

ASB Ways & Means Committee Minutes

August 3, 2020

Held via Zoom

Attendees: Victoria Parisi (Chair), Christine Grayson, Jeff Candito, and Kelly Schmidt

The meeting began at 6:05pm.

Processes

Ms. Parisi asked Ms. Grayson if she would take minutes for W&M meetings going forward. Ms. Grayson agreed to this. Minutes, as taken, will be formally approved and/or amended at the next meeting, with acceptance/amendments so noted in subsequent minutes.

Discussion began with processes for the current W&M year. Due to Right-To-Know laws, all members should be using their SAU emails for communication. Ms. Parisi has already met with Elizabeth Kuzsma (Amherst School Board Chair) and Michele Croteau (SAU 39 Business Administrator) to set dates for W&M full committee meetings, as well as sub committee meetings. (All meetings are scheduled through Zoom at this time.) The process this year will be a little different and faster. Communication with Ms. Croteau has been outstanding thus far. She has been answering questions in a timely manner. Ms. Parisi said the committee should continue to funnel any questions through her, and she will communicate them to Ms. Croteau. Her goal is a two day turn-around time to submit the questions to Ms. Croteau.

More W&M members are needed. A full committee consists of seven regular members and two alternates. Currently, the committee has four confirmed regular members (Ms. Parisi, Ms. Grayson, Mr. Candito, and Ms. Schmidt), with a possible fifth (Jack Bielagus) to be confirmed. Additionally, Frank Brown is serving as an alternate this year.

A question was asked as to the difference in duties between regular and alternate members. Ms. Parisi will follow up on this question. Discussion followed on avenues to share the need for additional members. Suggestions including asking the ASB to make an announcement during their meetings, and posting on social media. All interested parties should contact Nate Jensen, Amherst School District Moderator, at ngjensen@mac.com.

Ms. Parisi asked the committee members to each email her their top three sub-committee preferences to her. The goal is to assign two W&M members to each sub-committee.

Once the budget is presented to the ASB, Ms. Croteau will hold a meeting with W&M shortly thereafter to go through all of the files pertaining to the budget. The ASB will be invited to attend as well. The ASB will be having more budget work sessions in order to expedite the budget process. The window for submitting questions via the Google form will be shorter, but the committee will decide on a way to gather questions in one place for submission to Ms. Croteau, by Ms. Parisi.

Other issues discussed include:

1. Date-stamping versions of the budget, so everyone (SAU staff and W&M) is looking at the same version.
2. The separate sheet kept last year of budget changes became confusing to W&M, with much room for error when trying to do additional analysis. The continual changes were not recorded in the actual budget document, rendering the sorting tools for some of the google sheets much less useful.

3. Updated information, such as benefit cost estimates, ideally should be updated as they occur. The same applies to errors that are found.
4. W&M would like to know specifically what changes are made (perhaps having the running separate sheet with changes, as well as incorporating those changes into the budget).

During sub-committee meetings, a W&M member should take notes (a meeting summary, not minutes) to send to the full W&M committee for review before the next full committee meeting.

Re-opening

Ms. Parisi gave an overview of the current draft of the re-opening plan. There are many details to be worked out; the estimates of costs related to re-opening we are seeing now will change and have additions. Large cost items are Teacher Professional Development and Ventilation/HVAC Work. There is a possibility of union re-negotiations (Amherst Education Association [ASSA] and Amherst Support Staff Association [ASSA]) which could have a significant financial impact. The SAU is working to re-allocate funds from the approved FY20-21 budget to accommodate these costs. The possibility of calling a special meeting to request money from the taxpayers does exist. If this is the case, W&M can weigh in on this. More information is needed before that decision can be made. Ms. Croteau has told Ms. Parisi that spending is frozen, except for curriculum needs tied directly to student education. CARES Act funding is based on Title I classification; ASD's allotment is \$22,622.96.

The next SAU Board meeting is August 10, 2020. The next ASB meeting is August 17, 2020. If there are financial implications to any of the agenda items for these meetings, W&M may convene to discuss them. The respective agendas should be posted a few days before each meeting.

If there are any questions in the meantime, email Ms. Parisi.

The meeting ended at 7:00pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Christine Grayson