

NHSAU 29 School Board Meeting
NEW HAMPSHIRE SCHOOL ADMINISTRATIVE UNIT 29
John W. Day Educational Center
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COMMITTEE: Special Meeting of the New Hampshire School Administrative Unit 29

DATE: November 24, 2008

LOCATION: Large Group Instruction Area, Keene High School, 43 Arch Street

CALLED TO ORDER: 7:01 p.m.

TIME ADJOURNED: 8:02 p.m.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

<u>TOWN:</u>	<u>PRESENT:</u>
• Chesterfield	Judy Idelkope Deborah Clemente
• Harrisville	Jack Calhoun Earl Horn
• Keene	Christopher Coates Elizabeth H. Coppola Kathleen O'Donnell Donald N. Parker Carter Chamberlin
• Marlborough	Michael Briggs Lisa Mitchell Robert W. Hill Elaina Waibel Julie Farhm
• Marlow	<i>No Members Present</i>
• Nelson	Kelly M. French
• Westmoreland	Michael J. Acerno, Chair Stuart R. Adams Justine Fletcher

OTHERS PRESENT:

- Wayne E. Woolridge, Co-Superintendent
- William B. Gurney, Co-Superintendent
- Brenda Doherty Finn, Assistant to the Superintendents
- Paul R. Cooper, Director of Human Resources
- John R. Harper, Business Administrator
- Timothy L. Ruehr, Business Administrator - Towns
- SAU Attorney Barbara Loughman
- Mark Gross, Surry School Board
- Media (1 - Keene Sentinel)

1. **Introductions:** Chair Acerno called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. and introductions were made by members from the six boards present.
2. **Approval of Minutes:** Chair Acerno asked the board for approval of the minutes of the May 27, 2008 NHSAU 29 Board meeting.

MOTION: Mr. Christopher Coates moved to approve the minutes of May 27, 2008 as printed and distributed. Ms. Kelly French seconded. A unanimous voice vote in favor was taken. The minutes of May 27, 2008 were approved.

3. **Surry Update** – SAU Attorney *Barbara Loughman*

Ms. Barbara Loughman, attorney with Soule, Leslie, Kidder, Sayward & Loughman updated the board on the Surry School District's request to join SAU 29 as a member district. Ms. Loughman stated that her presence this evening was to update the board on the continued discussion of the proposal and that a vote would not be taken at this meeting.

The following points of the Surry proposal were reiterated by Ms. Loughman:

- Surry withdrew from the Monadnock School District (SAU 38)
- Following the withdrawal – SAU 38 no longer provides satisfactory levels of superintendent services to Surry
- NH law requires SAUs provide services to school districts
- Surry currently tuitions their K-12 students to the Keene School District
- Surry entered into a 20-year tuition agreement for students in grades 6-12, and a 2-year agreement for K-5 students
- Motion made at October 27, 2008 SAU Advisory Committee meeting to engage the services of the SAU attorney to meet with Surry School District Attorney, David Bradley, to determine revenue from Surry joining SAU 29 and to identify the scope of administrative services, mindful of constraints on human resources and services of SAU 29
- On November 6, 2008 Attorney Gordon Graham and Attorney David Bradley met at 34 West Street with Mr. Wayne Woolridge and Mr. William Gurney (Co-Superintendents) as well as with Ms. Brenda Doherty Finn (Assistant to the Superintendents) and Mr. Mark Gross (Surry School Board) to further discuss the proposal

Surry School District Proposal:

Phase 1: Surry students continue to attend Keene schools. Surry School District would pay SAU 29 approximately \$30,000/year for services.

Phase 2: If Surry School District decides to re-open their elementary school – the contract would approximately double to \$60,000 as the reopening of the school would involve additional services from SAU 29.

Phase 3: Surry School District payment would be based on the same formula in the statute applied to all other member districts.

All district boards will meet in December to discuss the Surry proposal.

A vote will be taken at the full SAU 29 board meeting on December 22, 2008 to decide whether or not to accept Surry's proposal.

If the full board accepts the proposal, the request will move forward to the district meetings for each member town district and the question would be placed on the ballot for the second session in Keene. A 60% majority by voters in each district is required to accept Surry as a member town district of SAU 29.

Mr. Woolridge spoke to Ms. Loughman's statement regarding Phase 2 costs. The final number would be appropriate to whatever is required to reopen the Surry Elementary School.

Mr. Woolridge further stated that the proposal needs to be brought forward to the member district board meetings in December given that additional revenue would be generated if Surry joins SAU 29. Voters would need to be given notice of the additional revenue. Should the SAU 29 member districts opt not to accept Surry's proposal, acting now will allow Surry time to move forward and secure alternative SAU services.

Ms. Idelkope questioned whether or not Surry has explored the costs associated with running their school district independently.

Mr. Gross stated that it is the preference of the Surry School Board to rely on the expertise of the SAU 29 administration to assist with running the Surry School District. Mr. Gross has spoken with retired superintendents who are interested in working with them to provide services. The Surry district feels as though this option would not provide the continuity of services necessary to successfully run their district. According to Mr. Gross, the district feels the professional staff in the Keene schools Surry students currently attend is of the highest caliber and would be difficult to replicate.

4. NHSAU 29 Financial Report – *Mr. John Harper*

Mr. Harper distributed a summary sheet for the Financial Report for FY 2007-2008 and briefly reviewed the pertinent details.

The figures presented are representative of the end of the year effective June 30, 2008. The surplus for the 2007-2008 school year will be applied to all member districts next year.

Contributing to the unusually large surplus this year is \$36,960 in revenue from federal overhead recovery (grant service fees) as well as surplus from expenditures in the amount of \$124,771.

The SAU realized significant savings in benefits and health insurance premiums. There was also a significant amount of money budgeted for a potential move of the Central Office from 34 West Street. With the signing of the 20-year lease for the 34 West Street building, the money budgeted for this expense was no longer necessary.

MOTION: Ms. Judy Idelkope moved to accept the financial report as presented. Mr. Christopher Coates seconded. With a unanimous voice vote in favor, the financial report was accepted as presented.

5. 2008-2012 Leadership Plan Recommendation – Ms. Kelly French

Ms. French stated that the Organization Structure Review Committee met on September 24, 2008 to review the 2008-2012 Leadership Plan Recommendation proposed by current Co-Superintendents Mr. Wayne Woolridge and Mr. William Gurney. Following this meeting each committee member returned to their respective board to discuss the proposal. The Organization Structure Review Committee met again on November 6, 2008 to review the recommendations of each district board.

The discussion on November 6 concluded with a motion made to continue with the current Co-Superintendent structure through the 2011-2012 school year with the addition of a Director of Curriculum and a Director of Technology. The majority of the boards agreed with this structure with the goal of returning long-term to the one Superintendent structure.

MOTION: Ms. Kelly French moved to continue with the current Co-Superintendent structure of SAU 29 through the 2011-2012 school year with the addition of a Director of Curriculum and a Director of Technology. Mr. Jack Calhoun seconded. By a voice vote of 17-1, the motion was approved with one dissenting vote (Ms. Idelkope).

6. Proposed NHSAU 29 Budget 2009-2010 – Mr. John Harper

Mr. Harper reviewed the proposed budget which was previously presented at the SAU Advisory Committee meeting held on October 27, 2008.

The proposed budget as presented by Mr. John Harper recommends a budget request for the fiscal year which begins July 1, 2009. The operating expenditure budget totals \$2,716,809, an increase of \$143,404 or 5.57% for the year. The total impact of this budget that will be paid directly by the various SAU school districts is \$2,442,795, an increase for the year of \$65,051, or 2.74%.

Personnel costs continue to constitute the majority of the budget, amounting to over 83% of the total. Changes in employee salary and benefits reflect the recommendations of the SAU Compensation Committee. Those recommendations include a 2.75% cost of living adjustment, \$15,000 equity/merit pool as well as a decrease in employer health insurance contributions from 90% of HMO premiums to 88%. Those premiums are budgeted at a 12.2% increase – based on a guaranteed maximum price from the health insurer.

Two co-superintendents are budgeted plus a director of curriculum and assessment. A director of technology, eliminated from the budget two years ago, is included with the cost primarily offset by a reduction of a technology support position. A new part-time benefits assistant is included to support the human resources department. There is also an increase in budgeted hours from 37.5 to 40 for two positions.

Other items of note include:

- \$25,000 earmarked for technology upgrades
- \$40,000 to replace the central air conditioning unit at 34 West Street
- \$23,000 to replace two previously-leased copiers
- Advertising budget has been reduced by \$30,000 to reflect move toward electronic advertising as well as the anticipation that a costly search for a superintendent will no longer be necessary

A carryover surplus from fiscal 2007-2008 of \$161,731, up from \$84,277 the previous year, is the primary contributor to a net \$78,353 revenue increase. This change, combined with the increase in the expenditures budget, results in the overall projected increase in member districts' allocations cited above.

Ms. Idelkope questioned the need to expend \$40,000 to replace the central air conditioning unit at 34 West Street, given the state of the economy and the fact that the system, while old, is still functioning. In particular, Ms. Idelkope questioned the decision to replace the unit with a possible move of the Central Office if a new middle school is built in Keene.

Mr. Harper indicated that in order to move the Central Office there would need to be a vote to do so by the majority of the SAU boards. If the board has concerns about this expenditure, bids would not go out until May or June 2009 with the budget available beginning July 1, 2009. Mr. Harper stated that the boards would have a better sense at that time if in fact the plan was to move the Central Office to a new middle school. Mr. Harper also cautioned that if the cooling unit were to expire, replacement would likely need to be done on short notice at a greater expense.

Ms. Idelkope questioned whether Mr. Cooper felt the advertising budget allowed for sufficient advertising funds for the Director of Curriculum and Director of Technology positions. Mr. Cooper responded affirmatively.

MOTION: Mr. Jack Calhoun moved to accept the NHSAU 29 Budget for 2009-2010 as presented and to move forward to the public hearing on December 22, 2008. Mr. Christopher Coates seconded. By a unanimous voice vote, the motion passed.

Ms. Idelkope moved to amend the motion to remove the designation of \$40,000 to replace the central air conditioning unit at 34 West Street. Mr. Christopher Coates seconded.

Discussion ensued regarding the age and efficiency of the central air conditioning unit as well as the cost to maintain and repair this aging unit. There was a consensus by board members relative to conducting an energy audit of the 34 West Street building to assess the overall efficiency of the Central Office building.

Ms. Idelkope stated she is willing to withdraw her amendment to the motion on the table provided that an energy audit is completed.

7. Other

MOTION: Ms. Judy Idelkope moved to request the Advisory Committee review prior to the final approval of the 2009-2010 budget the apportionment of the Co-Superintendents' salary and benefits. Ms. Elizabeth Coppola seconded. A voice vote was unanimously in favor.

Mr. Christopher Coates moved to adjourn. Mr. Jack Calhoun seconded.

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 8:02 p.m.

*Respectfully submitted,
Cathy Dieter*

APPROVED: 12/22/08