

1 SAU #39 Reconfiguration Sub-Committee

2 Tuesday, March 26th, 2019

3 Meeting Minutes- Not Approved

4 Attendees: Adam Steel- Superintendent, Meg Beauchamp- Director of Student Services, Porter
5 Dodge- Director of SAU #39 Operations, Sarah Lawrence- Chair/MVVS Board Member, David
6 Chen- SCSB Member, Laura Taylor- SCSB Member, Jim Manning- SCSB Member, John
7 Glover- ASD Board Member, Ellen Grudzien- ASB Member, and Stephen O'Keefe- MV Board
8 Member (via video conferencing).

9 Minute Taker: Danae Marotta

10 Public: Alison M. Minutelli, Esq. Wadleigh, Starr and Peters, Manchester, NH and Kelly
11 Schmidt, Amherst NH.

12 I. Call to Order

13 **Superintendent, Mr. Adam Steel, called the meeting to order at 4:00PM.**

14 He then explained for the new members that they had met a couple of weeks ago with Ms.
15 Lawrence elected Chair. Ms. Taylor, Mr. Manning and Mr. Chen are representing Souhegan, Ms.
16 Grudzien and Mr. Glover are representing Amherst and then Ms. Lawrence and Mr. Glover
17 representing Mont Vernon.

18 The committee suggested that they have a professional guide them through the process, with
19 knowledge in real estate, collective bargaining, SAU. Mr. Dean Eggert, will be here for most
20 meetings as well but had a previous commitment, Ms. Minutelli is here in his place.

21 They set up a Trello Board as well and will be happy to help get people started. Additionally, the
22 name has changed and is now the SAU #39 Reconfiguration Sub-Committee.

23 He then asked if the Committee has access to the Trello Board.

24 All of the meetings and minutes will be on the left, any documents are listed here with the
25 original Articles of Agreement. There is a list of items to address and then the agendas. They are
26 trying to keep everything in one place.

27 The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, April 11th 4-5:30PM at the MVVS, just prior to the
28 MV Board Meeting.

29 He then turned it over to Chair, Ms. Sarah Lawrence.

30 Ms. Lawrence asked Ms. Minutelli if they have everything they need to get started in the
31 process.

32 Ms. Minutelli replied that it looks like it has been talked about for a while and they have the right
33 Statute and the Articles of Agreement. It is her understanding that it is more of a middle school
34 reconfiguration and then would be an amendment to those articles. In short, the answer is yes.

- 35 Mr. Chen asked if it was only the 5th grade from Amherst that would be transitioning to SCSD.
- 36 Mr. Steel reminded Mr. Chen that it is also the MV 6th grade.
- 37 Mr. Chen asked about teachers that are on previous CBA's.
- 38 Ms. Landwehrle replied that it is not a huge difference in teachers.
- 39 Mr. Chen added that he is foreseeing that the contract being the biggest hurdle.
- 40 Ms. Minutelli asked about the CBA at Soughegan.
- 41 Mr. Steel replied that they don't have a CBA but rather a set of policies.
- 42 Mr. Chen asked about guiding principles.
- 43 Ms. Minutelli replied, yes, in the sense that there will be a general path, but then a lot of
44 branches. You will have to amend the articles of agreement, which is a straightforward process,
45 and then that will need to go before the public hearing process and then the legislative bodies.
- 46 Mr. Steel added that the Amherst CBA is in year 1 of 4, the ASSA (for support staff) is in year 1
47 of 5, the Souhegan set of polices is in year 1 of 2, and Mont Vernon is in year 1 of 3.
- 48 Mr. O'Keefe suggested creating a map, looking for potential obstacles, looking at pros and cons.
- 49 Ms. Minutelli replied that the CBA piece is something that she would like to come back to.
50 Although, she does not handle negotiation, someone in their office can best handle that. She has
51 made a note for the next time.
- 52 Mr. Glover asked to what extent does status quo stay status quo until such time that they either
53 choose or not choose to organize.
- 54 Mr. Steel noted that ultimately they will end up with a warrant article that amends the Articles of
55 Agreement based on what is determined by the three boards.
- 56 Ms. Lawrence asked what is the logical first step.
- 57 Mr. Chen suggested that they know all of their scenarios.
- 58 Mr. Steel added that the labor piece will not be determined until this is executed. They will not
59 know until later on.
- 60 Mr. Glover asked what are the other issues.
- 61 Ms. Minutelli replied they need to decide what are the grade levels that you are focused on and
62 that can narrow the focus. But fundamentally, they would have the same student issues and
63 employment questions.
- 64 Mr. Steel replied that he is thinking that Amherst 5-12th and MV 6th-12th.
- 65 Ms. Lawrence added that she is not sure that it is ironed out. People are asking why would they
66 keep just K-4 in one district and K-5 in another, it does not make too much sense.

- 67 Mr. Glover suggested full consolidation Pre-K-12.
- 68 Ms. Grudzien asked would they consider moving 8th graders to the Annex.
- 69 Mr. Steel noted that the Prek-12th consolidation is a non-starter particularly to Mont Vernon.
- 70 Ms. Lawrence added that she has a feeling that is accurate.
- 71 Ms. Steel noted that educationally it makes the most sense to keep the SAU #39 5th graders
72 together. Although the space might be a challenge, that is a consideration.
- 73 Ms. Lawrence added that she thought it was the point to be student centered.
- 74 Assistant Superintendent, Ms. Christine Landwehrle, replied that she has gotten feedback from
75 teachers at AMS noting that when the MV 7th graders go to AMS they are not as independent as
76 the ASD 7th graders. The self-direction and independence is not in the same place and makes
77 sense if you think about class size.
- 78 Mr. Steel added that Amherst has not thought about what their long range facility plans are.
- 79 Mr. Glover asked Mr. Steel if he would speak to using the Annex.
- 80 Mr. Steel replied that they looked at using the Annex for 5th grade a year ago, they looked at a
81 couple of things. There were a couple of reasons why not. First, there would not be a cost
82 savings as they would have to duplicate programs from the middle school. There are also costs to
83 duplicate the same access to resources.
- 84 Ms. Grudzien clarified Mr. Steel's comments.
- 85 Mr. Steel added that it would be a 5th school in the SAU, with issues around bus routes, food
86 service etc. The biggest issue is around Special Education, PT, OT and Speech services.
- 87 Ms. Grudzien asked about the 8th graders using the Annex.
- 88 Mr. Steel replied that that they would not have the 8th grade in the Annex and still consider them
89 part of AMS. Then there is the political issue with 8th graders, there is a concern about parents
90 regarding relationships.
- 91 Ms. Grudzien added that she sees it as an advantage for their 8th graders taking advanced
92 courses.
- 93 Ms. Lawrence asked if there was anyway to configure this so that they have flexibility in regards
94 to what Amherst decides with facilities.
- 95 Mr. Steel replied that it has to be clear.
- 96 Ms. Minutelli added that it is easier to get in than out.
- 97 Ms. Lawrence asked Mr. Glover what his thoughts are regarding facilities in Amherst.
- 98 Mr. Glover replied that they only got 24% of Amherst voters.

- 99 Ms. Grudzien added that it is a much bigger question.
- 100 Mr. Manning added that he has been hearing this conversation for three years now. He then
101 suggested that they put 6, 7th and 8th graders together at AMS, keep the MV 5th graders where
102 they are, and for a short period of time put portables at Wilkins for the 5th graders and build an
103 elementary school.
- 104 Ms. Landwehrle added that she has been looking at the research surrounding configuration of
105 schools supports K-8 for highest academic achievement. There is compelling information out
106 there.
- 107 She added that she can look at more configurations and they felt really strongly about 5-8, with
108 the 5th grade was self-contained. It was interesting about 5th graders and that is when the social
109 problems start. Transitioning in 5th grade, before the social issues, allows them time to transition
110 and 6th grade is a lot easier.
- 111 Ms. Grudzien added that it can be designed in the elementary school as well.
- 112 Ms. Landwehrle noted her concern for having the 5th graders in portables and not having access
113 to innovation and design.
- 114 Discussion ensued.
- 115 Ms. Landwehrle added that they would need 6 additional trailers including the 2 they already
116 have.
- 117 Ms. Lawrence added that they are a little more aligned. The question is will the boards agree K-4
118 and 5-8, with potentially shared expenses at AMS. She then asked Mr. O'Keefe his thoughts.
- 119 Mr. O'Keefe remarked that adding portables at the Wilkins will not happen.
- 120 Ms. Landwehrle added that they are getting full at the MVVS.
- 121 Ms. Lawrence added that she is hearing 5th grade and if they go down the path can they change it
122 later on.
- 123 Ms. Taylor asked about transportation time for MV students to go to AMS.
- 124 Mr. Steel replied that from AMS to MV its about 17 min. It is no doubt that MV bus routes are
125 longer.
- 126 Mr. Dodge added that he knows that they are talking short term solutions, but there is nothing
127 more unsafe than a portable classroom as far as security and safety are concerned.
- 128 Ms. Taylor asked about putting the portable close to the building.
- 129 Mr. Dodge replied it can be looked at and would definitely be safer.
- 130 Mr. Steel replied that the costs for used portables are around \$100 per sq. ft. to purchase. New
131 portables are range from \$150- \$175 installed, and new construction is around \$250- \$275 per
132 sq. ft.

133 Mr. Dodge added that they were very close with building a 4/5 elementary school. It got voted
134 down when someone came up with the idea that you can also build at the Baboosic Lake Road
135 property.

136 Mr. Steel noted that Mr. Manning's point was to move the AMS 5th graders to Wilkins in
137 portables, have the Cooperative be 6-12th, AMS doesn't require any additions or portables. Mr.
138 O'Keefe's point is to Amherst 5-12, MV 6-12th and then gives Amherst time to figure out their
139 5th grade over time.

140 Ms. Grudzien noted that they can also add in MV over time.

141 Mr. Steel replied, yes, and the 3rd option is 5th -12th for everyone, with a small addition or
142 portables at AMS.

143 Mr. Glover added that their input needs to be weighed.

144 Ms. Minutelli added those are different factors that they want to figure it out fairly soon. She
145 then asked if this is something that they are looking at for the next annual meeting.

146 Ms. Lawrence replied, yes.

147 Ms. Minutelli noted that she would be looking for input after their next meeting.

148 Superintendent Steel described the three options.

- 149 1. The Coop is 6th -12th for both ASD and MVVS. MV 5th graders stay where they are and
150 ASD 5th graders go into portables at Wilkins.
- 151 2. Combination of grade levels 5th -12th.
- 152 3. MV and Amherst 5th -12th graders in both, and somehow both included at AMS with an
153 addition/portables.

154 Mr. Glover then asked about costs.

155 Mr. Steel replied that Option 1 would be the most expensive.

156 Ms. Lawrence asked for a straw poll.

157 Mr. Dodge- #2, Mr. Steel -educationally 3, Mr. Glover- 3, Ms. Taylor- 2, Mr. O'Keefe – 2, Mr.
158 Chen- 3, Ms. Beauchamp- 3, Ms. Landwehrle- 3 but she would be comfortable with 2, and Ms.
159 Grudzien- 2.

160 Ms. Grudzien added that she is comfortable with baby steps.

161 Ms. Kelly Schmidt, Amherst NH, noted that she is concerned with the costs and chose option 3.
162 She then asked how far off are the ams repairs, 5 years or 2 years.

163 Superintendent Steel replied there is nothing that needs to be done immediately.

164 Ms. Lawrence replied option 2.

165 Ms. Schmidt asked about option for Amherst to back out if needed.

166 Ms. Minutelli replied, possibly, it is easier to get in than to get out.

167 Ms. Lawrence asked if they were to look at option 2, would that change the scope of work.

168 Ms. Minutelli added that would change the space and would portables might be less work in that
169 context but not an ideal option.

170 Ms. Landwehrle suggested that Principal Bernasconi come to the next meeting.

171 Ms. Taylor asked for the driving factors around reconfiguration.

172 Ms. Landwehrle explained that they were looking at providing greater services to students.

173 Ms. Lawrence mentioned that MV is a small cohort and they are ready for more kids in their
174 class, and it would help with transition issues, and they do not do as well with the schedule
175 change.

176 Mr. Glover added that the MV students are not able to participate in the co-curricular athletic
177 programs.

178 He added that that he wants to state it publically that he is in favor of a full consolidation.

179 Ms. Grudzien disagreed, remarking that they will have a lot of push back.

180 Mr. Glover remarked that it wouldn't cost anything. He added that number #2 is flawed with 5th
181 and 6th moving around.

182 Ms. Lawrence added that they need to go back to their boards and get feedback from the public.
183 They really need to figure out where they are going.

184 She then added that she would like to get feedback.

185 Mr. Steel asked the committee if they felt comfortable with Mr. Minutelli and Mr. Eggert begin
186 amending the Articles of Agreement using option #2 as a template.

187 Ms. Minutelli replied, yes, she will get started and they can adjust it.

188 Mr. Glover asked about Board representation. He then noted if there are flaws to please fix them.

189 Mr. Glover then asked Ms. Minutelli to flag anything that looks out noted, it would be helpful to
190 have her recommendations.

191 Ms. Minutelli noted that the AMS building would transfer to the cooperative.

192 Mr. Chen asked if the bonds are close to expiring.

193 Mr. Steel replied, yes.

194 Ms. Lawrence asked if it feels like they have clear direction for actionable steps going forward.

195 The Committee agreed.

196 She added that the next meeting is April 11th and they should schedule more meetings. They
197 need to keep momentum with their short timeline.

198 Mr. Glover added that one of the driving forces is access to resources. He added that there are
199 great Special Education programs at AMS.

200 Ms. Beauchamp explained that they are looking to having a continuity of programs at all districts
201 at all grade levels. They could hire a PT instead of contracting, and those problems are common
202 and constant. They cannot simply move staff back and forth

203 Ms. Schmidt added the benefit that she sees for SHS is a long term benefit and they have a
204 declining enrollment but not for long. Right now, the benefit is to AMS but later on for SHS.

205 Ms. Taylor asked about the teacher certification.

206 Ms. Lawrence added that the state DOE is 5-8 or 5-12.

207 Ms. Beauchamp added that with Special Education, it is still K-8.

208 She then thanked everyone for great discussion and the next meeting date is April 11th at 4:00PM
209 at the MVVS. She added that she would like to set another meeting.

210 Discussion ensued.

211 She then thanked Ms. Minutelli and Ms. Schmidt.

212 The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, May 2nd at 4:00PM for the MVVS.

213 II. Meeting Adjourned

214 **Ms. Sarah Lawrence, adjourned the meeting at 5:30 PM.**

215