

SANBORN REGIONAL BUDGET COMMITTEE
APPROVED - MEETING MINUTES
THURSDAY, September 22, 2016

A meeting of the Sanborn Regional Budget Committee was held on Thursday, September 22, 2016. The meeting was called to order at 7:30 pm. The following were recorded as present:

SRSD BUDGET COMMITTEE

Annie Collyer, Chairperson
Charlton Swasey, Vice-Chairman
James Doggett
Sandi Rogers-Osterloh
Jack Kozec
Cheryl Gannon

EXCUSED

Ami Faria
Roberto Miller, School Committee Representative

The meeting began with a salute to the flag.

DEPARTMENT REVIEWS:

Ms. Collyer stated that back in May 2016, BudCom set up meetings through Dr. Blake with the department heads to review their budgets, and that Dr. Blake decided the night before the meeting of September 8, 2016, he wasn't going to send anyone to the meetings. The meeting had to be cancelled. She added that he reneged on what he agreed to do. It was disheartening. She added that it is her decision that we review the information we do have tonight, which isn't complete, and share with one another and get up to speed.

1. Athletics Department

Ms. Gannon and Ms. Collyer reviewed this. Ms. Gannon stated the information from Vicky, the Athletics Director, is self-explanatory and she had nothing further to add and had no additional questions. She said the bathrooms in the Swasey Gym have been remodeled but a wheelchair wouldn't be able to fit through the doorway. She doesn't know if the locker rooms were done or where the money came from or how much it was.

Ms. Collyer feels the Swasey Gym and Chase fields are used a lot and is concerned with ADA compliance and wants to make sure the bathrooms are in shape. Ms. Collyer will try to get a tour scheduled for next Thursday evening.

Ms. Collyer looked at the costs for participation in a sport, knowing that some in the District would like to see 'pay to play'. She noted that she is not personally in favor of 'pay to play' because there are studies that demonstrate how much participation in music, drama, art

and/or sports adds to student success. She stated that she believes if the voters have accurate information, they will be able to make sound judgments.

We have the overall cost of athletics but would like to know the cost of each sport and haven't received that yet. The total spent last year was roughly \$637,000 with \$280,000 of that for co-curricular activities. There are 561 participants as compared to 527 the year before. The cost per participant for afterschool sport is \$512, including the cost of maintaining the Swasey Gym and Chase fields, now not as high since the mothballing of the Seminary building. Last year, she noted, Vicky proposed a few additional sports. There is no personal cost for the kids to play sports.

It was asked how much do the Boosters contribute to sports and how much is used to defray expenses. Ms. Gannon explained the money raised by the Boosters is for things above and beyond the budgeted expenses. Ms. Collyer would like to receive details of that.

Ms. Gannon inquired as to whether they actually purchased the 200 baseball hats. Ms. Collyer stated BudCom did not get an answer on that yet.

Mr. Kozec says he is interested on where they buy their equipment. He hopes they go through a bid process.

Mr. Swasey stated we should be provided with each bid proposal they put out last year on everything. He wants to make sure they are following the bid process procedure.

Ms. Gannon suggests they ask them if they consistently follow the bid process and what is the process. Otherwise, that question sets the tone that we don't believe they are following the policy. We should ask what the policy is and what their procedure for following the policy is. There is a bid policy in the manual.

Ms. Collyer said we have the check register and she can re-sort it and send it to the committee members. Mr. Swasey would like a reference list for the vendor number and accounting codes.

2. Informational Technology Department (IT)

Mr. Kozec said he didn't see anything to bring to the group yet. He needs to talk to the IT director. Mr. Swasey and Ms. Collyer didn't see anything either. Ms. Collyer would like to hear from the IT director to ask him questions.

Ms. Rogers-Osterloh requested an update on the Chromebooks and the laptops for the juniors and seniors. She would like to know how the transition is going.

Ms. Gannon would like to see how it relates to the strategic plan and if there is monitoring to determine the effectiveness of these things and if it is positively impacting the education in

order to determine if they are worth the investment. With only three weeks into the school year, it will take another month or so to know better. She also pointed out that some on BudCom last year were concerned with reports from other Districts about whether they would last for the planned five years, and would like to know if the District's Chromebooks are an upgrade from that reported by other Districts as having a 2-year life.

Ms. Rogers-Osterloh said she believes all students from Grade 2 through Grade 10 have a Chromebook and grades 11 and 12 have laptops.

Ms. Collyer said about \$400,000 was spent on this at the end of last year. It was approved by the Finance Committee. The cost for each Chromebook is about \$200. Each child and their parent signed a waiver for them and they do go home with the students each day she understands but does not have confirmation.

Ms. Rogers-Osterloh asked, what is the impact of this on the IT Department and the staff with the implementation of the Chromebooks.

3. Grounds and Maintenance Department

Mr. Doggett said there is a large amount of money, about \$125,000, that seems to be spent every year no matter what. At some point, the \$25,000 for asbestos removal which is spent yearly will disappear. He believes they decided on an annual basis what to use the money for but they are all one time expenditures. He went through last year's budget and tried to identify each year's projects. He believes expenditures for capital improvements, giving the example of the \$130,000 spent on the HS vestibule, should be a warrant article. He said, for example, if a warrant article is for \$250,000 and they only spend \$200,000, it would be used only for what it was intended for and any remaining money would go back to the taxpayers.

Ms. Collyer stated we have asked for a schedule on maintenance, year by year, for 5 years. We don't have it yet for each school and what they need the money for. Every school has the same maintenance budget and they just do line item transfers. They have built in some wiggle room. Secondly, if we had a warrant article based on \$50,000 for the front vestibule and it came in at \$160,000 where does the \$86,000 difference come from? Mr. Doggett explained they would need to do another warrant article next year for the difference.

Ms. Collyer doesn't think there should be warrant articles for regular maintenance. Ms. Gannon stated a budget is a best guess estimate and things happen any day which can change how to spend the money and priorities need to be looked at.

Ms. Collyer said we need to see the plan. We have asked for what the budget requests are from the various departments. Mr. Doggett asked what impact did one custodian at the high

school have? In the budget it doesn't appear to have had any impact. He was informed they filled the position. Ms. Collyer stated we used to have a facility at the seminary building no longer used, and she didn't see a reduction in staff when the building was vacated. She wondered what happened. Mr. Doggett said when the high school opened, the custodians were brought there. We increased by three when this school opened. He also said that when the Superintendent's office was in the Seminary building, it did not need a custodian of its own, but was taken care of by various custodians for a few hours at a time.

Ms. Collyer questioned the reason there are five custodians sitting around in a room and not working when she came into the building for the meeting. Mr. Doggett said maybe they were on dinner break. Ms. Collyer wants to get their schedule and commented that other people are asking that same questions. Ms. Gannon believes they are nit picking. Ms. Collyer replied she just wants an answer. Ms. Gannon explained it is questions like that which are setting a tone for adversarial relationship which is not conducive for collaborating. There has to be some common sense. We can't be nit picking every single thing. People are feeling mistrusted and the professionals are feeling mistrusted. If we want to keep high quality professionals in this district, this kind of scrutiny is pushing people away.

Mr. Swasey said it is not his job to make them feel good. He wants accountability. Ms. Gannon says a line needs to be drawn. Ms. Collyer stated the assumption made by Ms. Gannon that asking questions and digging into information is adversarial is not accurate. Getting answers may go a long way to rebuilding trust with the voters, and that is the goal.

Ms. Rogers-Osterloh asked how we get items removed from the budget to become warrant articles. She asked have we ever requested an estimate for custodial staff for the district to hire a management group to manage them.

Mr. Swasey said we don't have the authority to make the School Board or Administration propose a warrant article when they propose a budget; however, we can remove an item from the budget and the School Board or BudCom can then propose it as a warrant article.

Mr. Doggett explained past School Boards had priced out a management group but they don't have a union and it ended up they would be spending more on the contracted service.

Ms. Collyer asked if the Budget Committee can propose a warrant article. Mr. Doggett said we have the ability to reduce the budget by that particular amount and we can recommend those be warrant articles.

Special Education Department

Ms. Collyer didn't get any answers to the questions BudCom sent to the Special Education Department and Dr. Blake. Ms. Rogers-Osterloh looked at the differences between the budgets and actuals and stated about 90% of every line for 2015 and 2016 increased. She said when you add all the increases compared to the 2016 actual and the 2017 budget, the difference is \$1,029,000.

It was explained that a lot of special education is mandated and there are a lot of unknowns with special education. Her biggest question is how many special education students district-wide in 2015/2016 and for the 2016 actual budget, how many district-wide and at each school. There is a significant difference in budgets. She would like to understand the percentage of students in our district receiving special education services. She added that our enrollment is going down but special needs is increasing. She also asked about information on any federal money reimbursement we are receiving to help offset some of this budget.

Ms. Gannon read from the 2015 district budget document that there were 311 Pre K through Grade 12 identified in 2015, which is a decrease of three from 2014. 17.85% of the general student population. Currently 8 are out-of-district placements which is 2.6% of the special education population. Ms. Rogers-Osterloh asked if there are 8 still enrolled and do they cost \$1 million or more.

Ms. Collyer stated we have asked about the money coming in. We do have a special education fund in the event of an emergency and it is policy of the school board to return any unspent special education money to the town.

PUBLIC COMMENT – none

SCHOOL BOARD COMMENT - none

COMMITTEE COMMENT –

Mr. Doggett referred to a point earlier in the meeting when he wanted to ask a question of a school board member who was in the audience and Ms. Gannon had raised a point of order stating there should not be dialog between a committee member and a member of the public. Mr. Doggett disagreed with Ms. Gannon and believed it would have been beneficial to the committee to have been able to ask the question.

Ms. Gannon explained she wants the Budget Committee to have a forum with the public to discuss concerns. This forum would be a place where we can have dialog. The Budget

Committee meetings don't allow for that and we don't have the time. We should consider having a night forum and announce it on Facebook to invite the public to attend and tell us what their concerns are. Committee meetings are not the place that provides an opportunity for community to come forth.

Ms. Collyer discussed the requests for information that haven't yet been answered and commented there is no strategic plan in place to be given, as requested by one member of BudCom.

Ms. Gannon pointed out to the Committee of the two large binders filled with information.

Ms. Collyer indicated when we have requests for information, per RSA 91-A, we are supposed to get an answer within five days but we have not received any response. She suggests the Committee members ask her to confer with the district attorney.

Mr. Doggett suggested to file an employee complaint that the superintendent and the business administrator are not in compliance with RSA 91-A. They have ignored it. He would file the complaint with the school board.

Ms. Gannon said we should at least get a consensus to do this from the members who are present.

Mr. Doggett made a motion that we file an official complaint against the superintendent to the School Board due to non-compliance of state law. Seconded by Mr. Swasey.

The complaint goes to the Chairman of the School Board and they will follow policy and make a determination. The complaint will go into the employee's file.

Mr. Swasey wants to know what exactly didn't the superintendent provide and the dates the information was requested. He suggests getting that in writing and delivering it to all parties involved. He said we need to get our documents in order first.

Ms. Gannon mentioned the amount of detail and some things that are being asked out of a \$34 million budget is nitpicking and so demeaning to people we pay a lot of money to in order to run this district. From her perspective, they are feeling mistrusted. Bringing a lawsuit will put fuel on flames and make it harder for anyone to do their job. She reminded the members that the Budget Committee can only control the bottom line.

Mr. Doggett withdrew his motion. Mr. Swasey withdrew his second.

Ms. Rogers-Osterloh commented that she is committed to helping prepare a budget for the taxpayers that is justified and an amount that is necessary to educate the students in the district.

She also commented that she believes it is important to ask questions, so BudCom knows and understands what is in each departments budget so educated answers can be given to the taxpayers.

Ms. Collyer stated it has been two weeks and no response under RSA 91-A.

It was the consensus of the Committee to hold a meeting next Thursday night, 9/29 at 7:30 pm to determine the information we don't have answers for that have been requested, then send a letter giving them five days to comply. She will try to schedule a tour for Thursday, October 6, 2016.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – May 26, 2016 and June 23, 2016

Mr. Doggett made a motion to approve the minutes for May 26, 2016 as written and approve the minutes for June 23, 2016 as amended. Seconded by Mr. Swasey. VOTE: 6-0 motion passes.

ELECTION OF SECRETARY

It was the consensus of the Committee a secretary is not required as long as they have a recording secretary.

OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Swasey asked the other Committee members if we could start the meetings earlier than 7:30 pm. It was stated that it would be difficult for a few members to attend any earlier. The meetings will remain at 7:30 pm.

Ms. Gannon made a motion to direct the Chairperson to investigate what it would take to conduct a forum of the Budget Committee and the community for the purpose of having a dialog. Seconded by Mr. Doggett.

Ms. Collyer asked if we could put this on the next meeting agenda because she wants it to be constructive. It was agreed to add it to the next agenda.

Ms. Gannon withdrew her motion. Mr. Doggett withdrew his second.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Doggett made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Mr. Swasey. VOTE: 6-0 motion passes

The meeting adjourned at 9:45 pm.

Minutes recorded by,

Linda Mahoney