

Surry School Board Minutes 3.16.26

Called to Order at 7:00 PM

Attending: Tim, Frank, John, Kim, Bruce, Tabitha Sipler (parent), Caroll (minutes)

Organizational Meeting—Superintendent nominated Tim as Chair. All voted in favor. Tim nominated Caroll as Vice Chair, Melinda as Secretary. All voted in favor. Still looking for suggestions for Clerk, Caroll would approach. MS22 signed.

Secretary's Report for February and Annual Meeting approved, Melinda looking for Sept minutes.

Treasurer's Report—Manifest of \$52,406.22 moved by Tim, seconded by Frank, all approved. Yearend balance may be \$25-75,000. Bus has been late for last 6 weeks.

Public Comment—Tabitha notes that Open Enrollment bill is under discussion in legislature. Governor has asked them to slow down. Tabitha pays \$1,000 for each of her children to go to Chesterfield. She pays more than teachers in other towns for out-of-district placement.

Old Business:

- a. NHED Bureau of School Facilities walkthrough--Tim Carney came.
- b. 2025-26 Bathroom Renovation Compliance Project—Will install linoleum over tile, new toilets & patricians. Tim to check that Hutter applied for a build permit.
- c. 2026-27 Parking Lot and Main Entryway Project—Barker is looking at this. This is our land but neighbor's right of way cannot be impeded.
- d. Surry Facilities Issues—SVCS replaced faucets, need to be evaluated, Hutter will know if something is needed. We can cover the asbestos tile with linoleum. Cleaning improves and then gets worse. Motion by Caroll, seconded by Tim, all approved for Tim and Kim to draft a letter telling SVCS to take care of the building, to define "clean and sanitary," routine daily cleaning expected. John noted that state law requires daily sanitation of touch places. Bruce says they notice they have been noticed.
- e. Essential Building Renovation Projects—SSB provides safe, functional building, SVCS responsible to make it a school. Tim feels a lack of cooperation; their most important fundraising goal is for sustainability, Kim has suggested an endowment. Can SSB rely on SVCS?
- f. *Renovation Project Funding Research—Would like some help on application for Northern Borders.*

New Business:

- a. SSB & Select Board to meet 3/23/26 at town hall to update them on renovation plans.
- b. SSB & SVCS Board to meet 3/24/26 at SVCS. Nicole wants the best for the school.
- c. Southwest Regional Preschool Collaborative—David Ryan (Winchester Superintendent) is working on a preschool – 2nd grade special education program, would be an out-of-district placement, private/public partnership
- d. Discussion from annual meeting--AREA contract is the ground rules for working with Keene, includes formula for special education tuition & SSB membership on 4 subcommittees. Tuition contract for K-6 ends 2028. Trinity charges \$8500. They would be interested in the Surry building. Tuition needs to be managed on the school level. NH pays for about 3% of school budget (\$4260 for regular ed student, \$9000 for charter student), federal government pays less than 1%. Harrisville is also a small school population, but they have tax revenue from lakefront property.

First Readings not discussed:

Policy BDB-A School Board Treasurer Responsibilities

Foundational Policies: AC/ACA Non-Discrimination & Harassment Revised

ACAC: Title IX Sexual Harassment

ACE: Procedural Safeguards Revised

cont.

ADB: Drug-Free Workplace

ADC: Tobacco Products Prohibition

Superintendent's Report—attached

Public Comment—none

Adjournment 8:30 PM

Superintendent's Report

The following is a general update of activities as of March 7th since the last Board meeting. Please note that the numbering on this report follows the school board agenda.

3. Treasurer's Report.

3a. The treasurer/superintendent's review of the March 2026 manifest.

3b. The superintendent's review of the most recent budget status report.

5. Old Business.

5a. NHED Bureau of School Facilities Walkthrough 3/10/26. Update. Tim Carney from the NHED Bureau of School Facilities will do a walkthrough of the Surry School with Kyle Barker, Barker Architects.

5b. 2025-2026 Bathroom Renovation Compliance Project. Update. The superintendent continues to work with Barker Architects and Hutter Construction on the renovation and ADA compliance project in the girls and boys bathroom. The school board previously voted to utilize a portion of the Surry Building Expendable Trust to address urgent compliance issues in the current year. The school board voted to authorize the superintendent to execute a contract with Hutter to complete the ADA bathroom compliance and other renovation work within the scope of the of the approved building trust budget for this year. The superintendent consulted with the school board chair and signed a contract for the project with Hutter, as previously authorized, on 2/13/2026. The project has been scheduled over the April school break, 4/24 to 5/3. Materials have been ordered and arriving at Hutter. Contingencies have been arranged with SVCS, if necessary. Moving forward!

5c. 2026-2027 Parking & Entry Project. Discussion/Planning. The school board voted in the affirmative to plan the next stage in the renovation and compliance work to include the parking lot and main entrance, pending approval of the warrant article at the Annual District Meeting. The objective is to meet ADA needs including reconfiguration of the parking lot to accommodate handicap parking spaces, smooth and graduated exterior walking surfaces for accessibility, and reconfiguration of the main entry to accommodate accessibility issues. The superintendent suggests prioritizing secondary projects based upon the availability of funding.

5d. Surry School Facility Issues. Discussion/Planning. Attachment 1.

- The NH Department of Environmental Services (DES) Get the Lead Out of Drinking Water (GTLO) program is a state initiative requiring all public schools and licensed childcare centers to test for lead in water, offering grants for remediation. The drinking water at SVCS was recently tested for Lead. Lead was found in the water coming from many of the sink faucets. DES recommends installing new faucets as a remediation strategy, as lead often comes from the older sink components. Many of the faucets have been replaced and other affected areas have been barred. SVCS is awaiting news on the GTLO grant to remediate. SVCS will keep the superintendent posted. DES will have the water re-tested at a later date. SVCS reports some difficulty performing the recommended faucet replacement due to the condition of the plumbing for the water supply to the sinks. Some of the water supply pipes are very corroded and breaking when replacing faucets. SVCS is replacing corroded water supply pipes with PVC. See attachment 6 for an example. The superintendent suggests an evaluation of the condition of the plumbing in the building with recommendations for replacement, if needed.

- SVCS is required to evaluate for asbestos every three years. Contractors recently evaluated the Surry School and acquired samples from areas of concern (some floor tiles, boiler room, and exposed glue from deteriorating baseboards). It was reported that the boiler room did not contain asbestos. SVCS will keep the superintendent posted. See the asbestos inspection report. The results show that the floor tiles throughout the building are asbestos containing building materials. Some of the floor tiles and coving are damaged and require mitigation. The superintendent recommends the investigation of remediation strategies such as various encapsulation techniques.

15e. Essential Building Renovation Projects. Discussion/Planning. As indicated in the February 2026 superintendent's report, SVCS is committed to launching a much-needed fundraising effort to support the long-term sustainability of the organization. SVCS stated that they would investigate grant opportunities to help share in the cost renovating the Surry campus. However, the SVCS chair stated that the most important fundraising goal is the long-term sustainability of SVCS. While this decision by SVCS is understandable, the superintendent is concerned that the effect is a regression in our partnership with SVCS regarding the Surry School Renovation Project. In light of this information, the superintendent suggests that the school board consider adjusting the scope of the project to include only the work related to major building systems and essential to building safety, code, and compliance.

5f. Renovation Project Funding Research. Status. The superintendent provides an update on funding research

renovation project including grant opportunities and public/private fundraising. The objective is to explore public and private funding opportunities for the renovation project to reduce the local expense as much as possible. See Attachment 5 for the running log. Jack Ahern from the SWRPC provided information on the Northern Border Regional Commission (NBRC) and the possibility of grant funding for the Surry project. The NBRC has several grant programs. More information to follow after a meeting with Jack Ahern. The superintendent met with Jack Ahern on 2/10/26 to explore potential grant funding for the project. NBRC Catalyst Program. SWRPC mentioned this program as potentially viable. "The Northern Border Regional Commission (.gov) (NBRC) Catalyst Program stimulates rural economic growth in Maine, New Hampshire, New York, and Vermont by funding infrastructure, business development, and workforce projects. Goals include reducing poverty/unemployment, modernizing infrastructure, and increasing community resilience. The challenge with the program is the matching grant aspect. Match requirements are based on county distress levels (80% federal/20% match for distressed; 50%/50% for transitional)." SWRPC said Cheshire County is the 50/50 match. A pre-application for the Catalyst grant is due on August 1. The school board voted in the affirmative to move forward on the application process.

6. New Business.

6a. Surry School Board & Surry Select Board Meeting. 3/23/2026. Attachment 2. Planning. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss the Surry School Renovation & Compliance Project with the Select Board.

6b. Surry School Board & SVCS Board Meeting. 3/24/2026. Attachment 3. Planning. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss the Surry School Renovation & Compliance Project with the SVCS Board.

6c. Southwest Regional Preschool Collaborative. Attachment 4. For discussion and possible motion. The superintendent and student services director informed the school board regarding a gap in mandated preschool educational services not covered in our

tuition and AREA agreements with receiving schools. This gap is documented in a board memorandum dated 10/2023. The administration has been working to fill the gap in mandated preschool services, including exploring various preschool opportunities.

The administration has been meeting with Superintendent David Ryan, Winchester, and Monique Antaya, EBC, over the last

year

on a preschool collaborative. Superintendent Ryan recently shared that they are nearing the end of the state's program approval process for an onsite early childhood behavior transition program in Winchester. The program that they are proposing is designed in partnership with Educational Behavior Consulting, LLC and will focus on the application of Applied Behavior Analysis and Trauma Informed Care in an acute and therapeutic setting. Although the Winchester location is not ideal, the proposed program model is viable and may be a possibility for unique, high service need placements. Superintendent Ryan is requesting that school districts indicate non-binding interest in the program by March 18th

6d. Policy BDB-A: School Board Treasurer Responsibilities. Attachment 5. First Reading. The Treasurer is responsible for financial safeguards such as providing oversight of financial procedures and ensuring compliance with district policies. The School Board Treasurer oversees financial practices and compliance with policy, while the district administration is responsible for day-to-day financial operations including managing revenue and expenses, grant management, developing manifests and budget status reports, and state and federal reporting.

6e. Foundational Policies. Attachment 6. First Reading. Foundational policies refer to the district's legal obligations and the basic principles underlying school board governance. Attachment 6 includes the following foundational policies for first reading. These policies include very prescriptive language required by state and federal law. AC: Non-Discrimination (revision). ACAC: Title IX Sexual Harassment and Grievance Process. ACE: Procedural Safeguards (revision). ADB: Drug-Free Workplace. ADC: Tobacco Products Prohibition.

27. Superintendent's Report.

- Surry School Renovation & Compliance Project. The district is moving forward on this project. Thank you to the school board for the support of this project. The school board authorized the superintendent to engage Hutter Construction to do important renovation and ADA compliance work in the girls and boys bathrooms. The superintendent is pushing to get this project completed over the April school vacation. And a 2026-27 warrant article is proposed to continue renovation work into the next fiscal school year. At this point, the district is planning to move the remainder of the project to a bond vote at the annual district meeting in March 2027. With all of the time and effort of the school board and superintendent to continually move this project forward, the superintendent wonders if the school board needs to revisit the idea of a bond vote. One. The time required to do all of the work prepare for bond vote is enormous. The district does not have the resources to complete this prep work and need to discuss how it might get done. Two. The superintendent remains uncertain about the commitment of the residents to take on a \$1.5 to upwards of a \$2 million bond in one lump sum. Question. Does the school board want to reconsider the scope of the project and adopting a phased approach to the completing the most essential work?

- Open Enrollment. Open enrollment refers to proposed legislation that would allow students to attend any public school in the state, regardless of their residence or school district boundaries (SB 101, HB 751). The proposed legislation mandates that public schools accept students from other districts, provided there is capacity. This

legislation would allow parents to choose any public school in the state. The open enrollment legislation mandates that the tuition to attend another public school other than where you reside would become the financial obligation of the district where you reside. -- The school board attorney reports, if the legislation is passed, that districts will be required to adopt, at an annual or special meeting, a policy on open enrollment and, unless there is a change, the proposed law would take effect when the Governor signs it. One of the bigger changes is that districts will not be able to prohibit or limit their resident students from seeking enrollment in other districts (the current law allows districts to set a limitation on resident students who may attend other open enrollment districts) --. Wadleigh Law is monitoring the status of the proposed legislation and will keep the superintendent posted if/when it becomes law, including what that will mean for districts going forward. Concerns remain about the financial and administrative impact on local districts. The Surry superintendent is concerned about what this proposed legislation will mean for our administrative costs, special education costs and monitoring, as well as for general tuition costs, census, and roster tracking in multiple districts.

Other items.

- The administration has been busy conducting district business. The superintendent continues the necessary policy work to bring the school board into compliance with best practice and regulations and continues to monitor district needs and the evolving educational landscape.

- Considerable time and effort continue to be devoted to the Surry School Renovation and Compliance Projects and work planned for the current year (ADA), further research on project grants, and SVCS partnership activities.

- The business administrator is working on a financial spreadsheet to better monitor and report grant submissions and reimbursement.

- The special education and student services director continues to monitor our special education students and follow through with federal requirements. The director continues to submit qualified expenses on a monthly basis for IDEA reimbursement.

Parking Lot.

- AREA agreement (k-5). As discussed at the October 2025 school board meeting, replacing the current tuition contract for grades K-5 with an AREA agreement could reduce tuition expenses. Holding pending school board discussion.

- Service Provider Contracts. The school board attorney recommends that the district include language in our service provider contracts that affirms that they are familiar, and will comply with, all applicable federal and state laws and regulations, and all applicable district policies, including but not limited to, reporting child abuse and neglect, drug free workplace, pupil safety and violence prevent act (anti-bullying) policy, safe school zones policy, antidiscrimination policies, suicide prevention policy, and staff conduct policy.

- Revising and refining contracts for the business administrator, district bookkeeper, and special education and student services director.

- School Board Minutes. The superintendent is concerned about school board compliance to policy BEDG: Minutes. A draft of public minutes will be made available no later than five business days after the school board meeting. The superintendent previously reported that SAU29 utilizes a stenographer for school board minutes. The school board added this service to the Surry School District 2026-27 budget proposal.

- Internet and Data Governance Policy Issues. The school district is mandated to develop a data security and privacy plan (RSA 189:66) and an acceptable use policy (RSA 194:3) that address computer security, data governance, email, and internet communications. The development of these policies requires careful school board consideration because of our unique status as a small sending district, part-time SAU services, and current electronic communication and remote practices. Policy development includes Personnel Policy GBEF: School District Internet Access and Support Services Policies EHAA: Computer Security and EHAB Data Governance. The superintendent suggests scheduling this as an agenda item at an upcoming school board meeting to explore possible solutions.

- NH Department of Environmental Services and Public Water Systems. Federal PFAS Regulations – Additional Sampling Required by April 2027. Certain public water systems will soon receive instructions to collect additional PFAS samples to comply with new federal Maximum Contaminant Levels (MCLs). Since October 2019, New Hampshire water systems have tested for PFOA, PFOS, PFNA, and PFHxS. New federal regulations now require testing for two additional compounds—GenX (HFPO-DA) and PFBS. All six compounds must be sampled during specific calendar quarters, even if prior results exist. Water systems missing PFBS or GenX results will be provided a sampling schedule to comply with the new federal regulations. Failure to collect these samples will result in a federal violation starting April 2027 and require public notification. The USEPA had stated it intended to revise the federal regulations to only regulate PFOA and PFOS. It has not revised the regulations to date and has instructed NHDES to proceed with requiring testing for all six compounds. The superintendent sent an email to NHDES requesting further advice regarding testing and/or remediation.

Non-Public. The superintendent will provide the school board with confidential updates as allowed under RSA 91.