

1 **Amherst School Board**
2 **Thursday, October 17, 2013**

3
4 **ATTENDANCE**

5
6 Amherst School Board

7 Peg Bennett, Lucienne Foulks, Amy Facey, James Manning, and Paul Prescott

8
9 Administrative Team

10 Peter Warburton, Gerry St. Amand, Porter Dodge, Patty Wons, Renea Sparks, Nicole
11 Heimarck, Betty Shankel

12
13 Minute Taker

14 Beth Penney

15
16 **CALL TO ORDER**

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18 Ms. Bennett called the meeting to order at 6:35pm.

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20 **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

21 FY15 Budget Committee introduction

22 Carol Holden introduced Michael Costolo the chair of the budget committee.

23 Michael introduced the members of the committee who were present at the meeting:

24 Linda Siwik, Gail Coad, Fred Iannelli, and Mark Vincent.

25 Principals' reports

26 No questions for the principals'.

27 Board Commitments

28 Ms. Foulks stated that the team was unable to meet in October. This broad commitment is
29 hard to define. The goal is to keep with the strategic plan, celebrate successes and use
30 those successes as a springboard to focus on areas of concern.

31 Mr. Warburton stated that they have discussed the accreditation process. This is an 18-
32 month time frame, which includes a self-study by the school and then peers from around
33 New England evaluate the school for four days based on the self-study.

34 Ms. Facey stated that her commitment is inspirational and effective teaching. The group
35 will focus on state standards and the teacher/ leadership evaluation. A team of K-12
36 faculty explored the anchor standards in the Common Core. She will have more

37 information about this process next month.

38 Ms. Heimarck discussed the work of the evaluation committee. They have focused on
39 rolling out draft standards for professional teaching to staff by having faculty forums to
40 solicit feedback. She discussed how the committee came up with the standards and what
41 was used to inform the work of creating the draft standards. Teachers engaged in a
42 protocol to provide the committee with feedback and they used survey monkey to access
43 the entire document. The leadership standards are still being developed and will be
44 explored further. The national board just put out standards for leaders and the committee
45 wants to look at those points of view before finishing the draft standards.

46 Mr. Manning and Ms. Heimarck discussed impactful teaching and how the schools will
47 evaluate if teachers are impactful. A study was done for 5 years across the state to look
48 at which teaching strategies have the biggest impact on student growth. This study, the
49 MET study, was able to determine specific teaching strategies that impact growth for a
50 variety of students. The study used a variety of indicators including standardized tests,
51 teacher evaluations, and parent surveys. There needs to be a framework to evaluate the
52 effectiveness of a teacher and not the use of just one data point, the evaluation.

53 Mr. Prescott discussed the innovative technology plan. The group has created a reporting
54 format and created milestones with target dates for completion. They introduced a model
55 for technology evaluation. The technology team will continue to look into I39 and work
56 with teachers. They also want to ensure the FY15 budget supports the technology goals.

57 Mr. Manning discussed the SAU 39 strategic plan. The group has met with the SAU
58 board three times. SAU board members were asked to put a list of aspirational areas they
59 wanted to be part of the strategic plan and asked to interview two members of the
60 community. The consultant is putting together the data and it will be presented at the next
61 SAU board meeting. The strategic plan group would like to meet more often. Mr.
62 Manning is concerned that there is no timeline to help the group have the strategic plan
63 completed by August 2014.

64 Mr. Warburton stated that the discussion of creating a timeline is on the agenda for the
65 groups next meeting.

66 Mr. Manning stated that the group would also like to conduct a survey of the students,
67 900 surveys is the goal, for information to put into the strategic plan.

68 Ms. Bennett discussed her commitment of diligent fiscal oversight. The group has
69 decided to write a process manual for the budget process to have as a public document.
70 This will help people see how spending works. The goal is to have it completed at end of
71 school year. They will write the manual as the district goes through the budget process
72 this year.

73 **CONSENT AGENDA**

74 Ms. Bennett pulled and tabled the Minutes September 18, 2013. She asked for changes
75 from board be emailed to her and the board will review the minutes next month.

76 **Ms. Foulks made a motion to accept the consent agenda containing the Treasurer's**
77 **report August 2013 and the Unanticipated Revenue Donation to Student Activities-**
78 **Target Take Charge of Education \$138.06. Mr. Manning seconded the minutes and**
79 **the vote was unanimous.**

80 **PRESENTATIONS/REPORTS**

81 Effective and Inspirational teaching □ Environmental School

82 Science teachers and 6/8th graders to discuss environmental school

83 Bruce Fessenden discussed the tradition of taking AMS students to environmental school
84 for the last 35 years. He discussed why it is important in 6th grade to go outside and make
85 connections to ecosystems. For grade 8, environmental school expands the oceanography
86 unit and allows students to further connect their learning to real life experiences. Both
87 Nature's Classroom and Fairy Beach have the students in small group learning and give
88 them exploratory experiences. Students need to have experience outside the classroom to
89 cultivate life long learning.

90 Many 6th grade students discussed their environmental school experience including:

91 They took classes each day where they learned more than just about ecosystems. They
92 learned about energy, endangered species, interactions between ecosystems, dissection of
93 animals, animal adaptation and reproduction.

94 Most students loved this type of experience over reading in a textbook because they got
95 to experience what they were learning and not just read about it.

96 Meal times were family style with 10-12 students at a table. The left over food was put in
97 bin and weighed. This was a good realization of food waste and the students' waste
98 decreased over the week.

99 The field groups taught students about the outdoors. They went on hikes, played games,
100 and learned about how organisms live.

101 The cabins had a common room and 2 rooms with 12 beds each. The student discussed
102 what they did at night in the cabins after the evening activity and how the cabin groups
103 became closer by the end of the week.

104 The hikes were fun to be outdoors and learn. They learned what plants they could and
105 could not eat and went on a night hike.

106 Transition time was a chance to connect with classmates and teachers in different
107 settings. It happened 2-3 times per day to encourage interaction and socialization. There
108 were many options they had during transition time, which allowed for trust and

109 independence.

110 They loved the setting of being outdoors for learning. It was a more peaceful
111 environment. It was really hard to get bored. They made good relationships with all
112 students.

113 Mr. Fessenden introduced other teachers at the meeting including Amanda Rogers, Brad
114 Freeman, and Jayma Robinson.

115 Several 8th grade students discussed their environmental camp experience including:

116 They did not think ocean ecosystems mattered to their life. The experience made them
117 more engaged as the week went on and learned how everything was connected. The
118 learning was much more effective than reading in a book because they learned first hand
119 and will always remember the information.

120 They discussed the Erosion problem at the Camp Ellis and the debate about removing the
121 jetty. Seeing the damage and the jetty and experiencing the problem enhanced their
122 learning.

123 They learned that small actions can make a big difference. There were many starfish
124 stranded on beach and they were able to save many, but maybe not all. This idea can be
125 applied everyday to help someone or the environment.

126 Mr. Fessenden introduced Kelly Kalenik an 8th grade teacher.

127 FY15 Budget Assumptions

128 Ms. Shankel discussed revenues including Title 1 and IDEA grants are decreasing. For
129 state aide they will assume FY14, but this number is in flux and there may be some
130 decrease. Catastrophic and Medicaid are projected on the current year expenditures,
131 which are paid out at 74%. This is higher than last year. The Unreserved Fund Balance
132 (UFB) will be kept at 1% of the budget and the SAU will attempt to create savings during
133 FY14 to increase the UFB.

134 Ms. Shankel discussed enrollments for FY14 were projected to be 606 at Clark/Wilkins,
135 but there are 627 students. At AMS the projection was 677 students and there are 684.
136 For FY15 they will budget for 613 students at Clark/Wilkins and 633 students at AMS.

137 Ms. Shankel discussed historical staffing and enrollments. Staffing is large piece of the
138 budget to accommodate enrollments. There are 13 students per certified teacher, which
139 includes nurses, the librarian, and a few others. With a declining enrollment they will
140 always be playing catch-up because they cannot reduce the number of teachers as quickly
141 as the enrollment decreases.

142 She discussed class size and student load and staffing considerations including
143 administration, instructional services, facility maintenance, support staff, and teachers.

144 Ms. Shankel discussed Health Care, which will be a 10% increase from FY14. In FY14,
145 it was 14.6% of budget (\$3,551,576) and 13.7% of budget in FY07. She is hoping for
146 actual rates in the next 2 weeks. She explained how they have had health insurance cost
147 containment.

148 Mr. Manning and Ms. Shankel discussed the Compass program incentives, which give
149 employees bonuses depending on where they get their health care services.

150 Ms. Shankel discussed NH retirement and explained how this benefit has been shifted
151 from the state to districts. For non-certified staff it has stabilized at 10.77%. In FY14, it
152 was 0.9% of the budget (\$214,766). For certified staff it has stabilized at 14.16%. NH
153 retirement was 5.5% of FY14 budget (\$1,344,966).

154 Ms. Shankel discussed contracts for FY15. The AEA is still negotiating and the ASSA is
155 in the 3rd year of an agreement. New hires/ reductions will be calculated at MA step 5,
156 which is \$51,167. Four employees receive additional benefits for retirements.

157 She discussed the employment compensation index and consumer price index increases.

158 Ms. Shankel discussed operations. There will be no change for electricity. For the FY15
159 they will budget \$3.50 for oil and \$0.74/therm for natural gas. She discussed maintenance
160 and repairs need to budget for at AMS and at Clark/Wilkins.

161 She discussed the 1 year extension of the transportation contract and an increase of 2.7%
162 They will decrease bus sizes, the hours based calendar will be accommodated and 2
163 additional busses will be added for athletic and field trips. Food service is self-supporting
164 and has continued compliance with the new USDA regulations.

165 She discussed technology integration, technology infrastructure, replacement programs,
166 Smarter Balanced Assessment requirements, and communication.

167 Ms. Shankel discussed initiatives including the Math program implementation.

168 Ms. Heimark discussed the math implementation resources further and the anticipated
169 adaptation of resources for FY15.

170 Ms. Shankel discussed the other initiatives including staff supervision and evaluation,
171 universal screening and progress monitoring assessments, alignment of pedagogy to
172 standards, and professional development.

173 She discussed strategic planning including full day kindergarten, language at the
174 elementary level, and the hours based calendar. She discussed the Facilities Maintenance
175 Trust.

176 Ms. Shankel concluded with the budget time line including the Saturday deliberative on
177 Feb. 1st.

178 FY15 Budget Committee Assignments

179 Ms. Bennett suggested looking at assignments outside of the meeting.

180 **PUBLIC TIME**

181 Jake Cullen a concerned citizen and volunteer spoke to the board. He discussed the life
182 styles of people and children being less active and the declining health of society.
183 Schools are replacing books with devices. Baseball and soccer are being replaced by
184 internet and Facebook. He discussed is own childhood and how socialization is essential
185 for growing up. Outside groups are no longer allowed to distribute fliers at the schools.
186 His concern is that by not allowing any organization to show families what the town has
187 to offer is doing a disservice to the community. He asked the board to consider allowing a
188 single recruitment flier once a year per year for any organization and access to advertise
189 to the community. With the new web page the community page has disappeared. He
190 asked the board to please allow organizations to get in front of children and parents.

191 Paul Leveque stated that he presented last year and had the same discussion. He has never
192 gotten a response and as a recreation commission member is asking again. He stated that
193 he will not go away and fliers should be allowed because the policy says so. The board
194 needs to make a decision and he felt like he was ignored last fall.

195 **Ms. Foulks made a motion to go into Non public Session at 8:15pm under RSA 91-**
196 **A:3 II (a)(b)(c). Mr. Manning seconded the motion and the role call was all yes.**

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