

MINUTES OF THE DELIBERATIVE SESSION
ANNUAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
KINGSTON, NEW HAMPSHIRE
FEBRUARY 8, 2018

The Meeting was called to order by Richard “Rick” Russman at 7:06 PM, held at the Sanborn Regional High School Auditorium at 17 Danville Road in Kingston, New Hampshire.

The Moderator opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance and a welcome to student pledge leaders, National Anthem singer, and the public. The Moderator introduced the panel on the stage beginning with School District Clerk, Phyllis Kennedy, Business Administrator, Michele Croteau, Legal Counsel, Diane Gorrow, Superintendent, Thomas Ambrose. Next were School Board members, Tammy Mahoney, James “Jim” Baker, Taryn Lytle, Vice Chair, Dr. Pamela Brown and Chair, Peter Broderick. Budget Committee Members followed with, Chair Annie Collyer, Vice Chair Charlton Swasey, Cheryl Gannon, Jack Kozec, James “Jim” Doggett, Sandra Rogers-Osterloh and Mary Cyr.

Moderator announced that all non-registered voters must be seated in the upper balcony. In addition, there would be no discussion on Article 1 and would be moved forward to the ballot as printed. He clarified that all voters should have blue sheets that begin with the letter ‘K’ not ‘A’.

Before the session, Voters’ Petition for paper secret ballot was submitted to the Moderator on article 3, which is the article on the school budget.

The Petition was accepted by the Moderator and submitted to the School District Clerk for filing.

Moderator announced that Article 1 concerning election of officers would be addressed at the second voting session in March.

Moderator read Article 2

Article 2. Shall the reports of school district agents, auditors, committees, or officers chosen be accepted and placed on file?

Motion made to move question by Jim Doggett and seconded by Tammy Mahoney.

Moderator read Article 3.

Article 3. Shall the Sanborn Regional School District raise and appropriate as an operating budget, not including appropriations by special warrant articles and other appropriations voted separately, the amounts set forth on the budget posted with the warrant, or as amended by vote at the first session, for the purposes set forth therein, totaling Thirty Five Million One Hundred Forty Eight Thousand and Seven Dollars (\$35,148,007). Should this article be defeated, the default budget shall be Thirty Five Million Five Hundred Seventy Thousand Four Hundred Forty Dollars

(\$35,570,440), with certain adjustments required by previous action of the Sanborn Regional School District or by law; or the governing body may hold one special meeting, in accordance with RSA 40:13, X and XVI, to take up the issue of a revised operating budget only. (This warrant article does not include appropriations in any other warrant article.)

Recommended by the Budget Committee In Favor: 7 Opposed: 0

Recommended by the Sanborn Regional School Board In Favor: 7 Opposed: 0

Operating Budget Estimated Tax Impact

Kingston: \$0.29/\$1000 Newton: \$0.34/\$1000

Default Budget Estimated Tax Impact Kingston:

\$ 0.63/\$1000 Newton: \$0.72/\$1000

Motion made to move question by Annie Collyer and seconded by Mr. Swasey.

Annie Collyer, Chairperson for the Budget committee demonstrated a slide presentation on the budget and explained each line item.

Moderator asked for any questions or discussion on article 3.

Dick Ventrillo (Newton) commented that he used the same mathematics here and comes out to around \$21,000 a child, 1601 enrollment and using the same budget numbers using long division. The national average is about \$9300, anyone can Google if they want. Although we are not the national average, enrollments are going down and costs are going up. By the time it is zero, especially after next year's tax (federal situation) gets alleviated, we will be broke; by the time there will be no kids going to school. He added he is being facetious, but asked that someone talk to that sometime or blend a little bit of common sense into that when a budget is being put together. He has been responsible for budgets up to 3.5 Million Dollars and if he went to his boss with something like that, based on the tail wagging the dog, he would be out in the parking lot in a few minutes. There must be a happy medium between what he is saying and what you are saying and he wishes you would think of that, especially going forward.

Jamie Fitzpatrick (Newton) commented that he rises in support of the budget but has some significant concerns with it. The reason for the support is that the new administration appears to be listening to all stakeholders, acknowledges that standardized testing actually has meaning and is valuable, a willingness to put metrics in place to improve our performance and the ability to generate a relatively flat budget. So, they are meeting the needs of both students and the larger community. The new School Board appears to have heard the voters and is acting accordingly, a willingness to focus on performance, achievements and metrics, and working with the Administration to generate a flat budget. The Budget Committee diligently reviewed and analyzed the spending; addressing the runaway spending that has been rampant in prior years, and worked with the School Board and Administration to get unanimous consent on one budgetary proposal. He considers these to be great achievements and supports the budget for that reason. He thanked the Administration, the elected representatives on the School Board

and on the Budget Committee. Yet, he still has grave concerns based on readily available data that can be found on the New Hampshire Department of Education. The achievement levels of our graduating seniors are dismal. When he was growing up, a 60 and below was an “F”. Our reading scores have gone from 75 in 2015 to 53 in 2017. Our math scores were 31 in 2015, 28 in 2016 and 37 in 2017. Clearly, the experiment that we’ve embarked upon is not serving our kids and they are paying the price for this experiment. He would suggest that a routine educational process, where there are no deadlines, when tests can be retaken ad infinitum, is not generating real results on real tests and is not preparing our students for the real world. The results are not for lack of spending. Spending per student, Sanborn is about \$17,600 and 15% higher than the State average. Student-teacher ratios are 10.1, which is 14% lower than the State average (the student-teacher ratio is not class size, it is comparative number of teachers; students divided by the total number of teachers, and nonetheless provided by the State for comparative and valid purposes). One comparison, Oyster River, listed in the comparable districts has about the same exact spending, their reading is 87 versus Sanborn’s 53, (a 64% improvement), their math is 66 versus Sanborn’s 37 (a 78% improvement) and they are achieving this with a ratio of 12.1(20% higher than Sanborn) and they pay their teachers approximately 70K versus Sanborn’s 50K. He knows that Sanborn is not directly comparable to Oyster River and is aware that there are demographic differences. That said he believes their methodology seems to provide better returns on investment than our methodology. He is not prepared to just assume that our students are not capable of matching their results, regardless of demographic differences. Even if we don’t match the results, we can learn from their process that led to their success, rather than following on the path we are on, yielding failing results. The data would suggest that right-sizing the structure, increasing class sizes and paying teachers more money seems to yield far better results than we are achieving presently. This is something the new Administration, School Board and Budget Committee will need to tackle in the coming year. Another related structural issue mentioned previously is that school enrollment is going down from 2013 at the highest point to the forecast in 2020 which is a 30% drop in enrollment. In the last 5 years, the most recent data available, student enrollment has dropped 10%, the number of teachers has dropped 2% and the Administration headcount has increased by 5%. Again, this is something that the Administration, School Board and Budget Committee should be looking at in the coming year. In conclusion, he appreciates the hard work and effort that went into the budget. He supports it and will vote for it; however, there is a great deal of work that needs to be done in the coming year. Continuing to spend more and more money each year pursuing programs that are not effective and do not improve achievement is not sustainable.

Jackie Clark (Kingston) would like to address the budget but first would like to share some information that affects many of our children. One in five people have a learning disability called Dyslexia. By those statistics, 20% of this room has Dyslexia to some degree. Student enrollments for this year are 1,601. That means that 320 students could have Dyslexia in our district. She would like you to take a second and think about the people in your life who struggle to write, spell or read. She asks you to recognize that they could be Dyslexic. Dyslexics don’t lack cognitive ability. In fact, some of the most famous people you know are Dyslexic. If you have an iPhone, you can thank Steve Jobs. He was Dyslexic. Her daughter Lacey, who is in 6th grade this year isn’t famous yet, but she is Dyslexic too. Dyslexia is a specific learning disability that is neurological, meaning it is a problem in the brain that you don’t outgrow. It is a common misconception that Dyslexics simply read or write things backwards. If that is what you know about Dyslexia, she encourages you to do some research of your own. Dyslexia affects a person’s ability to read, spell, write and complete math skills. It also hinders their ability to organize thoughts or objects, but most importantly, it requires a level of specialized instruction,

early intervention and identification that our district is currently ill-equipped to provide. Lacey's Dyslexia wasn't identified by our district until just last year. In fact, it wasn't even identified by our district first. The day we sat down and told her we knew why her school work was so challenging, she laid her head on our dining room table and the tears rolled down her face. Thinking she had upset her she asked, "Are you sad about this?" She will never forget what her daughter responded next, "No, I am relieved I am not stupid". Having the utmost respect for her daughter, she won't go into detail about her struggles, but she can say that when Dyslexia is not addressed, it can lead to bigger problems in the area of behavior, self-esteem and anxiety. She believes we are seeing this right here in our district. The Superintendent has a slide in his budget presentation that reads *Mission Critical Budget Additions*, in which he listed *Professional Development* as one of those items. She is standing here to say that this is not a wish list item; this is at the root of our district's education issue. New Hampshire House Bill 1644, RSA 259, Section I and II, also known as the State's Dyslexia law, in summary states that starting in 2017, every public school must screen every Kindergartener and every First Grader with the DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills) to identify risk factors of Dyslexia and related disorders. This needs to be completed by November 30th of each school year. If such screening took place by November, just a few months ago, and one in five children have Dyslexia, then quite a few district parents should have been notified that their child presented with risk factors. The law also states that parents must be notified should they want further independent testing done at their own expense. According to that same law, by January 1st, those red flag students should have begun receiving age appropriate evidence based intervention by adequately trained staff. She has heard some comparisons tonight and would like to give one more. She would like to bring attention to something that has happened in the Rochester School District. Their administration came together to do something huge. They passed a budget that certifies 10 teachers per year in the area of Dyslexia. Currently, they employ 40 certified teachers, each with over 100 hours of training and the results of this have been astounding. Until proven otherwise, it is my understanding that our district does not employ one teacher certified to this extent. She believes our teachers and support staff wants to provide a great education for our children and also believes that they want the best tools to do so. She has met with some of our administration and can see how invested they are in our children and has faith that Mr. Ambrose has the best of intentions in affecting fiscally responsible, positive change for our students. She believes he deserves our trust and support in his efforts. She recently saw Dyslexic actor Will Smith address an important topic. He said, "There is a difference between fault and responsibility. It doesn't matter whose fault it is that something is broken, if it is your responsibility, you need to fix it. Fault and responsibility do not go together". Every single day, Dyslexia is a part of her family and what they are going through as a family to get Lacey the education to which she has the legal right, should never have to happen to another family. She encourages putting your agenda aside for a second and ask yourself one question, "What would you want to see if your child were in the 20%"? This school district is our responsibility and our responsibility is to fix it. She is not suggesting to inflate the school budget, but to support the proposed budget and the professionals who work so hard to create it. Your vote would be a giant leaps towards instilling trust and transparency in our district, a brighter future for our students and the necessary support for our teachers.

Larry Zurek (Newton) commented that during the presentation it said the tax impact for Newton was going to be .41 per 1000 but in the print out (Annual Report) it says .34, so which is the real number?

Moderator determined through the Business Administrator, Michele Croteau that the correct number is .34, and that the slide has a typo that she did not see.

Heidi Granlund (Kingston) noticed that there are 198 students from Fremont and wonders how they factor into this budget in terms of what they contribute.

Business Administrator, Michele Croteau, explained that they pay tuition and the way it works is that we develop a full budget for supporting student needs and then the revenues that come in offset that amount to determine the amount to be raised in taxes. So the tuition from Fremont reduces the amount to be raised in taxes.

George Schiller (Kingston) asked where to obtain a copy of the slides used.

Moderator responded that they will be available on the Sanborn website tomorrow.

Moderator asked if there were any more questions for Article 3. If not, he will move on to *Article 4*.

Chair Broderick made a Motion to Restrict Reconsideration of Article 3.

The Moderator explained that a Motion to Restrict Reconsideration of Article 3 means that once it is addressed tonight, you cannot go away or go home and bring it back up again this evening. If you vote, “yes” it is restricted from being brought up (reconsidered) again and that is the end of it. A “no” vote means you can bring it up again.

Moderator asked the voters who is in favor of not revisiting this Article or in favor of Restricting Reconsideration of Article 3 to signify or say so by saying “I”. Voters were unanimous in saying “I”. Moderator asked if there were any “No’s” and there were none voiced.

The Moderator read Article 4.

Article 4. Shall the Sanborn Regional School District authorize the School Board to enter into a long-term lease with Seacoast Learning Collaborative for District property located at 178 Main Street, and designated as a portion of Tax Map 000R34, Lot 000017, and further to authorize the School Board to negotiate the terms and conditions of the lease and take any other action necessary to carry out this vote.

Recommended by the Sanborn Regional School Board In Favor: 5 Opposed: 0

Motion moved by Peter Broderick and seconded by Annie Collyer.

Chair Broderick explained that Article 4 is straightforward; an organization is interested in leasing the Seminary area, the brick building (old English and Science wing) and the gym is part of that. We want your permission to negotiate with them. We will have the lawyers, the real estate people and all that. There is no secret to it. With someone interested in leasing it, we need your permission to say we can talk to them and if the deal is good for Sanborn, we will go forward with it.

Moderator asked for comment from voters and with no comment offered, Article 4 will appear on the Ballot.

Moderator read Article 5.

Article 5. Submitted by petition: On behalf of the Sanborn Ice Hockey Team board & registered voters of Kingston & Newton, shall the Sanborn School District raise and appropriate the sum of Ten Thousand Three Hundred and Thirty Five Dollars (\$10,335.00) to partially fund the High School hockey team. These funds will be used to cover the same costs that are funded for any other funded team in the district. These costs include away game transportation; provide coaching staff funds; game official fees; and athletic dues/ fees. The hockey team is now in its sixth season, fourth playing varsity. All seasons thus far have been funded solely through the hockey boosters club fundraising. (This article provides funding for varsity ice hockey with an additional \$14,000 of funding to come from Sanborn Ice Hockey Boosters Club.)

Not Recommended by the Budget Committee In Favor: 0 Opposed: 7

Not Recommended by the Sanborn Regional School Board: In Favor: 1 Opposed: 4

Estimated Tax Impact Kingston: \$0.01 /\$1,000 Newton: \$0. 0 1 / \$ 1,000

Motion moved by Jon LeBlanc of Kingston and seconded by a voter from the audience.

Mr. LeBlanc (Kingston) introduced himself as a current member of the Sanborn Ice Hockey Boosters Organization. They have been self-funding an ice hockey team, operating under the NHIAA (New Hampshire Interscholastic Athletic Association) rules at Sanborn High School, so we are a fully recognized program fielding about 20-22 student athletes every year for the last six years. Our first two years were junior varsity level and the last four years have been at the varsity level. What the Booster's Club is facing is a constant fundraising battle every year and that is every month we are planning a new fundraiser or operating and executing on an existing fundraiser that we planned. Raising 24K per year is a difficult task but we have been able to maintain that over the last several years. The Boosters Club is looking to have the voters hopefully support raising \$10, 335 dollars to pay for the normal athletic costs associated with running an athletic program at the High School, to include transportation to games, referee fees, coach fees (who are required to have stipends under the Collective Bargaining Agreement) that currently the Boosters Organization has to fundraise for to provide those things, including uniforms and so forth. What the Boosters would like to continue to do if this is passed, is to continue to pay for the ice time, which if you anything about hockey and ice time, it is an expensive sport, about \$300 per hour. So, we have to raise that money in addition to all those other funds. One of the reasons we brought this forth for a second time is we are a little bit concerned that the fundraising is going to continue to be more difficult and the program could possibly suffer and fold if we don't get this passed. I hope the voters will see that a \$0.01/1000 impact on a \$300K house is a \$3 dollar bill and on a \$400K house it is a \$4 dollar bill. Athletics are very important to producing well-rounded students out of the High School and he hopes that the voters can support this.

Moderator asked for further comment, debate or discussion.

Robert Pellegrino of Kingston commented that he is in favor of the article having played pro hockey himself. He believes it is a good program for kids, especially with the drug addiction issue going on right now in this area and it would keep kids out of trouble. His experience playing was great; the camaraderie is there with anyone who plays sports. The program may be expensive but it is worth it to the community.

George Schiller (Kingston) asked why both the Budget Committee and the Board are against this.

Budget Committee member Mr. Doggett answered that when hockey originally came before the School Board six years ago, we were informed that this would always be a private organization, that they would never come and request funds from the School District. He specifically said, "Never means never" and asked are you saying that you are always going to be funding this, because they wanted to use the Sanborn name but not have to follow any of the Sanborn requirements. They said, "Yes, we will never come before the School District and ask for a penny." Now, they are asking for 10K, very soon it will become 25K and it will continue to escalate because at the same time they are speaking about adding a JV team, a feeder team and I am sorry but here are certain other priorities that have to come first, such as children with Dyslexia. They have to come first before hockey.

Budget Committee member Cheryl Gannon asked about the \$10, 335 dollars and if it was being requested for this budget only or will that amount be expected in subsequent budgets.

Mr. LeBlanc responded that from the Boosters Club point of view, we hope that it becomes permanent. The way the article is worded, it doesn't preclude the Administration from deciding that it is something that can be cut in the future. That can always occur. Even if the voters vote yes, in subsequent years that doesn't mean that the Administration can't make the decision to spend the 10K elsewhere and not fund it. As a member of the Boosters, he hopes it can be funded as it takes 10K off the amount the amount needed to raise every single year and makes it a much easier hill to climb. Otherwise, we have these nickel and dime fundraisers all the time and that is part of the concern. Mr. LeBlanc added that none of the current Board members were at that first Board meeting in which the hockey proposal was made to the School Board, when the said assurance was made that the group would not come back and ask for funding. We are not asking for the funding from the school, we are asking for the funding from voters and want to say that having reviewed the Minutes from that time, there is no mention of an assurance made. He can't say it wasn't made as Minutes aren't always complete from those meetings. He wants to be clear that the current group did not make that promise; it was made by someone else.

Barry Gluck (Newton) asked why it is relevant that seven or eight years ago someone said something about the issue, the point it is, that a presentation was made about the value of funding the hockey program and it should be judged on the merits and the value of what it offers the students. At \$0.01/1000, to be able to continue the hockey program is worth it and it should be judged on its merits.

Lisa Gonyer (Newton) commented how impressed she is, compared to last year; she expected to walk and still see presentations on the overhead, so to be on the last article is excellent. She appreciates that this is a separate warrant article and not built into the budget because it gives the voters the opportunity to say Yay or Nay. She hopes to see another warrant next year for the same reason. She absolutely agrees to let the voters decide if it is something they want to support.

Moderator asked for further discussion or debate. Article 5 will appear on the Ballot as printed.

Moderator asked for any business that needs to come before the meeting.

Moderator asked for a Motion to adjourn.

Peter Broderick moved the Motion, seconded by Taryn Lytle.

Meeting Adjourned 7:59 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Phyllis Kennedy

Phyllis Kennedy
School District Clerk