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2 Shaker Regional School District
3 Minutes Legislative Meeting
4 December 13, 2010
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6 Board Members Present: Diane O'Hara, Chair; Tom Goulette, Gretta Olson-Wilder
7 Administration Present: Mark Blount, Superintendent; Debbie Gay, Business
8 Administrator, Shannon Bartlett, Curriculum Coordinator, Doug Ellis, Director of
9 Buildings & Grounds, Tonyel Mitchell-Berry, Director of Student Services, Jonathan
10 White, Technology Coordinator, Principals: Russ Holden, Aaron Pope, Emily Spear,
11 Mary Morrison
12 Legislative Members Present: Seth Cohn, Alida Millham, Jim Pilliard, Priscilla
13 Lockwood, Andy Sanborn
14

15 The meeting was called to order at 6:10 by Diane O'Hara. After introductions were made
16 Diane thanked everyone for attending. Diane reviewed the packet of information that
17 was distributed to each legislator.
18

19 Diane opened the floor for discussion on what the legislators view as the issues that will
20 be upcoming.
21

22 Alida said the principal topic will be the budget.
23

24 Priscilla said she believes we will get a constitutional amendment, but doesn't know what
25 form it will be.
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27 Andy said the senate side is looking for a 2-4 year, probably 4 year, collar on the funding
28 formula to allow for time for a constitutional amendment.
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30 Priscilla said they are looking for some kind of collar.
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32 Seth said the concept of the collar is to help provide time to plan ahead and create a
33 funding formula that also plans ahead. The collar will help control the budget until the
34 new formula is created.
35

36 Andy said without the collar there is an additional. \$140M obligation and that cannot be
37 funded now.
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39 Alida said the problem with the formula is that it goes back to having donor towns.
40

41 Seth said the House Republications have met and already know they have to find \$660M
42 in cuts – not necessarily actually funding cuts since there are things that have not been
43 spent, such as the \$180M from the formula. Seth said as long as towns and school
44 districts don't count on that money the house won't have to find it.
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46 Andy asked if districts received letters regarding the funding.

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2 Mark said that when the district received the calculated amounts of the Adequacy
3 Education Aid on November 15th it was accompanied by a notice that said not to count on
4 any additional funding.

5
6 Andy said the legislation will go into a holding pattern and there will be no more and no
7 less provided to districts. Andy said the senate needs to concentrate on creating jobs,
8 economic expansion and the budget. The state budget is approximately \$12B of which
9 \$2B is raised through gas tax and rooms and meals tax.

10
11 Tom said one of his key issues is unfunded mandates which become issues in the school
12 budget. Tom said it is important that elected officials understand that there is a trickle
13 down affect onto local taxpayers. Tom said we understand we are in touch budget times
14 but legislators need to know that a compliance bill means an increase in time, programs
15 and taxes. Tom said the board would like to work with legislators to discuss potential
16 impact on school budgets.

17
18 Andy asked if Tom was referring to Federal or State mandates. Mark replied that it is
19 both.

20
21 Priscilla said the law that says legislations can't pass unfunded mandates doesn't pertain
22 to education, which was grandfathered.

23
24 Seth said that that might be changed and the grandfather status removed from the
25 education law. Seth said that Race to the Top is a prime example of no dollars for
26 support but standards that now have to be met. Seth said that his believe schools will
27 have support in their efforts to push back on legislation that requires changes with no
28 funding.

29
30 Tom said the district has a tremendous group of professional and the board wants to
31 provide them with the tools they need to do their jobs but over the past 8 years there have
32 been more and more requirements that take funds away from those tools.

33
34 Alida asked if retirement is included in that example. Tom said that the retirement piece
35 is huge.

36
37 Alan said there are a number of groups from all different walks of life and if the board
38 could present a list of items and the impact in a one-page format it would be useful. Alan
39 said there is really only a two month window to propose legislation and in NH every bill
40 entered must be voted on. Alan suggested that board members get to the house to meet
41 with people and explain how a bill will affect the district.

42
43 Mark said a good example of an impact is the Title I funding, which comes from the
44 Federal Government through the State Department of Education. Mark said that dollars
45 that used to be used for direct instruction to students have been impacted by No Child
46 Left Behind, and now we have to set aside funds from our Title I allocation to provide for

1 Supplemental Education Services, which is tutoring for a limited number of students who
2 qualify for it, and for professional development. This money has been taken away from
3 direct instruction.

4
5 Andy said he would like the district to help legislators understand the real root of the
6 problem(s) and what they really cost.

7
8 Tom said the district has real economic concerns and an increasing population of students
9 with needs.

10
11 Debbie explained how the free and reduced population has increased in the district over
12 the past few years. Debbie said this is a reflection of an increased number of households
13 who have lost jobs.

14
15 Tom said the state needs a fresh look at the infrastructure.

16
17 Alan asked what percentage of the budget is compliance related? Diane and Tom said
18 they had that calculated a few years ago and would have to have it recalculated.

19
20 Diane said one example that makes no sense is the cutting of the vocational education
21 funding. Since the state didn't fund this the district has to pay almost \$30,000 more this
22 year for the students who attended last year. Diane said this is perplexing since the
23 students who attend vocational education are not college bound, they are there for work
24 force training and are there to obtain skills.

25
26 Priscilla said a law was passed to keep students in school until the age of 18, and funds
27 were put into that law but the state then cut funds from other areas – including the
28 vocational funding.

29
30 Seth said Concord is considered a good school district and there was a 10-12% dropout
31 rate, but there were no statistics to see why students were dropping out. If the vocational
32 program is successful in keeping kids in schools that should be supported. Making kids
33 stay in school for the sake of staying in school does not address the problem.

34
35 Andy said that over 58% of the plumbers in NH are over 50 years old.

36
37 Seth said we need to make sure people have skills.

38
39 Andy said keeping kids in school until 18 can be a hindrance.

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41 Diane said we have a successful program with a 1% dropout rate. Shaker is putting the
42 dollars into programs that provide for kids, but the cuts, such as the voc ed cuts, make us
43 ask how we can continue to provide programs that are successful for our students.

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45 Seth said is it obvious that vocational education is a good program for Shaker students
46 and asked what programs we have to spend money on that don't work.

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Mark said that keeping students in school until the age of 18 puts more demands on faculty and administration.

Tom said that on the success side Shaker has a long history of working with children who are 17 and homeless, through no fault of their own, or students who have had children. Tom said the number of students who are on the “margins” are growing. The change in the law brought students back who don’t want to be in school or were pulled away for some other reason. The new bullying law requires time and money away from other programs.

Seth said that the programs are all valuable but there is limited dollars. Those dollars can only be spread so thin before you can’t get anything done. Seth suggested that the district needs to identify the priorities. Seth said one example is the bullying law, which requires a lot of time with little return.

Andy asked if it was possible to pick the top 80% of the programs that are successful and determine the costs of those programs.

Alida said the entire funding issues gets caught up in this since some districts need financial help.

Alan said each community should be able to set their own priorities.

Alida said Pittsfield and Claremont will disagree.

Seth said the drop out rate is a good example. The rate for Concord is much different from Canterbury’s rate which indicates there is a much different program. Seth said it would be great to have more local control to direct the funds where they do the best work.

Tom said that Shaker believes full-day kindergarten is important and wants to know if that is being supported in the education committee.

Seth said that Hudson has a bill entered to repeal kindergarten and that goes back to the local control issue.

Tom said local control leads to the community’s ability to pay issue. If Town A is affluent and Town B is strapped it makes it difficult to act to care for the children when you have to consider the tax rate and the folks in the community that are out of work. Tom said that looking at educational initiatives full-day kindergarten in an area that will benefit everyone. Tom said it’s sad that we can pass a law for bullying but we can’t support full-day kindergarten.

Diane agreed saying that studies have been done showing that students are more successful when they have attended full-day kindergarten.

1 Seth said that the board needs to put that before the taxpayers to see if they support it.

2

3 Diane said it's a question of affording it, not a question of supporting it.

4

5 Seth said the state's not in a position of affording it either.

6

7 Tom said he would be very pleased if the NH legislation and the NH Department of
8 Education would have the guts to identify what an educated child is and what it costs.

9 Tom said there is precious little in the way of guidelines or support and it's very easy to
10 say that we need to wave full-day kindergarten in front of the voters but people are
11 looking for more guidance from the experts.

12

13 Alida said the bullying is a thing that school do should and have done, and not because
14 it's a law.

15

16 Mark said education really needs to be defined, have costs determined, create
17 accountability, and we need to find out how much it really costs for the state's minimum
18 standards.

19

20 Andy said the Shaker Regional School District is a beacon of doing amazing things.

21

22 Diane said that the Finance Committee is looking at the work that has been done to built
23 this district over the years and is afraid that due to the economic situation and funding all
24 the work will start to unravel.

25

26 Mark said the next two years will be like walking a tight rope. Shaker has built programs
27 and needs to be careful through the budgetary process that we are still able to provide the
28 core programs.

29

30 Tom said he is concerned on the taxpayer level since the financial push is from the state
31 to the county to the town to the school. Taxpayers are being asked for more money on all
32 fronts. Tom said the board wants to work you collectively.

33

34 Alida said it's important that the legislative body not turn their backs on schools.

35

36 Andy said the root is revenue. There are so many things we have to deal with and we
37 need to have a reasonable amount of revenue to meet the needs. NH has fundamentally
38 walked away from business and we have to look at options. The relationship between
39 government and business has soured and needs to be realigned so government can once
40 again embrace business. We need to ask if we are being competitive for business. We
41 will never have a Toyota factory in NH but there is intellectual business that we could
42 reach out to. We have an opportunity to make this state great again.

43

44 Alids said we've built revenues on the backs of business and we are taxing businesses
45 more than our neighboring state. NH is becoming a graying state.

46

1 Andy said we cannot raise any more taxes we need to expand the base. Once such
2 example is Google, which pays \$3B in taxes.

3
4 Alida said NH will never get a Google.

5
6 Andy said he disagrees. We can attract these companies and it won't pay \$3B in taxes
7 right off but it can be built up. The future is cloud computing and there are currently 3
8 states – Oregon, Washington, and Virginia, that have set up their infrastructure to attract
9 those businesses. Andy said we need to look at the emerging technologies and the state's
10 education system.

11
12 Seth said the #1 employer in NH is Walmart, and most of the top NH employers are
13 services type and we need a manufacturing base. Seth said we need to change the
14 education focus and vocational education program teaches real skills.

15
16 Andy said there is a high school north of Burlington VT that has teamed up with a
17 company that is the largest manufacturing company for gaming in Montreal and they are
18 having the conversations of what the students needs to learn in school.

19
20 Alida said these conversations have been going on for years.

21
22 Seth asked what we are missing if these conversations we have been having these
23 conversations.

24
25 Alida said infrastructure is missing.

26
27 Tonyel asked that each legislator say what their priorities are and what they will vote for.

28
29 Seth said he has 2 bills entered dealing with open source and transparency. Seth said the
30 IT budget for the state is \$80M - \$100M and that the state pays Microsoft \$2M per year.
31 Seth said the state could use open source software and use the dollars for other things.
32 Seth also said he would like more transparency and to have the agencies put their budgets
33 and work online.

34
35 Andy said as a business owner he is concerned with the underemployment in NH. He
36 said it is the largest challenge we have today and he ran to get business owners in so they
37 can work to create jobs.

38
39 Priscilla said she has no particular agenda but likes to think she has experience in
40 education and is a voice of sanity.

41
42 Jim said the publication *Targeting Achievement* is an amazing book and shows a wealth
43 of work. It indicates that we aren't doing badly. Jim said that he has worked in health
44 and human services and says that bullying costs a lot later on.

45

1 Alida says she has working in many departments and hopes to get back onto health and
2 human services. The reason she ran for office again is due to the economic issues and the
3 budget.

4
5 Ken Knowlton said he has worked on the conservation commission, the budget
6 committee and with the taxpayers association. Ken said he believes the problems that are
7 not being discussed are:

- 8 1. Parental Responsibility
- 9 2. The need to pare down the House of Representatives to 50
- 10 3. Administrative costs of the Lottery System

11
12 Ken asked how many people really care enough to look online for information. He said
13 taxes go up and they want to know why but they don't want to know the particular line
14 item information. Ken said he hopes this legislative body will really get things done. He
15 said if it means a tax, so be it, but maybe parents have to have mandates too. Ken said
16 more is expected of schools to raise, feed and teach children and the big problem is really
17 the parents but no one says it.

18
19 Seth said he is cosponsoring a bill will give parents fundamental rights and responsibility
20 for the education of their children.

21
22 Ken said there are so many things the board can't, or won't say. He wishes there was
23 more transparency to the core issues. Ken said parents may take more interest if they
24 have to pay taxes on a per child instead of a per acre basis.

25
26 Alida said that years ago parents had to pay to have their children educated and we had
27 illiterate people in WWI.

28
29 Diane thanked everyone for coming and participating.

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31 Diane adjourned the meeting at 7:53 pm.

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33 Respectfully submitted,

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36
37 Debbie D. Gay
38 Clerk pro temp