

SANBORN REGIONAL BUDGET COMMITTEE
PUBLIC HEARING

APPROVED MEETING MINUTES

JANUARY 11, 2018

(The video for the Budget Committee’s Public Hearing and subsequent Meeting on 1-11-18 can be viewed under “Budget Committee Videos” on the district’s website at www.sau17.org)

A Public Hearing and Meeting of the Sanborn Regional Budget Committee were held on Thursday, January 11, 2018. The meeting was called to order at 7:02 PM. by Sanborn Budget Committee Chairperson, Annie Collyer. The following were recorded as present:

BUDGET COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Annie Collyer, Chair
Charlton Swasey, Vice Chair
Mary Cyr
James Doggett
Cheryl Gannon
Tammy Mahoney
Sandra Rogers-Osterloh

EXCUSED:

Jack Kozec

ADMINISTRATORS:

Thomas Ambrose, Superintendent
Michele Croteau, Business Administrator

1. **CALL TO ORDER** at 7:02 PM by Ms. Collyer with the Pledge of Allegiance and a welcome to those present. Ms. Collyer briefly reviewed the agenda and explained that the presentation this evening will be of a preliminary budget, one that will be finalized after hearing from the public tonight and after meeting as a committee to make their recommendation for the Deliberative Session on February 7th.

2. **PRELIMINARY BUDGET PRESENTATION** –Chair Collyer presented the 2018-19 Preliminary Budget as follows:

3. PUBLIC COMMENT /QUESTIONS

Barry Gluck (Newton)-commented that having a goal of having a Proposed Budget pass in and of itself isn't necessarily a good thing. It depends on what the budget is that passes. When you have a situation in which the Default Budget is significantly higher than the Proposed Budget, as a supporter of the school district, he would say that he hopes it doesn't pass because it would be better for the school district if it didn't.

Corey Masson (Newton) and School Board Member- commented that many are impacted by the services of the Student Assistance Counselor and given the loss of children due to drugs and alcohol in the community, he challenged the members of the Budget Committee to consider putting the \$37,500 (money they were about to fund before the Grant came through) back into the budget to do more to assist the Counselor, the students and the community.

Jon LeBlanc (Kingston)-commented that in watching the School Board and Budget Committee videos, he has heard it said that we need to fund an adequate education for our students. Then, when looking at the performance results at our High School, he sees that the K-8 come out quite good, which he believes is a testament to the building up of competency based education through PACE in the last several years. He closed by saying that if we want our students to excel, then shouldn't we be funding the budget for excellence, and not adequacy?

Chair Collyer asked Superintendent Ambrose if he cared to respond to Mr. LeBlanc's comment, since he had recommended the budget. Mr. Ambrose responded that it is important for everyone in the community to recognize that budgeting is about balance and that more funds move us up the ladder faster towards goals but sometimes we need to recognize that more funds aren't always the answer, that sometimes we need to look at doing things differently. He closed by saying that at the end of his emails, he uses the quote; "The definition of insanity is doing the same things over and over and expecting different results". So, it is important to remember that these budgets fund the schools and we can run the schools on these budgets. We have worked hard in the last six months (Budget Committee, School Board, Administrators and others) to create a budget that is a fair one at this point.

Chair Collyer reviewed slide # 15, *Some Possible Budgetary Impacts for the Future* and asked that everyone take note of all the things that the Budget Committee, School Board and the Administration are committed to looking at over the next year. With a Superintendent voted in only 3 months ago and other new administrators, there is much to figure out. What they have said is that they are invested in looking at making improvements. She stressed that it is a process that involves taking steps towards a high functioning growing

and improving school district. Many teachers are taking training and have commented that they need time to incorporate their training, so this doesn't happen overnight.

James Fitzpatrick (Newton) - commented that he is also a district supporter and he appreciates seeing a Proposed Budget that is lower than the Default Budget because it recognizes the fact that the Board is listening to the voters, and the voters have spoken numerous times. He is also glad that many of the Board recognize that, if there is not constraint on spending as we work toward an excellent education, as we work toward improvement in our Math scores and in our English scores, there won't be support next year for the future spending that has to come in order to support the teachers and increase wages. He appreciates the committee taking his comments into account and he thanked them for their work.

Chair Collyer asked for a Motion to close the Public Hearing portion of the meeting. Motion moved by Ms. Rogers-Osterloh and seconded by Ms. Cyr.

Vote: All in Favor

Public Hearing adjourned at 7:25 PM

4. **VOTE ON RECOMMENDED BUDGET**

The Budget Committee meeting continued with Chair Collyer asking for a Motion to vote on the recommended preliminary budget of \$35,148,007 to bring forward to the Deliberative Session. Motioned moved by Mr. Doggett, and seconded by Ms. Mahoney.

Mr. Doggett commented that he supports bringing this number to the Deliberative Session but asked to acknowledge that there are some things between now and this time next year that we will have some definitive answers for. He referenced a comment he made at a previous Planning Board meeting; "Woe be he who comes in and says, Well...we didn't get to it".

Mr. Swasey echoed Mr. Doggett's comments saying that he has heard representations and promises and that this budget is based somewhat on that. He added that many Budget Committee members have qualified their support of this budget on what they perceive may happen in the coming year. He wrote a lot of it down and will be watching. He is not comfortable with what has been done, that the budget number is still way too high and we need to look further into community affordability. There is a finite amount of money in people's pockets and we are approaching that. There are many people living on Social Security and fixed incomes who have to make choices between food, heat and medicine and the problem is you can't make a choice on taxes. Next year, he wants to see results and delivery on this budget. In the meantime, he will support this number.

Vote: All in Favor

5. INTRODUCTION OF PETITION WARRANT ARTICLE

Article 5. Sanborn Ice Hockey Team

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, and 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.)

Chair Collyer asked for a Motion to accept the Warrant Article for discussion purposes. Motion moved by Ms. Rogers-Osterloh and seconded by Ms. Gannon.

Mr. Swasey commented that this should have been presented to the Budget Committee earlier and it is not fair to anybody to suddenly bring it up.

Ms. Collyer invited the petitioner, Jon LeBlanc to speak to the Petition Warrant.

Mr. LeBlanc (Kingston)- commented that he has been a member of the Sanborn Hockey Boosters Board for the last three years and the organization is in its sixth season, starting out as a junior varsity program, fully under the Sanborn athletic umbrella and a recognized sport under NHIAA. This is the fourth year as a varsity program, with twenty student athletes, both male and female. The Boosters have been raising money to fund this program over the last six years and will continue to fund the cost of the ice time (\$14K), but are hoping that the voters will vote to fund the other costs (\$10, 335.00) as noted in the Warrant. It has become increasingly difficult to raise \$24K and they don't want to see the program dissolve as the current team "ages out," but rather see students have another winter activity alternative to track and basketball. Also, this gives students in the 8th Grade who want to continue playing hockey an avenue to so do.

Ms. Collyer asked for confirmation that when the program was approved years before, it was agreed that it would never need to come to the School Board for funding.

Mr. LeBlanc agreed that it originally that was the case but it was a junior varsity team then and as such, much less funding was needed and there were not as many games, nor as many costs. Then the Athletic Director asked them to become a varsity team which the Board voted in and the costs and funding have increased. The Athletic Director is still in favor of this becoming an official sport.

Chair Collyer pointed out that the Athletic Director has also supported other sports such as Bass Fishing and golf, etc.

Ms. Gannon asked Mr. LeBlanc if the requested \$10,335 will be in next year's budget too, and is it anticipated in future budgets. She also asked about the future programs and whether freshmen, JV and Varsity would be a part of it. Lastly, is there the option to combine with another school in a different district?

Mr. LeBlanc responded that he hopes it is included in the budget (unless it is cut in a future year) and that he does not foresee the program being anything more than a varsity team. Regarding the last question, in order to combine with another district, the NHIAA requires that we show a shortage of athletes, which is not the case right now.

Ms. Rogers-Osterloh asked if this was the same budget number requested last year and what was the result of the vote.

Mr. LeBlanc responded that last year's request was \$9,800. The vote was supported in Kingston by 100 votes but failed in Newton by 200.

Mr. Doggett commented that he was on the School Board when this first came about and remembers the "never" part of asking for money. Given that they are asking now he believes the asking will never stop and added that this is one of the most expensive sports that we can add to a curriculum. He also noted the school district's sports programs cost more than Newton pays for its police department. So, this is a major increase in a non-curricular area that we were told would never be coming before us as part of the budget. Once it becomes a small part of the budget, it can become a large part of it. Last year it was turned down and he suggests that we turn it down again.

Chair Collyer commented that although she likes sports for kids and the research shows that it is good for them, the flip side of that is that Professional Development can impact every single child and not just twenty of them. We have priorities ahead of this, like books in the classroom and other identified needs. We cannot do every single sport, especially with contracts needing to pass next year for teachers and support staff. We have to respect the affordability of everything and the appearance of it. This is critical and we don't need another rebellion at the polls. She closed by saying she will have to vote against it.

Ms. Rogers-Osterloh encouraged Mr. LeBlanc to ask the voters to respond to the Warrant Article and to see what the voters want regarding having a hockey team. Of course, the teacher contract /negotiations are very important and paying our teachers better is also, but clearly hockey is a passion for him and he should pursue this Warrant. She asked if he was present for the original request (he was not) but regardless, she would like to see hockey supported and the community to have a conversation about it.

Chair Collyer asked Vice Chair Swasey if he was comfortable with the amount of discussion on this Petition and whether they needed to meet again regarding it. Mr. Swasey responded that he is OK with it due to Mr. Doggett's input which was that the Budget Committee is only responsible for their budget, and the School Board is responsible for everything else.

Superintendent Ambrose informed the group that the School Board had met prior to this meeting and all articles were reviewed and the Board voiced their support (or not) for the Warrant. However, it cannot be finalized until after the Deliberative. Ms. Mahoney reported that the Petition Warrant for hockey was voted down with 1 in favor and 4 opposed. (not all Board members could be present at the meeting).

Mr. Swasey asked the petitioner if he felt he had a fair hearing tonight. Mr. LeBlanc said he did. Discussion ensued on recommending a warrant for the Deliberative which is not a final vote; only a recommendation.

Chair Collyer referenced the Motion on the floor to recommend the Petition Warrant Article for \$10,335.00 to the Deliberative Session.

Vote: 0 in Favor, 7 opposed

Chair Collyer explained that the other Warrant Article she referenced does not have an appropriation with it so there is not a vote. The warrant has to do with entering into a long-term lease at the Seminary Campus. Mr. Doggett commented that if it has budgetary impact, the Budget Committee would vote on it. Ms. Collyer said the language is vague on the terms of the lease. Ms. Croteau said Legal Counsel had given them the language and the parameters of the agreement are yet to be finalized.

Superintendent Ambrose commented that the lawyer had said there is no appropriation right now and we are taking steps with legal counsel to move through this. The voters would give the final word once it is finalized, but the Bud Com does not have to vote. Discussion ensued about the leasing process in the past, including the School Board's having entered into a long-term lease without voter authorization, including the fact the District incurred net operating losses on the prior lease. Superintendent Ambrose stressed that he hears their concerns and once the negotiation becomes public he will have more to share.

6. **REVIEW OF MINUTES**

Chair Collyer asked for a Motion to accept the Minutes of 1/4/18 moved by Mr. Swasey and seconded by Ms. Cyr.

Ms. Gannon commented that the Minutes should actually be dated 1/8/18.

Mr. Doggett asked that the discussion of Minutes be tabled until the next meeting and all were in agreement.

7. **NEXT STEPS**

The Deliberative Session will be held on Wednesday, February 7th at 7PM in the Auditorium at Sanborn Regional High School. (Snow date is February 8th)

8. **ADJOURNMENT**

Chair Collyer asked for a Motion to adjourn moved by Mr. Swasey and seconded by Ms. Rogers-Osterloh.

Meeting adjourned at 8:04 PM

Minutes Respectively Submitted by:

Phyllis Kennedy
Budget Committee Recorder