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Amherst School Board
February 17, 2014

ATTENDANCE

Amherst School Board
Peg Bennett, Lucienne Foulks, Amy Facey, James Manning, and Paul Prescott

Administrative Team
Peter Warburton and Gerry St. Amand

Minute Taker
Beth Penney

CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Bennett called the meeting to order at 6:31pm.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Principals' reports

Mr. Prescott stated that the AMS cheerleading team participated in a competition over the weekend and came in first in their division. They did a wonderful job.

Ms. Foulks asked if the Invention Convention tomorrow would be postponed if there were snow.

Mr. St. Amand stated that if it was postponed it would be held Wednesday night, which conflicts with Wells Speaking Contest.

Ms. Foulks asked about the NH Symphony.

Mr. St. Amand stated that Peter Warburton initiated the connection to the symphony. A group from the symphony is coming to Clark/ Wilkins and Mont Vernon Village School on Thurs. Feb 20th and all 3rd and 4th graders will go to Nashua to see the Symphony in March.

Mr. Manning asked about the electronic report card.

Mr. St. Amand stated that the school is looking for a system that connects with current system to do digital report cards and one that meets the College and Career readiness standards. They are working to introduce the electronic report card at Clark/Wilkins and Mont Vernon Village School first and will later connect with AMS.

36 Mr. Manning asked about the kindergarten registration, which was 56 kids less than
37 anticipated.

38 Mr. St. Amand stated that 83 students registered last year. This was a low number for the
39 first day of registration and they will have to wait and see what happens between now and
40 the fall. A few families have approached the school about a full day Kindergarten, which
41 will not be offered this year. 1st grade enrollment usually increases by 25%.

42 AMS Poetry Students

43 Ms. Bennett introduced Ms. Edmond and her students.

44 Ms. Edmond discussed the poetry unit their team did. The unit is used as a prelude for the
45 Wells Speaking Contest.

46 The students recited 5 Robert Frost and Edgar Allan Poe Poems.

47 The board told the students how proud and delighted they were that they came to share
48 their poems.

49 Mr. Warburton stated that the Nashua Symphony will be done annually and covered by
50 funds from the Bean Foundation. Last Saturday, he got the chance to go to State
51 Championship Mock Trial competition. SHS came in second and did a phenomenal job.
52 Many of them got their start with a mentor from AMS, Dick Vassar. Congratulations to
53 SHS.

54 **PUBLIC TIME**

55 Donna Riley, Marty Nevrla, John Bowkett, and John Hill spoke during public time.
56 Donna Riley presented a petition to the board discussing lighting on the Bean Field. The
57 petition and the signatures are attached to the minutes.

58 Ms. Bennett stated that someone would get back to the group once the board had
59 discussed the petition.

60 Ms. Riley asked why the application was withdrawn for the planning board.

61 Ms. Bennett stated that the board withdrew the application because they did not want to
62 be on the agenda without a professional study. The board has no intention of side
63 stepping the planning board.

64 Two senior Nursing students from St. Aslem's College attended the meeting to fulfill and
65 assignment where a group of eight students choose a town to study and a different person
66 is assigned to different aspects of the community. They are looking for priority problems
67 the schools have, education level, graduation rate, special education programs, substance
68 abuse rates, aide given for lunches, and many other topics.

69 The board and the Nursing students discussed how to answer their questions.

70 **ANNOUNCEMENTS** (Continued)

71 Board Commitments report

72 Mr. Prescott discussed his initiative, Innovative Technology. The FY15 proposed budget
73 is complete. The committee is looking at electronic grading starting K-4 and evaluating
74 vendors. There will be I39 planner workshops soon for posting Homework. This is a
75 shift in best practices. There was an I39 Parent partnership training. The committee is
76 determining the next steps for the evaluation of technology.

77 Ms. Foulks stated that the postponed presentation from tonight was about a shift in focus
78 for the Excellence commitment. The committee determined that getting involved in
79 another self-study is not the best use of resources. Mr. St. Amand and Mr. Dodge will
80 present the curriculum enrichment programs already in the schools and discuss if there is
81 use for them and should there be different avenues looked at. They will also discuss if
82 the programs support the curriculum and how to provide feeder program throughout the
83 district. The committee has also discussed getting proper funding to encourage a robotics
84 program at the Middle School. Kids can do Lego League through AMS, but there are
85 new innovative programs that could be a feeder program for the high school robotics
86 program.

87 Ms. Bennett discussed Diligent Fiscal Oversight. She discussed the budget manual,
88 which includes all of the state laws, every step of building the budget, and an explanation
89 of the public hearing and the deliberative session. The committee wants the principals to
90 look at it. The next step is to write about when the money is approved, spending the
91 money and accountability. The document is being written for all three school districts.

92 Mr. Manning discussed Strategic planning. The SAU board meeting will be used to
93 consolidate the 45 strategic issues that were identified. The SAU board will prioritize
94 those issues and identify the 3-5 top issues. Sub-committees will be formed to tackle the
95 3-5 issues chosen. The sub-committees will describe the issue and make a proposal. At
96 the meeting the SAU board may go back to look at the vision and mission statement to
97 help determine where to steer their work.

98 Mr. Warburton stated that there is some interest to look at a SAU board retreat and they
99 will set a date at the SAU board meeting.

100 Ms. Bennett stated that there is a fantastic list of 20 people who want to serve on sub
101 committees. These volunteers will be very helpful.

102 Ms. Facey discussed Teacher/ Leader Evaluation. She stated that the schools would do a
103 Thoughtful Classroom study in March, April, and May. The study is to test drive this
104 tool. The teachers have volunteered or have been recruited. These teachers have

105 attended a training and the evaluators have been trained. None of the evaluations from
106 this study will go on records because this is just a pilot. This is just the first component
107 of this program.

108 The board discussed how the pilot for this is behind schedule and that this is the only
109 program that will be piloted. Another program looked good, but does not have enough
110 data or tools included in it. If the trial run is not liked then they will look at other options.
111 The board also discussed the stakeholders involved in the process. They discussed how
112 the schools would determine if this were the program that will be chosen. The teachers
113 and evaluators will fill out a survey; the committee will review the surveys and make a
114 recommendation to the school board. There are multiple components to this tool.

115 Mr. Coughlan discussed that this tool best meets the goals of the schools and all
116 stakeholders agree this could be the right tool.

117 Mr. Warbruton stated that he has been part of the process, which began in 2012. The
118 process has been very thorough. He likes this tool a lot. The tool is very thorough. No
119 one is saying do not use this tool. Thoughtful Classroom fits the culture of SAU 39. The
120 model that has been used in the past is out of date. He discussed one aspect of the
121 Thoughtful Classroom process. The tool is clear and objective. The training is good and
122 thorough. The process is taking a little longer, but it will be worth it.

123 Ms. Facey stated that she would send an email explaining what has been done to date and
124 what the next steps are. She also discussed the state standards for literacy, which was the
125 focus of the in service day, today. Teachers looked at instructional shifts, text complexity
126 shifting, and examined student and teacher work to help connect state standards to work.
127 Curriculum Planning development and the PTA will present a parent night this spring to
128 help parents understand the standards in literacy. Recently the committee heard about the
129 grade book component of MMS and they will have another presentation from a different
130 vendor soon. Mr. Dodge will report out next month about Homework consistency at
131 AMS.

132 **CONSENT AGENDA**

133 Ms. Foulks pulled sections C-F, Donation to Special Revenue Fund- Energy North
134 Inc./ExxonMobil - \$500, Re-Allocation of Donation - \$2,721.80, Donation to Student
135 Activities- \$23.50 - Box Tops for Education, Rebate to General Fund- \$4,200 from
136 Public Service New Hampshire, Donations to General Fund for Martha Wagner
137 Memorial - \$5,180.00, of the Consent agenda.

138 Ms. Bennett pulled the minutes for January 15th, the public hearing.

139 **Ms. Bennett made a motion to accept the consent agenda containing the minutes for**
140 **January 7th and the Treasurer's report. Ms. Foulks seconded the motion and the**
141 **vote was unanimous.**

142 Ms. Foulks asked if Letter B, \$500 is going toward Math and Science and is this money
143 being used for Summer Math Intervention.

144 Ms. Bennett stated that the money used for the Summer Math Intervention is coming
145 from somewhere else. She will follow up on this with Ms. Shankel and Mr. Dodge.

146 Ms. Foulks asked if the rebate from PSNH goes back into the district.

147 Ms. Bennett will ask Mr. Miner about that.

148 The Board discussed the donation for the Martha Wagner Memorial and are grateful for
149 the donations

150 Ms. Bennett made the following change to the Jan. 15th minutes: “The operating budget
151 was developed with the help of the superintendent, building administration, and
152 SAU department heads. The board and the Ways and Means Committee looked at all
153 the lines of the budget and changes were made based on recommendations from the
154 Ways and Means. This budget represents diligent fiscal oversight and supports our
155 commitments to elementary and middle school excellence and strategic planning.”

156 **Ms. Foulks made a motion to accept the January 15th minutes as amended, the**
157 **Donation to Special Revenue Fund- Energy North Inc./ExxonMobil - \$500, Re-**
158 **Allocation of Donation - \$2,721.80, Donation to Student Activities- \$23.50 - Box**
159 **Tops for Education, Rebate to General Fund- \$4,200 from Public Service New**
160 **Hampshire, Donations to General Fund for Martha Wagner Memorial - \$5,180.00.**
161 **Mr. Prescott seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous.**

162 **Mr. Prescott made a motion to go into Non-public Section under RSA 91-A:3 II**
163 **(a)(b)(c) at 7:26pm. Mr. Manning seconded the motion and the roll call was all yes.**