

NHSAU 29 School Board Meeting
NEW HAMPSHIRE SCHOOL ADMINISTRATIVE UNIT 29
John W. Day Educational Center
34 West Street
Keene, New Hampshire 03431
PHONE: (603) 357-9002 FAX: (603) 357-9012
WEBSITE: www.sau29.org

COMMITTEE: Public Hearing and Meeting of the New Hampshire School Administrative Unit 29

DATE: December 22, 2008

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

CALLED TO ORDER: 7:04 p.m.

TIME ADJOURNED: 8:02 p.m.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

- | <u>TOWN:</u> | <u>PRESENT:</u> |
|----------------|--|
| • Chesterfield | Judy Idelkope
Rebecca Auger (arrived 7:10 p.m.)

Deborah Clemente (arrived 7:08 p.m.) |
| • Harrisville | Earl Horn |
| • Keene | Neil Donegan
Carol Brown
Christopher Coates, Vice Chair
Carter Chamberlin |
| • Marlborough | Robert Hill |
| • Marlow | Stephanie Tickner (arrived 7:10 p.m.) |
| • Nelson | Kelly French |
| • Westmoreland | Stuart Adams
Michael Acerno, Chair |

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 Harper, Keene Business Administrator
- Timothy Ruehr, Business Administrator of Towns
- Catherine L. Reeves, Director of Special Education
- Media (1-Keene Sentinel)

1. Introductions: Chairman Acerno called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m. and introductions were made by members of the 7 boards present as well as SAU 29 administrators.

2. Public Hearing: Mr. John Harper opened discussion for public comment on the NHSAU 29 Budget for 2009-2010 at 7:05 p.m. There being no members of the public present, the public hearing was adjourned at 7:06 p.m.

3. Approval of Minutes: Chairman Acerno asked the board for approval of the minutes on the following NHSAU29 School Board Meetings: No discussion or comment followed.

- a. Mr. Christopher Coates moved to approve, Mr. Neil Donegan seconded. A unanimous voice vote in favor was taken. The minutes of November 24, 2008 were approved as printed and distributed.**

4. 403 (b) Plan: Committee Recommendation – Mr. Earl Horn

Mr. Horn presented an overview of the SAU 29 Compensation and Benefits Committee's recommendation to the SAU 29 Board relative to a new 403(b) plan for all SAU 29 employees. As of January 1, 2009, the IRS will institute new regulations for schools and nonprofits, similar to private industry 401(k) plans. The regulations will require greater oversight by employers offering 403(b) plans.

Currently 160 SAU 29 employees participate in pre-tax contributions to approximately 54 different vendors. To maintain all 54 vendors would be unmanageable given the new IRS regulations.

In August 2008, Mr. Paul Cooper notified SAU 29 employees that due to the changing IRS regulations the SAU would be exploring new options for 403 (b) plans. Employees were invited to attend meetings and provide feedback. Principals and teachers' association presidents attended meetings regarding the move to a single vendor. No disagreement with the proposed plan was expressed.

On September 24, 2008, the Compensation and Benefits Committee made the decision to provide 403 (b) plans through a single vendor. Nine proposals from independent investment companies were received and reviewed by Mr. Cooper. As a result of the review of investment proposals, and with a goal of selecting a company offering diverse investment products with low management fees, Fidelity was selected as the sole vendor for SAU 29 403 (b) plans.

A brief discussion ensued.

MOTION: Mr. Earl Horn moved, Mr. Christopher Coates seconded that SAU 29 on behalf of its employees and the employees of the SAU 29 school districts adopt the written plan document for the SAU 29 Section 403 (b) Plan (the "Plan") as prepared by John Rich of the McLane Law Firm. By a unanimous voice vote, the motion passed.

MOTION: Mr. Earl Horn moved, Mr. Christopher Coates seconded, that William Gurney and Wayne Woolridge, the Co-Superintendents and Paul Cooper, Director of Human Resources or any of them, be authorized and directed to finalize and execute the Plan, any other documents and do any and all acts which may be necessary in connection with the

adoption, maintenance, and ongoing funding of the Plan. By a unanimous voice vote, the motion passed.

MOTION: Mr. Earl Horn moved, Mr. Christopher Coates seconded, that William Gurney and Wayne Woolridge, Co-Superintendents and Paul Cooper, Director of Human Resources or any of them, be authorized and directed to retain any service providers they believe necessary or desirable in connection with the Plan on such terms and conditions, as they deem, in their sole discretion, appropriate and necessary. By a unanimous voice vote, the motion passed.

5. Surry School District Proposal -

Mr. Woolridge stated that over the past three months the SAU 29 board has been made aware of the Surry School District's desire to join SAU 29. Surry's request was an agenda item at the October 27, 2008 Advisory Board meeting as well as the SAU 29 Board Meeting held on November 24, 2008. Mr. Woolridge reiterated that the goal of SAU 29 has been to make a thoughtful and respectful decision after studying the proposal and supporting documents and reflecting on budgetary and staffing implications.

At this time, there seems to be significant concerns among the member districts of SAU 29 in two areas: First, the work an additional town would add to the organizational structure of SAU 29 and second, the cost that providing such services would add.

Ms. Idelkope questioned whether or not the board needed to take a vote to recommend or not at this point.

Mr. Woolridge stated that if no motion or vote is made, then the Surry School District will need to move forward and secure SAU services without the assistance of SAU 29.

If the SAU 29 boards were interested in providing services to the Surry School District, this would need to be built into budgets, every board would have to approve, and a 60% decision in favor would be necessary by voters in order to pass.

Discussion ensued relative to a feeling that adding the Surry School District to SAU 29 may be revisited in the future, but that at this time it is not in the best interest of the member districts of SAU 29 to do so.

6. Final Action by the NHSAU 29 School Board on the 2009-2010 NHSAU 29 Budget –

MOTION: Mr. Christopher Coates moved to open discussion on the 2009-2010 NHSAU 29 Budget. Mr. Neil Donegan seconded. A unanimous voice vote was in favor.

Mr. Harper distributed a memo dated 12/22/08 regarding the replacement of the air conditioner unit at the Central Office (34 West Street). According to Mr. Harper's memo, Mr. Tom Remillard, Keene Building and Grounds Director, recommends replacing the current "chiller" unit (which dates back to the 1970s). Mr. Remillard's assessment is that repairs within the past two cooling seasons have been extensive (approximately \$8,600 in expenses) and that metal fatigue impacting the coils will only continue to worsen over time.

According to the memo, Mr. Remillard shared that an energy audit of the West Street building is estimated to cost approximately \$1,500.

Discussion ensued regarding the “chiller” unit.

Mr. Coates questioned why a Director of Curriculum position is necessary as Ms. Brenda Doherty Finn, Assistant to the Superintendents, has been assuming additional roles to assist the Co-Superintendents.

Mr. Woolridge explained that the Assistant to the Superintendent position is not in the budget for next year. The Director of Technology position in actuality will replace a technician with the addition of \$15-17K to make the position viable in the marketplace. Mr. Woolridge further shared that the employee who previously held this position is on long-term disability with no plans to return to the SAU. In reality, two positions will be eliminated and replaced with the Directors of Technology and Curriculum.

Mr. Coates furthered questioned the consequences if a Director of Technology were not included in the 2009-2010 budget.

Mr. Woolridge stated that if a Director of Technology were not in the budget, the model currently in place would be hard to replicate. One technology person for Keene is retiring. A Director of Technology is necessary to provide oversight for the technological needs of the entire SAU. Technology is a tool for instruction not just an administrative requirement.

It is imperative that technology is properly implemented to support the K-12 curriculum throughout the SAU. Our goal is to prepare students for the future enabling them to be successful in the ever-changing technological world in which we live. Currently we do not have the infrastructure in place to support our students for the future with technology. For less than \$20,000 we can make the necessary impact on the education of our students from a technological standpoint.

Mr. Coates asked Mr. Woolridge and Mr. Gurney how their approach to hiring a Director of Curriculum will differ from the previous attempt to hire a Director of Curriculum.

Mr. Woolridge responded that the previous hiring process involved a Director of Curriculum for the Keene School District. The new position is Director of Curriculum for the SAU. Curriculum is constantly being revised. We are in the midst of compiling a professional development model. There needs to be oversight for this process, as well as to dovetail staff development needs with best practices. The ability of the Co-Superintendents to provide the essential leadership needed will be enhanced by adding these two positions.

Ms. Idelkope reminded the board that a meeting to discuss the apportionment of Mr. Woolridge’s compensation, given that Mr. Woolridge is the Superintendent for Towns as well as for the SAU, has not yet taken place. The minutes from the November 24, 2008 meeting indicated this discussion was to be done before final approval of the budget.

Mr. Coates, Chair of the Advisory Committee, will call a meeting in January to discuss Mr. Woolridge’s apportionment.

Mr. Harper pointed out that if reapportioning is called for, individual district budgets would need to find funding from other sources.

7. NHSAU29 Financial Report 2008-2009 - Mr. John Harper

Mr. Harper reviewed the financial report for fiscal year 2008-2009 (handout distributed). Mr. Harper stated that the revenue budget for the SAU is fairly consistent with the basis for which it was set. Salaries and staffing have remained stable. There was a \$15,000 savings on health benefits for the SAU as employees were asked to contribute more to health insurance benefits.

Mr. Harper indicated that there are a number of available balances including \$71,000 for hardware/software, much of which will be spent down by the end of the fiscal year. Mr. Harper stated that the Director of Technology position in the budget for 2009-2010 will be important in helping with properly funding technology needs.

Mr. Harper stated that the budget is in good shape with no areas of concern and a reasonable surplus expected at the end of the fiscal year.

Discussion ensued relative to line items, capital expenses and repair expenses with concern voiced amongst board members regarding fiscal responsibility given the current economic climate.

MOTION: Mr. Christopher Coates moved to adjourn at 8:02 p.m. Mr. Neil Donegan 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: 5/18/09