

Stratford School Board
Board Meeting
January 13, 2021

The Stratford School Board had a meeting on Wednesday, January 13, 2021 at 5:30 pm. Present were: Kyle Haley (Home-Stratford), James Kennett (Home-Stratford) and Nicole King (Home-Stratford). Absent was: None. Also present were Superintendent Ronna Cadarette (SAU-Groveton), Business Administrator Patty Brown (SAU-Groveton), Student Services Administrator Michelle Mason (Home-Groveton) and Principal Bridger DeWitt (Home-Pittsburg). Absent was: None.

Kyle Haley called the meeting to order at 5:31 pm.

A motion was made by Kyle Haley and seconded by James Kennett to approve the public minutes of December 9, 2020 as presented. A vote was then taken and all were in favor.

Reports:

Ronna Cadarette presented her report and went over the COVID Back to School Plan for the SAU. We have not regularly updated the plan as the school year progressed. Ronna would like to remove the statement that the board will reconvene for each pivot. This has not been practiced, nor is it practical to meet for each decision. Sometimes these decisions happen at 5:30 am in the morning and need to happen quickly. Examples were then given to the board.

Policies I, K and L are the last of the Policy upgrades for now. As NHSBA updates policy recommendations we will continue to bring them forward.

Bridger DeWitt presented his report and noted the current enrollment is at 56 students, with the possibility of 4 more coming in the next week or so. SPS had a great holiday celebration before break, both the students and staff enjoyed the festivities. The next school paper is coming out very soon. Grades 4-8 are now getting into ALMA and accessing their missing assignments tab. Data team meetings are starting next week to go over the school's goals.

Michelle Mason presented her report and had no changes and nothing to add.

Patty Brown presented her report and discussed the current budget and how she has "froze" the budget to necessary purchases only. Bridger and Patty have discussed the purpose of watching carefully because of significant costs added to the budget. Patty also talked how offsets have been written into grants as much as possible for all COVID expenses and purposes. This will hopefully help save some in the budget and keep us from going over.

Patty Brown also proposed to the board to remove all technology equipment from the budget and purchase it with grant funding. This could potentially save the proposed budget \$14k as of right now. Patty spoke with Shane Cloutier about the idea and Shane thought it was great, but the board needs to remember the funds eventually need to go back into the budget. The district has an approved Technology Plan with a replacement cycle and we need to stay on top of that cycle to keep the equipment current.

The board agreed the idea was good and they would put the money back into the budget when it was time in the future and grant funds were no longer available for the purchases.

Shane Cloutier presented his report and commented that it made absolute sense to use other funding to make tech purchases and reduce the budget. We have a four-year replacement cycle and we're lucky to get four years from a device with students taking them home.

Shane Cloutier also noted there will be no new projects for the next 18 months. He will be spending the time fine tuning all the new purchases we've made recently and continue to make this year and make sure everyone is adequately trained on it all.

The board again recognized they will put the money back into the budget after all the grant funds have been spent to cover purchases in technology.

Continuing Business:

Patty Brown went over the budget proposal for the 21-22 school year. Patty repeated options 1-4 in her board report and also added the board requested option to tuition all students K-8 & 9-12.

Patty went down through the costs associated with tuition all students and how some students are homeschooled and need to be considered in the calculation. Not all expenses are automatically reduced to zero, there are some expenses we are mandated to pay even if we do not have a school. We still have a building to maintain and that will cost us money, along with current transportation. This would also result in a loss in revenue because of not having a school in operation; no tuition revenue from VT, no grant funding and no food funding. Net Estimated Savings of \$197k as of December's enrollment. This number could change quickly based on enrollment and tuition rates at \$16k+ per student.

Patty Brown quickly discussed the significant increases and decreases, nothing had changed from the prior month except high school tuition rates that were finalized from the DOE cost per pupil figures last month. Patty also updated the student enrollment at GHS this past month to align with the current ADM.

The proposed budget is up \$196k (7.97%), totaling an appropriation of \$2,654,000 with an estimated tax rate of \$21.47. With the discussion on cutting out technology equipment this proposal will be reduced by an additional \$14k, if not more before the budget hearing next month. This total does include all articles, including the STA negotiated article of \$17,821.

New Business:

Next Meeting:

Tuesday, January 5, 2021 at 5:30 pm, SAU Board Meeting Remote.

Wednesday, February 2, 2021 at 5:30 pm, SPS Budget Hearing Remote.

Adjournment:

A motion was made by James Kennett and seconded by Kyle Haley to adjourn the meeting at 6:25 pm. A vote was then taken and all were in favor.

Minutes were respectfully submitted by Patricia Brown