

More Letters

Warrant Articles Supported by Souhegan School Board

To the editor:

In addition to the budget, Souhegan Cooperative School voters will have three additional warrant articles to consider.

Article 3 asks for voter approval of a new agreement between the School Board and the professional and support staffs at Souhegan.

Article 4 proposes replacement of the track at the school.

Article 5 asks to replenish the maintenance trust fund after it is used toward the track replacement.

Article 3 - Since we are in the final year of the current agreement with the staff, the board and staff have negotiated a new two year agreement. If the voters approve this agreement, it will go into effect in the fall and run for two school years (FY2016 and FY2017). The agreement covers salary and wage schedules, working conditions, and benefits. Under the agreement, the staff will receive no Cost of Living Adjustment for the two years. In other words, teacher and support base salaries will remain constant over the period of the agreement. The agreement does include minimal cost increases (\$29,804 in the first year, \$80,377 in the second) to address changing support job classifications, adding new steps to the support staff wage schedule, increasing the daily rate teachers are paid for summer work, changing how professional development reimbursements are budgeted and paid, and changing how health insurance costs are shared between the district and the employees to incentivize shifting to lower cost plans. Under the agreement, access to the highest-cost health insurance plan is being frozen to begin phasing it out. The board is very excited about this agreement. It provides for cost increases that are significantly less than previous contracts, and represents a close and effective collaboration with the staff to meet the needs of students and taxpayers.

Article 4 - In 2010, we undertook a comprehensive facilities study (the Gale report) to help the board prioritize our facility investments. The report indicated that the track was deteriorating and becoming a safety issue. The report concluded that the base layer was too damaged to allow another resurfacing, as had been done in 2007 to extend track life. With other pressing facility concerns identified in the Gale report, such as the

main building roof, now completed, it is prudent to address the track. The track serves the entire Souhegan community. It is heavily used by the high school wellness classes and track teams, the Middle School track team and by community members who find it a safe and convenient place to walk for exercise. The existing track has developed gaps and cracks that make it an uneven and unreliable running surface. The proposed article will completely rebuild the track at a cost of \$220,000. The project would grind out the old track, lay down a new subsurface and two asphalt base layers, and finish with a rubber running surface. The new track is expected to last twenty years. The Board proposes to use \$110,000 from the existing maintenance trust fund and raise the remaining \$110,000 from taxes. We hope that voters will agree that the track is an important asset to the schools and to the community, and support restoring it to a long-lasting safe condition.

Article 5 - Simply asks the voters to support using surplus funds available at the end of the fiscal year to replenish the maintenance trust fund.

The board is excited to present a budget that is only slightly higher than last year's, despite the recent unanticipated increase in the SHS student population. The staff worked very collaboratively with the board to reach a fair agreement. We ask the voters to support the agreement (Article 3) and to ensure the safety of the track for the entire Souhegan community by supporting articles 4 and 5.

*The Souhegan Cooperative School Board
Mary Lou Mullens, Amherst, Chair
Fran Harrow, Amherst, Vice-Chair
Howard Brown, Mont Vernon, Secretary
Steve Coughlan, Amherst
Pim Grondstra, Mont Vernon
Chris Janson, Amherst
Peter Maresco, Amherst*

David Chen Announces Candidacy for Souhegan School Board

To the editor:

Please consider me on March 10 for the Souhegan School Board. My Background

- Resident of Amherst since 1980, 35 years
- Married to Crystal for 42 years; Crystal taught HS science in public schools for 26 years
- BS in Electrical Engineering and Computer Science from the University of Illinois
- Bell System Fellowship for MS in Operations Research from Lehigh University
- Coached Pop Warner Football for 10 years
- Founder Mass Bay Youth Lacrosse League
- Founder and former president of Amherst Lacrosse Club
- Founder and former president of New Hampshire Youth Lacrosse Association
- Volunteer lacrosse coach at Souhegan HS
- Former president of the Jasper Valley Swim and Tennis Club
- Elected to Amherst Zoning Board of Adjustments
- 2 children attended Amherst School System and Souhegan HS
- Member of the Souhegan HS start-up committees for curriculum and co-curricular
- Served on the Souhegan HS Wellness curriculum committee
- 3 year member of Town of Amherst Ways and Means
- 3 year member of the Souhegan Advisory Finance Committee; 2 as co-chairman
- Retired executive with a 44 year career in high tech and business operations

Platform

- Maintain and improve the high-quality education that our Souhegan students need to compete in their lifetimes.
- Provide the best growth and development opportunities for students at Souhegan.
- Scale the budget to adjust to changing demographics and enrollment levels.
- Deliver the best value for our tax dollar in educating our students.
- Determine, measure, and use relevant outcomes to monitor progress at Souhegan.

Personal Statement

We, the citizens and tax payers of Amherst, have an obligation to provide a quality education for our students. This is a social contract and the foundation of a democratic society. Just as the tax payers in Amherst and Mont Vernon paid to educate my children, I feel responsible for paying for the educating generations of children to come. I welcome that opportunity and want no less of a quality education for each successive generation.

Before and shortly after Souhegan opened its doors, there was an excitement and pride in the community about the school. I want bring that excitement and pride back to the community. A high quality education benefits all. First, it directly empowers students to become well-educated adults by entering and performing at better colleges, getting a good start in their chosen careers, and contributing to our society and community. It benefits the Amherst and Mont Vernon home owners by drawing more buyers into our market, increasing demand, and increasing the values of our property. However, we need to balance these benefits against the long-term effect of high property taxes. Excessively high taxes erodes property values, decreases interest in people relocating to Amherst, and restricts residents from using tax dollars in other aspects of their lives, for example, funding a 529 plan for their children's education.

Therefore, managing both the quality and cost of education is a must. Efficient use of tax payer's dollars is a main concern of every citizen and should be at the forefront of the school board. I've spent the last 25 years of my career in management working on optimizing the efficient use of capital for the benefit of the stakeholders. You can depend on me to do likewise with your taxpayer dollars.

I would be honored to have your vote on March 10th for the Souhegan School Board.

*Respectfully,
David Chen
Amherst*

Eastland Seeks to Re-Visit Cemetery Field Options

To the editor:

I am Lisa Eastland and I am running for the Cemetery Trustee (CT) position. I have lived in Amherst almost five years. I am a substitute teacher and an avid volunteer in our schools. My husband, Rae, and I have three wonderful children at SHS, AMS, and Wilkins. We love it here!

I am asking for your vote because I watched how the Cemetery Trustees have been conducted business for the past couple of years and I want to provide a new perspective!

I believe the current Trustees are doing the best they can. They have devoted many hours to the management of the cemeteries, old and new. Marie Grella is a fantastic advocate for honoring our veterans. Her program for insuring they are remembered is moving and beautiful! As a US Air Force veteran, I am so appreciative of her work! I also value the time and effort placed into creating the Memorandum of Understanding the CT entered into with the Board of Selectmen. As a new member of the CT, I will fully stand by what the Trustees have already accomplished.

However, we can improve on the work already in place. Through better organization of trust accounts, existing plots, and management of the committee, I believe I can help usher in a period of positive change in Amherst. I want to have more operational transparency. I want the town to be very clear on what the expenditures of the CT are and where that money should be coming from--not from your yearly tax bill, as has been done, but from the proper portions of the current Trust accounts. I want the CT to provide the town with a road map. We need an up-to-date, and accurate as possible, accounting of our current available plots. We need a reasonable and logical projection of usage and need for Forestview. The CT needs to provide the town with options for Forestview Cemetery. From different designs to what it is going to cost so the citizens can voice their opinions I want to open the doors to greater communication and compromise, a change that is needed and wanted by the citizens of Amherst!

If you want a candidate who will bring a fresh perspective, an interest in helping Amherst do better, and strives to save you money, then vote Lisa Eastland for Cemetery Trustees!

*Lisa Eastland
Amherst*

Dwayne Purvis – An Outstanding Candidate for SHS Board

To the editor:

We were thrilled to learn that Dwayne Purvis was running for the Souhegan School Board. Having worked with him the last two budget seasons on the Souhegan Advisory Finance Committee, I have been very impressed with the responsible way in which he approaches the budget review process. He clearly has many great qualities that would make him an outstanding board member.

First of all, he's been very involved in the education of his six children who are currently in all of the Amherst schools. He attends board meetings regularly (just for fun) and takes every opportunity to become educated about our schools and the issues that face us. He and his family moved to Amherst because of the excellent schools and he feels that as a school board member he can help keep our schools focused on excellence. He has a thoughtful, positive approach to everything he tackles.

We need Dwayne's wise leadership and expertise as part of a board that has historically managed budgets responsibly, communicated with all of the stakeholders, and has always been mindful of balancing the needs of the students with the demands of the taxpayers. Dwayne has the right blend of caring, knowledge, dedication and constructive criticism to be an outstanding addition to the Souhegan Board. Please join us in voting for Dwayne Purvis on March 10.

*Jeanne and Will Ludt
Amherst*

*Sincerely,
Brandy Pierce
Amherst*

Thank You to Town Snow Plow Drivers

To the editor:

I wanted to recognize the hard work that our town plow drivers do during these difficult winter months. As I was driving during some of the peak hours of the blizzard last week my car became terribly stuck in the snow as I was turning on to Holly Hill Drive from 101 around 9:00am. I tried unsuccessfully to dig my car out myself for at least 30-40 minutes although the bitter cold and blowing snow certainly made it feel like an eternity. Fortunately for me Ken (or Kent as I didn't quite catch his name due to the howling winds), arrived and finished digging my car out of very deep snow and then plowed a path for me to get home. I work at Catholic Medical Center as a registered nurse. I must report to keep our roads safe despite awful weather and road conditions because my employer, co-workers and patients depend on me. I could have stayed at work and waited for road and weather conditions to improve, but I was also needed at home. I had a sick and nursing daughter waiting on me. I needed to be home if at all possible. Ken (Kent) was a real class act and exemplary representation of our town. Thanks to him I was able to get home and my whole family appreciate his efforts and time in helping me get there.

No one likes winter (certainly not me...I came here a few years ago from Florida), but please remember that the road crew is doing their best. They help us when we need them most. They are working awful hours away from their families in bitter conditions that most of us wouldn't even attempt to go out in. So the next time you pick up your knocked down mailbox or complain about the end of your drive-way being buried by the plow, please remember the folks behind the wheel are people like Kent...helping us out when we need it. They aren't knocking down your mailbox or burying your freshly dug out driveway purposefully, they are trying to keep our roads safe for travel, which is very important for our emergency and essential personnel. They aren't helping just people like me...but also you and your family. They are working hard to keep the roads cleared for you as well in the event that you or your family you have an emergency. So instead of complaining, recognize the hard work our town employees do everyday (and night)!

Dwayne Purvis for Souhegan School Board

To the editor:

Greetings neighbors of Amherst! For those of you that I have not had the privilege to meet, I am Dwayne Purvis. I am a candidate for the open seat on the Souhegan Cooperative School Board and I need your vote.

After a long and exhaustive search, my wife, family, and I were delighted to settle in Amherst New Hampshire in September 2000. To us Amherst is a family-friendly and education-conscious environment. We are blessed to have neighbors who are kind, intelligent, hard working, and generous - attributes of great people who make up a great town.

Our children have been fortunate to participate in activities and sports programs offered by the Amherst Parks and Recreation Department. They have also enjoyed the resources and programs offered by the town library. More importantly, our children have thrived in the Amherst Schools and Souhegan High School. Nearly every teacher or administrator that knows my wife and I realize that we have very high academic expectations of our children and our schools. Most of you have moved here for the exact same reasons.

I have a bachelor's degree in Electrical Engineering. I am enjoying over 35 years creating logic circuits typically implemented in microprocessor based systems. As it is with many of you who work, I love my work, and it is easy to get lost in it. Like you, we work very hard providing for our family.

I love my town. It is easy to assume that the outstanding resources and reputation of our town will persist and my involvement is unnecessary. If I choose not to participate in decisions being made in my town, then someone else will decide for me. If I choose not to vote in town elections, then someone else makes decisions for my children, my schools, my town, and some of these decisions may impact the reputation of my town, and my property values.

Three years ago I started attending school board meetings regularly. I learned an incredible amount about the inner workings of our schools. This also presented opportunities to ask questions or discuss concerns with board members and administrators.

Two years ago I was given the opportunity to serve on the Souhegan Advisory Finance Committee. I came to the SAFC with an open mind and without an agenda. With four out of six other members on the committee, we enjoyed a great working relationship with the administration and the school board. With integrity, we successfully validated budgets that are responsible, and appropriate for the levels and quality of education that the school board chooses for our district.

This experience was a real eye opener. Given the recent public discussion, initiated by a disgruntled member of this committee, I hope all citizens of the town realize what can happen when people who have agendas or made up minds, join committees like this.

Neighbors, we are living in serious times that require serious people to implement serious solutions. Given the current enrollment projections trend downward, the membership of the school board must be proactive, pragmatic, and responsible. Under no circumstances should the board experiment with, or waste time debating schemes, that may impact the academic excellence, achievement, and reputation that Souhegan High School has enjoyed since opening its doors. Two other issues that are a concern to me are consistency in grading, and fairness in grading.

I hope that more people will take the time and get involved in our schools and our town. Those who show up to vote get to decide for our children, our school districts, our town, our property values, and our reputation.

I am grateful that you have taken the time to allow me to share some thoughts. I am Dwayne Purvis, candidate for the Souhegan Cooperative School Board. I desire to serve you, I appreciate you, and I need your vote. If you will be out of town on Election Day, please stop at the Town Hall and get an absentee ballot. Otherwise, see you on Tuesday, March 10, 2015 between 6:00AM and 8:00PM at Souhegan High School.

*Dwayne Purvis
Amherst*

► Amherst Candidates Night continued from page 1

terms unless noted) • Town – two Selectmen, one Cemetery Trustee, two Library Trustees, one Supervisor of the Checklist (for a one year term), one Town Treasurer, one Trustee of the Trust Fund and three Zoning Board of Adjustment Members • Amherst School District – one School Board Member •


Souhegan School District (Amherst resident) – one School Board Member.

In the event of inclement weather, a decision about cancellation will be made by 4 pm. Please call 673-5171 or check ACTV20. There is no alternate date scheduled.

COMEBACK ATHLETE OF THE MONTH

Athlete: Delaney Corcoran, Amherst Middle School
Injury: Lateral Ankle Sprain
Physical Therapist: Laura Jackson, DPT, ATC

Delaney's Story: Delaney came to Apple Therapy following a lateral ankle sprain during the fall cross country season. Delaney was placed in a walking boot for three weeks then referred to physical therapy. Therapy initially focused on restoring ROM and gentle strengthening which then progressed to dynamic balance, plyometrics, and return to sport activities. While progress was slow Delaney worked hard in physical therapy to strengthen her ankle and get back to the activities she loves. Upon discharge from physical therapy Delaney was able to return to running, dance and skiing. We wish Delaney all the best in her future athletic endeavors!



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