

1 **Amherst School Board**
2 **Tuesday, August 28, 2012**

3
4 **ATTENDANCE**

5
6 Amherst School Board

7 Peg Bennett, Lucienne Foulks, Amy Facey (6:20pm), James Manning, and Paul Prescott

8
9 Administrative Team

10 Peter Warburton, Porter Dodge, Gerry St. Amand, Renea Sparks, and Betty Shankel

11
12 Minute Taker

13 Beth Penney

14
15 **CALL TO ORDER**

16 Ms. Bennett called the meeting to order at 6:02pm.

17 **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

18 Ms. Bennett stated that the SAU kicked off the year with a back to school breakfast and
19 featured young talent from the district. It was fantastic and exciting to see young people
20 speak with such composure and be so eloquent. There were also fantastic and inspiring
21 words from the superintendent and others. Ms. Bennett thanked all of the teachers for
22 being there. She stated welcome to a great school year.

23 Principals' reports

24 Ms. Bennett stated there would be no official report till September.

25 Mr. St. Amand stated that there are 633 students enrolled at Clark/ Wilkins (CW). This is
26 higher than projected, because there are 43 new students in grades 1-4. The buildings
27 look great. Pick-up patrol is up and running. Parents can log-on and change dismissal
28 plans up to the last few minutes of school. The link is on the school website and pre-K
29 and morning K will not have access yet. There is a Service dog coming to Wilkins, but
30 she will not start till Sept. 20th.

31 Mr. Dodge stated that AMS would open with 739, which is slightly under the projected
32 number. There are 22 new students. Registration day was great last week and went very
33 smoothly. The building looks great. There is no water leaking from roof and the roof
34 was finished last week. The library now has smaller windows that are more energy
35 efficient. The cafeteria is a nova blue and yellow and looks great. All of the lockers are
36 now Eagle Red. Some of the lockers are original lockers from 1974 and were fixed or
37 replaced. Rodger Langley and the custodial staff did a great job. The garden out back
38 looks good. The produce out there will be used in the life skills classes and in the
39 cafeteria. He thanked the 7th grade teachers who started the ten beds and who have plans
40 to increase the number. In front of the building, Linda Ferrington created an outdoor

41 classroom with a stage and planters. Linda's daughter helped to get the plants and the
42 students put the area together. SHS put all staff on buses to visit all of the district's
43 schools. Mr. Dodge received good feedback when he asked for more communication
44 between the high school and AMS. Former students presented to SHS staff about their
45 AMS experiences. Mr. Dodge spoke of two students that presented to the SHS staff and
46 what a great job they did.

47 Ms. Bennett stated that her son has been in district since K and he presented at the
48 Wilkins School to the SHS staff about his K and 1st grade experience.

49 Correspondence

50 Ms. Bennett read a formal letter of resignation to the board from Amy Burke. She stated
51 that they are very sorry to see Amy go.

52 **PUBLIC TIME**

53 Len Gerzon addressed the board because he is running for State Representative for
54 Amherst/Bedford. He stated that he is a strong supporter of education and was one of the
55 leading people to open Peabody Mill and Joppa Hill. He discussed his goals and hopes
56 that the board and administration will contact him with questions.

57 **CONSENT AGENDA**

58 Ms. Facey pulled the May 17th minutes. Ms. Bennett pulled the June 21st minutes and the
59 unanticipated revenue.

60 Ms. Facey asked that the May 17 minutes be changed in the following way: Line 38: in
61 order to encourage consistency among districts; get rid of even though they are already
62 on trimesters. She asked the June 21st minutes be changed in the following way: Line
63 198: Jen Eccleston

64 Ms. Bennett asked to change the June 21st minutes in the following way: in the consent
65 agenda – table may 17 – not may 1st; line 45: say May 17; Line 46: May 1st

66 Ms. Shankel stated that with the default budget the SAU was looking for a way to
67 purchase the rest of the Math in Focus books. They pursued a grant from NH Charitable
68 Foundation and received a grant for \$20,000 to help buy textbooks.

69 **Ms. Foulks made a motion to accept the consent agenda as amended containing the**
70 **Minutes for May 17, 2012 and June 21, 2012, Treasurer's report for June 2012 and**
71 **July 2012, Resignation, and Unanticipated Revenue donation to the General Fund –**
72 **New Hampshire Charitable Foundation - \$11,912.00. Mr. Prescott seconded the**
73 **motion and the vote was unanimous.**

74 **PRESENTATIONS/REPORTS**

75 Preliminary Costs for NH Retirement and Healthcare

76 Ms. Shankel stated that health insurance could see a 7.5%-10% increase. The SAU will
77 be given a guaranteed maximum percentage in November and then in April/May will be
78 given the actual rate. A 10% increase is \$340,000, which is over 1% of the budget. Over
79 the past years 10-20+% has been the increase every year, which adds 1-2% to the budget
80 each year. This has a large cumulative effect on the taxes. The school has decreased the
81 benefits that the insurance provides and is offering a new high deductible plan. They are
82 also piloting the Compass Program where employees can shop for services, but are
83 limited in the number of services, which are mostly preventative.

84 Ms. Shankel stated that for NH Retirement there are two rates and both are going up:
85 9.77% for employees and 13.16% for teachers. Combined this is a 2.1% increase to the
86 budget. NH Retirement had traditionally had a 35% contribution from the state and now
87 all the cost is given back to the districts. This is 60+ million dollars shift to the taxpayers
88 in the state and now the cost shows up in the property tax bills through school districts
89 and the town. In the current budget, these costs are over 10% of the budget for Health
90 Insurance and NH retirement. This makes huge difference in taxes and determining the
91 budget.

92 Mr. Prescott stated that it is not too early to start talking budgets, especially when we
93 have to offset a large increase. The goal is to maintain the quality of the education as it
94 becomes more expensive. The board will have to work harder to keep the net increase
95 low. The board must communicate better with the community and the taxpayer about
96 what makes up the budget. This will give the community a chance to make a better-
97 informed decision when the vote happens. He is grateful to have this discussion now.

98 Superintendent Evaluation Committee

99 Mr. St. Amand passed out a copy of a document the committee had been working on. He
100 stated that they will be meeting soon and have a formal document by the end of
101 September for the SAU board to review. Then the committee will work on the staff
102 survey.

103 Mr. Manning stated that the process has been great. The committee is made up of
104 teachers, administration, school board members, and community members. The input has
105 been great and has focused on communication. The outcome will be a much-revised form
106 and evaluation tool that is segmented into criteria that all people can understand. They
107 have implemented language to integrate forward thinking criteria and managerial criteria.

108 The board discussed that this work is just for the evaluation of the superintendent, but
109 there has also been work done on the administrators and teachers evaluations also. The
110 board will be hearing about this at the September SAU board meeting. They also
111 discussed evaluations of the board members as well.

112 Mr. Warburton thanked Mr. St. Amand for heading up this committee. It will set the
113 SAU on a good path. He wants to survey the staff and school board members, also. This

114 is a consistent way to measure progress.

115 AMS and Clark/Wilkins School Goals

116 Mr. Dodge stated that the leadership team had set a goal to observe all of the teachers in
117 their 3rd year and that goal was met. The school is going to keep same three goals again.
118 Last year there were at least three staff meetings focused on RTI and this was the focus of
119 professional development. There was also monthly RTI training, which was a request that
120 came from the teachers and is not an initiative. RTI is a best practice and AMS is a pilot
121 site for the Department of Education. The school will continue to prepare for being an
122 RTI demonstration site next school year. Another goal was to improve communication.
123 They have done this by implementing the use of Sharepoint to communicate with the
124 staff and to be able to get messages from the administration about business items, reading
125 materials, and links to best practices. This is a great educational tool and means to
126 communicate with teachers. The last goal was to refine Core and More. Last year the
127 focus was on Math. The school has established a committee that is still working on
128 improving enrichment for students who are not struggling and do not need intervention.

129 The board discussed at length what RTI is. RTI stands for Response to Instruction. All
130 students are being monitored and teachers are better able to provide more instruction or
131 enrichment. RTI is intervention or acceleration not remediation. This is not only for
132 students who struggle, but also enrichment for students. There are probes and other
133 methods used to find where students are with content, so then the teacher can group
134 students and give them more enrichment or more support. All students get content
135 instruction, but how it is delivered could be different. An example is that teachers are
136 giving more pre-tests and post-tests. Teachers are learning strategies, getting support
137 from other teachers, and having best practices conversations. Schools are also looking at
138 the amount of content time students get.

139 The board discussed the benefits of AMS being a RTI demonstration school. This will
140 bring national attention to AMS. The school also receives free consultation from the
141 Brain Trust in Massachusetts and from the national RTI program. AMS will be showing
142 other schools and teachers how to better implement RTI. There are 6 or 7 training sites in
143 the state, but AMS is the only middle school. RTI is a national law and was part of No
144 Child Left Behind.

145 Mr. Warburton stated that at a future meeting he would have teachers come in to show
146 the levels of RTI, look at probes, and AMES web.

147 Ms. Bennett asked to hear from the teachers about Tier One students. Her impression
148 was that RTI was to catch kids before they become special education students. She glad
149 to hear there is enrichment also.

150 Mr. St. Amand gave out a handout to discuss the 8 goals, which were set at each grade
151 level. He stated that CW has not been trained in Sharepoint, but will have training soon.

152 He discussed how to read the goal summary sheet, reviewed the goals, and the
153 achievement of the goals for each grade. He also discussed some of the reasons for the
154 numbers shared, what the revised goals may be, and what new goals might be made. He
155 stated that the school has made good progress overall. Maybe for next year the school
156 will write a more global goal having to do with communication. The data and results for
157 each goal, collected by the teachers, was valuable to the administration.

158 The board thanked Mr. St. Amand for the great measureable and actionable data. They
159 look forward to seeing the results from this school year to see the progress of the
160 students, especially with the new Math program.

161 Mr. Warburton stated that they are trying to lengthen the time for goals and to have
162 teachers input on the goals. This process has worked and the schools will look at goals
163 again for the next 18 months.

164 Mr. St. Amand thanked everyone for their support with the passing of Martha Wagner.

165 **DISCUSSION ITEM**

166 Policies

167 EEAA –Video Surveillance on School Property

168 **Ms. Foulks made a motion to accept the policy EEAA –Video Surveillance on School**
169 **Property as written. Mr. Manning seconded the motion and the vote was**
170 **unanimous.**

171 End of Year Survey results

172 Mr. Warburton thanked parents for the input and stated that it is important for the board
173 to move forward with the input. He recommended that the board members meet with the
174 administration to review the comments to put them in an Exel spreadsheet. The board
175 will then review the spreadsheet at the next meeting. This way the feedback is compiled
176 in a more organized way. The objective is to share this information publically in writing
177 in the paper and to share with the staff also.

178 **ACTION ITEMS**

179 Professional Nominations

180 Mr. Warburton recommended, all of the candidates, Lorraine Stockwell, Karen Urbanik,
181 Kim Boothroyd, and Jeff LaFlamme be hired for the 2012/2013 school year.

182 **Ms. Facey made a motion to accept the recommendation of the superintendent to**
183 **hire Lorraine Stockwell, Karen Urbanik, Kim Boothroyd, and Jeff LaFlamme. Mr.**
184 **Prescott seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous.**

185 DOE/MS25

186 Ms. Shankel reminded the board about what the DOE and MS 25 documents are and
187 explained the importance of the documents. These are draft numbers and in December the
188 audit will give the final numbers. The surplus was \$202,282, because the board had put a
189 freeze on the budget at the end of the year. If they had not put a freeze on the budget the
190 difference would have only been \$41,000. There was revenue from Medicare, also, that
191 was not expected to be that high.

192 **Ms. Foulks made a motion to authorize the board and the superintendent to sign the**
193 **DOE 25 and MS 25. Ms. Facey seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous.**

194 **INFORMATIONAL**

195 DOE Technical Advisory House Bill 545

196 Mr. Warburton stated that more updates would be given at the SAU board meeting. This
197 bill discusses the new regulations for Home Education. He explained in past parents had
198 to bring in curriculum and student progress to the SAU. Now the SAU has very little
199 input. He read the most important components of the new bill to the board. Parents are
200 no longer required to submit a letter every year and evaluations no longer need to be
201 submitted to the SAU. He will get the number of Home Educated students to board at the
202 next SAU meeting.

203 Ms. Bennett asked how the school would know where a student is in their education
204 when they enter the public system.

205 Mr. Warburton stated that the student would be evaluated when they enter the public
206 school.

207 School Approval Designation

208 Mr. Warburton stated that the schools are approved (accredited) schools through 2016.
209 This is a mandatory state requirement.

210 Mr. Dodge stated that Pam Gross suffered a bad ankle break and she will be back next
211 week sometime, hopefully.

212 **Ms. Foulks made a motion to go into a Non – Meeting RSA 91-A:1 (a)**
213 **at 7:36pm. Mr. Manning seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous.**