apathy towards community involvement and civic duty is a great threat to our local community fabric."

**ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT** Dr. Blake reported on the PACE program at Sanborn. It is a two year pilot that SRSD was granted permission to participate in. Sanborn was allowed to develop the PACE exam in place of the Smarter Balance in certain grades. Officials from the federal level "looked over the shoulders" of staff in the development of the PACE exam. Dr. Blake

introduced Assessment Specialist Dr. Scott Marion. Dr. Marion is the Vice President of the National Center for the Improvement in Educational Assessment in Dover, and has been working with Sanborn over the last two years in the development of the PACE project. In addition to working with Sanborn, the the Center works with (at various times) 30-35 states and the Department of Education. The Center works with assessment and accountability issues. Dr. Marion said that Sanborn has been a leader in the country holding kids to rigorous expectations. Dr. Marion said that the “beauty” of PACE is that it allows teachers to identify student weaknesses sooner. Ms. Ellen Hume Howard and Mr. Michael Turmelle gave a presentation on the results of the recent PACE and Smarter Balance exams. They spoke of PACE vs. Smarter Balance. PACE allows teachers to intervene before it’s too late. With PACE there’s an internal accountability. PACE has changed everything – how teachers teach, grading. Dr. Blake stated that Sanborn is being looked at by everyone across the country, “You should be proud.” Dr. Blake said that representatives from the NH Dept. of Education along with representatives from the national level will be visiting Sanborn in February to learn more about PACE. This is the first year of a two year test. A hand-out entitled ***District Results for NHPACE Performance Assessment for Competency Education 2014-2015*** was distributed.

At 8:25 PM there was a ten minute break. The meeting resumed at 8:36 PM.

**PUBLIC COMMENT** Ms. Annie Collyer said she thought all the effort put towards PACE was fantastic. She said she’d like to see the results improve. Ms. Collyer said she thought it was great that the District is able to identify weakness in students and address those needs. Ms. Collyer said that there is a misconception about the Newton Kingston Taxpayers Association that they are only interested in slashing money. That is not true she said.

**SCHOOL BOARD COMMENT** none

### **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

Middle School Roof: Ms. Coppola reported that the 8<sup>th</sup> grade students are back at the MS. She said the school looks great and that it is great to have everyone back. The total cost to repair the roof, along with some repairs (replaced damaged floor, replaced worn carpet in music room, organized internet wiring, some improvements recommended by the Building Inspector to bring the building up to code) came in at \$415,848.00. This amount does not include the final bills from the architect. Of that amount, FEMA reimbursed the District \$58,000.00 and the insurance coverage was \$97,874.15. The District’s insurer would like to settle on \$97,874.15. Ms. Ross made a motion to accept the insurance company settlement of \$97,874.15. Ms. Bennett seconded the motion. Discussion followed. Ms. Coppola was asked if the District was happy with the contractor? Yes, we were pleased. Ms. Bennett praised Ms. Coppola’s ability to get things right. This has been a tough project. She never quit, always made herself clear. She thanked Ms. Coppola for all her work over the years, and said the District has been a

beneficiary of her ability to get things done. Ms. Ross stated that Ms. Coppola consistently does her due diligence. Mr. LeBlanc gave a shout-out to the contractor – a local contractor – for getting the job done at a much lower cost than the other bidders. All in favor to accept the insurance company settlement of \$97,874.15.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

a. Overnight Field Trip – High School Tabled until the next meeting.

b. School Calendar Dr. Blake reported on the 2016-2017 school calendar which is based largely on the SST calendar. Mr. Masson asked about the possibility of moving the early release days to Fridays from Wednesdays. His opinion was it allowed for four full solid days of curriculum without the interruption of an early release day in the middle of the week. Dr. Blake reported that historically teachers stay an extra hour on Wednesdays for professional development. Some expressed concerns changing to Fridays. It would mean less time for professional development and people for the most part want to leave at the end of the school day on Fridays. Ms. Bennett said it was an interesting idea and suggested a poll be taken of the leadership team and teachers. The proposed calendar has students attending school on Friday, December 23<sup>rd</sup>. It was suggested that Friday, December 23<sup>rd</sup> be the start of the holiday break and add one day to the end of the calendar. After more conversation, it was agreed to poll the leadership team and teachers to get a consensus about the early release day occurring on a Monday or Friday.

d. Budget Mr. Masson recapped the earlier BC report by Ms. Ross. By a 5-3 vote, the BC voted to reduce the proposed budget by \$350,000.00, which is an increase of \$810,000.00 over the current/default budget, which is a total an increase of over \$3 million over last year's proposed budget. The proposed budget does not include the professional staff contract. It does include the increases in health care premiums. Ms. Miller asked what does a good education mean? What does it cost? Ms. Miller asked if throwing money at the problem is going to fix it? How can we continue to ask the tax payers to support the school, when we can't prove it? Based on tonight's presentation and the test scores, how does the District justify the increases? Ms. Ross stated that Sanborn is a leader in PLC's and nationally recognized for its leadership in PACE. Everything that Sanborn does is state of the art delivery of education. You're always going to have your naysayers and cheerleaders. Mr. Ramey asked the board members to look at page 8 of the budget book, **17 Reasons to Celebrate**; there are plenty of good things happening in the District. There are 17 reasons to be excited and proud of what's going on. Ms. Miller asked about the \$100,000.00 award the District recently received and if there was language as to the way it could be used. Dr. Blake responded yes, the District needs to continue the work of innovative practices. Dr. Blake said that the leadership team would discuss how to best use the money and report to the SB. Mr. Masson asked when the last the

time the stipend for the SB was adjusted? Ms. Bennett said there has not been a raise in the stipend since she's on the board (16 years). A discussion followed about raising the stipend. Most members felt that serving on the SB was part community service. Mr. Masson wondered if raising the stipend would result in more people running for the SB? Mr. Masson asked if the SB wanted to propose a warrant article that raises the SB stipend by \$1,000.00. Most members did not think that would motivate people to run for the SB vacancies. Mr. LeBlanc said that people have to be "internally" motivated. Money is not a motivator. Mr. Ramey said that at this time he did not want to discuss it, it's a minute issue. Mr. LeBlanc asked the SB if they would like a warrant article to create a capital reserve for capital improvements. The suggestion was that the reserve would be funded from the unexpended funds. The SB discussed the pros and cons of establishing such warrant article. Ms. Miller said she thought it may be a good idea because people who might not support the budget would support maintaining the buildings. Ms. Coppola will look into the language to prepare a warrant article to establish a capital reserve for capital improvements.

Ms. Bennett made a motion to approve the 2016 Default Budget of \$34,412,230.00. Ms. Ross seconded the motion. All in favor.

#### **COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED/SENT** Audit Reports and management letters

**WRITTEN INFORMATION** none

**PUBLIC COMMENT** Mr. Jim Baker said he thought it was a good idea to have a warrant article on capital improvements because he felt the proposed budget will not pass. People understand that the buildings need to be maintained. He suggested they start with \$50,000.00. He feels that \$100,000.00 is too high. He said he agreed with Mr. Ramey's suggestion that they define what capital improvement means.

Ms. Gannon wondered whether the professional staff agreement had been ratified?

Ms. Annie Collyer read the following statement: "I was too apoplectic in some prior meetings to make these comments, but I need you to know that I am distressed at the lack of stewardship of taxpayer monies that you have been exhibiting as a body with the budget proposal."

"On the CIP, your plan for window replacements for \$130,000.00 has a 27 year ROI based on a 2007 energy audit and prices. This is not good stewardship.

"You plan to put security cameras inside the schools, and build a new vestibule when you already have a double-locked entry at the high school for \$126,500 seems motivated by the

possibility of getting a 50 cents per dollar return from Home land Security. I do not think it is good stewardship to spend a dollar to get 50 cents back. Instead I believe you should allocate \$8,000.00 for the elementary schools to eliminate outdoor blind spots and further examine the need for the rest. Do we really need our children on video surveillance? This is not good stewardship.”

“On the rest of the budget, it does not seem that you are even willing to look for efficiencies. Look at class size for example. There ARE studies that show that smaller classrooms seem to have a learning benefit, however small, for elementary aged kids, especially if they are inner-city kids. However, the studies do not extend to the upper grade levels. Average class sizes of under 24 students in both the Middle and High Schools would mean a reduction of up to 15 FTE’s-which could be very possibly done by attrition alone. That means that they would not impact either Union relations or existing staff. The class sizes would comply with both the contracted aim for no more than 25 students per class, and also with the State mandate not to exceed 30 students per class. That translates to \$1,245,000.00 without adverse effect on education according to the research and agreed-on norms. No wonder we are outspending comparable Districts, including Timberlane and Exeter, by almost \$950.00 per student – according to the information on the Department of Education website. This is not good stewardship.”

“The studies show the best impact on student learning comes from great teachers. Let’s invest in that, and garner taxpayer support for that, including passing a good contract this year. I would like to be able to pay great teachers at the top of the state scale, not below the middle. I urge you to put our money where it can do the most good for the students, and look carefully for more efficiency to do so.”

**SCHOOL BOARD COMMENT** none

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The next **regular meeting of the Sanborn Regional School Board** will be held on **Wednesday, January 20, 2016, at 7:00 PM**, in Room 137 at the **Sanborn Regional High School, Kingston.**

The **Budget Committee meeting** will be held on **Thursday, January 7, 2016, at 7:30 PM** in the **Library at the Sanborn Regional High School.**

The **Budget Committee Public Hearing** will be held on **Thursday, January 14, 2016 at 7:00 PM** in the **Sanborn Regional High School Auditorium (Snow date Friday January 15).**

The **Filing Period** for positions on the Sanborn Regional School Board, The Sanborn Regional Budget Committee and the District Moderator will open **January 20 through January 29<sup>th</sup>, 2016, at 5:00 PM.**

The **first (Deliberative) session** of the Annual School District Meeting will be held on **Wednesday, February 3, 2016, at 7:00 PM in the Sanborn Regional High School Auditorium.**

**Second Session of Annual School District Meeting** will be held on Tuesday, March 8, 2016. Voting to be conducted at the Swasey Gym in Kingston for Kingston residents from 8:00 AM until 8:00 PM. Voting to be conducted at the Newton Town Hall from 8:00 AM until 8:00 PM for Newton residents.

**Non-Public Session – RSA 91-A:3 II**

Ms. Ross made a motion to enter into non-public session at 10:24 PM. Ms. LeBlanc polled the board. All in favor.

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.*