

Sunapee School Board Meeting

SMHS Gymnasium

November 5, 2025

Call to Order:

Vice Chair Lizotte called the School Board meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Roll Call:

Edward Andersen - Absent

Amanda Spears

Alyse Lizotte

Linda Tanner

Tiago Pereira

Others Present:

Russell Holden, Superintendent

Kelly Wessells, Business Administrator

Sean Moynihan, SMHS Principal

Meagan Reed, SCES Principal

John Lellos, SMHS Assistant Principal

Amanda Hughlock, Director of Student Services - Absent

Haleigh Spears, Alternate Student Representative

Pledge of Allegiance:

Alyse Lizotte led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Minutes:

Amanda Spears moved to approve the minutes of the October 1, 2025 School Board Meeting as presented.

Linda Tanner seconded the motion.

Vote unanimous

Amanda Spears moved to approve the minutes of the October 1, 2025 non-public session as presented.

Tiago Pereira seconded the motion.

Vote unanimous.

Agenda Review:

None

Public Forum:

Anthony Dolan, 18 Sunapee Heights Court - expressed his desire to have the school district approve allowing his son and other students participate in a co-op football team with the Newport School District.

Jan Bettancourt, 10 Northwest Lane - stated she had sent emails to each school board member, but did not receive a response. She wants the Board to listen and note her concerns.

Mother of Tristen - Son wants to play football in Newport and asks the District to please consider allowing the students who want to play to participate.

Lisa Hoekstra - She read the October minutes and saw that 36 new students have moved into the District. She would like to know the breakdown of grades these students are enrolled in. She also has read through social media that the Superintendent is working for another school district as well. She wants to ensure he is not double-dipping via documentation. Lastly, she is aware of a lawsuit filed against Superintendent Holden and wants to know if Sunapee is paying the legal fees.

Jessica Dolan, 18 Sunapee Heights Court - asked the District to seriously consider allowing her son and other students participate in the co-op football team with Newport.

Neil Cobb, 14 Orchard Circle - asked the District to approve allowing his son and other students to participate in a co-op football team with Newport.

Sheila Lewis, 70 Burma Road - This is the first school board meeting she has attended. She read on social media that the District has a number of tuition students that pay to attend and that the tuition rate is going up by \$500 per year for each student. She would like better communication from the School District. She has never heard or seen Superintendent Holden. It would be good if he would host residents for coffee, so they can ask questions.

Peter Hoekstra, 25 Maple St - read in the minutes that health insurance and water/sewer is increasing next year. Wanted to know when the school board is going to communicate with the public about the process. He wants to understand how this works.

SCES Kindness Club Presentation:

Principal Reed introduced a group of SCES students to give the following presentation:

- Principal Reed stated this club was created due to ongoing work coming out of the strategic plan process, which includes giving students a voice and offering more co-curriculars. The students stated they want to spread kindness.
- The students meet on Thursday mornings before school begins.
- The students stated they say hello to students and staff each morning when coming in.
- They presented a dance they created on kindness.
- They've made hearts for teachers and staff.
- They read books to younger students.
- In the future, they hope to start the following:
 - Start a Big Brother/Big Sister program
 - Create artwork in the school that promotes kindness
 - Create a kindness book or newspaper
- At the end of their presentation, they gave gifts they created to administrators and school board members.

Student Representative Report:

Haleigh Spears, alternative student representative, gave the following report:

- The first quarter ended at the end of day on Halloween.
- All fall sports are done. She congratulated the Girls Varsity Soccer team for making it into the playoffs.
- The Service Club is working on the Empty Bowls Dinner annual event.
- The drama club is practicing for "The Comic Book Artist" to be held soon.

SMHS Good News:

Principal Moynihan gave the Board the following report:

- The annual Dodgeball Tournament will be held on November 13, 2025.
- The Veteran's Day Breakfast will also be held on November 13, 2025.
- The first quarter is done and report cards will be going out soon.
- The National Honor Society inducted ten new members.
- The 8th grade took a field trip to Boston this past Monday with Mr. Lellos.
- The Newport Athletic Director reached out to Sunapee's Athletic Director about a football co-op. Principal Moynihan stated he is not supportive of the co-op and feels there are other sports in Sunapee, such as soccer, bass fishing, and golf students can participate in.

SCES Good News:

Principal Reed gave the Board the following report:

- Discussed the ongoing strategic plan work. The first goal is regarding educational and extracurricular growth. Teachers are focusing on creating new opportunities for students outside of the regular classroom. This includes Laker Lens, which is a video production club and will be meeting Thursday after school. In the spring, a 3D Printing Club will begin.
- Staff is working on planning for Winter Program activities.
- The school is focusing on student voice and increasing opportunities for student input and engagement. For example, fifth grade students will be meeting with her to discuss issues that matter to them.
- Fourth and fifth grade students are working with the Sunapee Police Department and have created a Safety Patrol. They are outside at morning arrival and recess. They have given the administration safety suggestions that have been implemented and are working well.
- SCES is also working on communication with families and giving more background information regarding upcoming events. They are also putting information regarding the school in the local newsletter Sunapee Happenings under "School Corner. This newsletter reaches 1400 people.
- The Halloween Parade was held last Friday on Halloween.

Alyse Lizotte asked Principal Moynihan when should the school board expect a question like the co-op football team to come before them. What are the next steps? She noted that the Newport AD came to the Sunapee AD first.

Principal Moynihan stated he felt the co-op did not follow the guidelines the NHIAA would expect. There was not a formal ask from the Principal or Superintendent; which is why he is making the decision. In the past, Newport was never interested in a co-op because they had enough students, but they do not have as much participation. He has not spoken to the Newport Principal, nor have they reached out. His concern is that if Sunapee participates in co-ops, it will take away from their other programming, such as soccer, golf, and fishing.

Superintendent Holden noted that the Interim Superintendent in Newport spoke with Russ Holden first to discuss the idea, but has not heard from him since, nor was a formal request sent. All of the communication has been between the Athletic Directors. He believes that the Interim Superintendent from Newport hasn't spoken to the Newport Board about it yet. He reiterated again that he had not received a formal request.

Amanda Spears noted that what the students want need to be considered as well.

Principal Moynihan noted that they have to view the full picture. He stated he needs to think about the entirety of the group. He is worried the school would lose a sense of community.

Superintendent Holden noted that while now it is five students, it may increase to ten next year and then more will join after that. It will eventually hurt our other sports program.

Linda Tanner asked what Sunapee's financial responsibility would be. Principal Moynihan responded that they don't know what it would cost Sunapee, but if they lose players to football then they would have to cancel a soccer season due to not having enough kids.

Superintendent Holden noted that Sunapee is not the only district Newport asked.

Principal Moynihan noted that the cost to Sunapee would not be exorbitant, but it would tax the athletic director here.

Superintendent Report:

Superintendent Holden gave the Board the following report:

- The State has put out another round of Safe Grants. Sunapee has received these grants in the past for safety upgrades at both schools. They are applying this round to replace the safety alert system. Homeland Security is also coming to do an inspection, which happens every three years. School administrators will also be asking them for recommendations to help with the grant application.
- School administrators are working on creating a responsible and palatable school budget for taxpayers. The first budget review was held tonight with the Board. The budget increase is coming in at the 3-4% range, but it is still a working document. The budget hearing will be held in January.
- He noted a number of prospective legislative education bills that include tax caps, required audits and consolidation. The State Consolidation Committee is recommending getting rid of SAUs and moving all school district business to counties and distributing the school district work to school boards. Vermont and Maine tried this as well. Vermont is still struggling and Maine reverted back to the individual districts.
- The newly created Pasquaney School District asked for superintendent consultation services last year; there was no conflict with the Sunapee Superintendent job. He went up to their district 2-3 nights per week and he did it on his own time. The Sunapee School Board knew about the consultation work.

The Pasquaney School District then asked for SAU services, which RSA allows to occur. Currently, the Milton and Wolfeboro School Districts share services. The Croydon and Unity School Districts also asked Sunapee to provide SAU services. They turned both of those down, but agreed to superintendent services for the Pasquaney School District. If he needs to travel to their district generally after 3 p.m. after working here or at 7 a.m. before coming here.

The Pasquaney School District pays \$80K to Sunapee for these services; \$40K to Superintendent Holden and \$40K to the Sunapee School District. There is an "out" clause for either district, giving them 30 days notice if either wants to terminate.

The Pasquaney School District recently asked for SAU services, budget, payroll, HR, Tech, SPED which the Sunapee School District agreed to review a proposal/agreement from Pasquaney's Board; they have not agreed to it at this time.

- He noted that he had hosted evening community events at the Abbott Library, but people stopped attending and he was the only one showing up, so he discontinued them. He'd be happy to hold them again if people want to come.
- He noted that he is involved in a Federal Civil Lawsuit in connection with the Shaker Regional School District. He has informed the Sunapee Board Chair. He is being represented by a lawyer from the Shaker Regional School District, which is being paid by their insurance. Again, it is a civil suit and Sunapee is not paying anything.
- He stated he will need to review the 36 new students to see in which grade each falls.

School Board Topics:

Superintendent Holden stated SAT and NHSAS testing will be presented in December. Amanda Spears said she would like to hear more on non-traditional paths for students, including VLACS and vocational studies. Linda Tanner would like to see a presentation on the strategic plan.

Approve Proposed 25-26 Snowplowing Contract:

Superintendent Holden explained how the town has always done the plowing, but due to the approval of their default budget, plowing for the school district was cut. He recommends the Board approve KA Stevens to do the snow plowing for the District at \$48,700. The other two bids were in the \$60K range. The District will still shovel our own paths and sidewalks. He noted the funding will need to come from contingency as this is unbudgeted.

Amanda Spears moved to approve giving the 25-26 snowplowing contract to KA Stevens as presented.

Tiago Pereira seconded the motion.

Vote unanimous.

Approve Proposed 25-26 SCES Co-Curricular List:

Amanda Spears moved to approve the proposed 25-26 SCES co-curricular list as presented.

Tiago Pereira seconded the motion.

Vote unanimous.

Approve Proposed SMHS Winter Coaches:

Amanda Spears moved to approve the proposed SMHS winter coaches as presented.

Tiago Pereira seconded the motion.

Vote unanimous.

Approve Gift from the Athletic Booster Club:

Superintendent Holden stated the Booster Club received an anonymous donation for a new scoreboard on the lower field. Their only request is that the scoreboard be named after Mary Moynihan. He noted it passes all the criteria in the school board policy.

Jennifer Correa, Booster Club President, spoke about the fundraising effort and the anonymous donation. She thanked everyone who participated in donating to the effort.

Linda Tanner moved to accept the donation as presented.

Amanda Spears seconded the motion.

Vote unanimous.

Amanda Spears moved to approve naming the scoreboard for Mary Moynihan as presented.

Linda Tanner seconded the motion.

Vote unanimous.

NESDEC Enrollment Projection:

Superintendent Holden noted the projection in the packet. With tuition students, this year's enrollment is 480. They are projecting, with tuition students, that Sunapee will be above 500 students within 10 years.

Town/School Budget Meeting:

Superintendent Holden stated the town, school district and Advisory Budget Committee all met this month and discussed both the town and school budgets. They will also meet in December and January.

Farm to School Grant:

Thanks to Sharon Parsons, the District received a Farm to School grant in the amount of \$5,400. She will use the money to create a hydroponic indoor garden to grow lettuce, which will be used in her science class and also the Garden Club.

Manifest:

Amanda Spears moved to approve the A/P and payroll manifests as presented.

Linda Tanner seconded the motion.

Vote unanimous.

Agenda for December 3, 2025:

- SAT and State Testing Presentation
- Budget

Nonpublic Session:

None

Adjournment:

Linda Tanner moved to adjourn at 6:14 p.m.

Tiago Pereira seconded the motion.

Vote unanimous.

Respectfully Submitted by,

Kate O'Connor

School Board Secretary