

1 Amherst School Board  
2 Thursday, March 28, 2013

3  
4 ATTENDANCE

5  
6 Amherst School Board

7 Peg Bennett, Lucienne Foulks, Amy Facey, James Manning, and Paul Prescott (arrived at  
8 6:07pm)

9  
10 Administrative Team

11 Peter Warburton, Gerry St. Amand, Porter Dodge, Patty Wons and Nicole Heimark

12  
13 Minute Taker

14 Beth Penney

15  
16 ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING

17 CALL TO ORDER

18 Mr. Warburton called the meeting to order at 6:03pm.

19 ELECTION OF SCHOOL BOARD OFFICERS

20 Chairman

21 **Ms. Foulks nominated Ms. Bennett to be the chairman. Ms. Facey seconded the**  
22 **nomination and the vote was unanimous.**

23 Vice-Chairman

24 **Ms. Facey nominated Ms. Foulks to be the Vice-Chairman. Mr. Manning seconded**  
25 **the nomination and the vote was unanimous.**

26 Secretary

27 **Mr. Manning nominated Ms. Facey to be the secretary. Ms. Foulks seconded the**  
28 **nomination and the vote was unanimous.**

29 COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS

30 Ms. Bennett asked the board to look at the list of committees and to let her know in the  
31 next few days by phone which committee each member would be on and she would let  
32 Ms. Shankel know.

33

## REGULAR MEETING

### CALL TO ORDER

35 Ms. Bennett called the meeting to order at 6:05pm.

### PRESENTATIONS/REPORTS

#### Clark/Wilkins Spelling Bee winners

38 Mr. St. Amand introduced the spelling bee winner, Everett Merriman.

39 The Board and Everett discussed how Everett studied for the bee and his winning word,  
40 incarceration. The board congratulated Everett.

#### Invention Convention

42 Mr. St. Amand introduced the invention convention winners, Lauryn Bently and Abbie  
43 Canard. Ms. McIntyre stated that both girls went onto the regional competition.

44 Ms. McIntyre explained that on February 19<sup>th</sup>, 95 inventors from K-4<sup>th</sup> presented their  
45 work. Everyone who participates is a winner because they choose to do the convention.  
46 The judges choose a 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> place winner in each grade. The 2<sup>nd</sup> place winner's work  
47 goes on display in Concord and the winners went to the regional competition in  
48 Pembroke where they both won in different categories.

49 Lauryn explained her invention the Super Knob, which helps set the temperature of the  
50 shower for different people.

51 Abbie explained her invention the Lunch Mat, which is a collapsible lunch box that folds  
52 into a placemat. She showed the board how it works.

53 The board asked the girls how they came up with the ideas, about presenting at the  
54 conventions, and how many years they have participated in the convention. The board  
55 congratulated and thanked the girls.

56 Mrs. McIntyre expressed how proud she is of all of the students.

#### Mock Trial

58 Mr. Dodge introduced the Mock trial 8<sup>th</sup> graders and Mr. Vasser.

59 Mr. Vasser explained that Mock Trial is part of the constitution unit. All 8<sup>th</sup> graders  
60 participate and a team is picked to participate in the State competition. The team does not  
61 have a lot of results back yet, but did well against Sunapee. This program helps with  
62 public speaking and self esteem.

63 The students introduced themselves like they did during the trials.

64 Mr. Vasser summarized the case from Georgia's Bar Association, centered around two  
65 design firms in Nashua. An Uncle of one firm killed a model from the other firm and  
66 there was a civil suit because the business suffered losses from the death of their top  
67 model.

68 Mr. Vasser stated that the future of the high school team looks good with these students  
69 coming up.

70 Mr. Warburton asked the students how this experience has helped them in life.

71 All of the Students responded and this is a summary of what they said. Mock trial helped  
72 them to be more confident with public speaking, furthered their interest in law, helped  
73 them to think on their feet and answer questions more quickly, it was a good learning  
74 experience because there was only so much they could be prepared for and they needed  
75 to know what to do and how to react in different situations.

76 Mr. Warburton stated that he was impressed seeing them in action.

77 The board and the students discussed if the students were assigned roles or could choose  
78 and if they had to argue against what they actually believed about the case.

79 Mr. Vasser stated that Ms. McCormick's Intern also helped prepare the students. There  
80 were 18 teams at the state competition and they named outstanding students in each  
81 round. Three students were named on the AMS team.

82 The board congratulated the team for their hard work.

83 Art – Rachel Rouillard

84 Ms. Rouillard explained the presentation and introduced the students to the board.

85 Many students presented to the board, very articulately, how they feel about art, why they  
86 enjoy it, what a world without art would be like, what types of art they like, how art helps  
87 students improve in other subjects, how other subjects help with art, and how art helps to  
88 relieve stress and allows them express themselves.

89 Ms. Rouillard challenged the board members to an art project. With limited supplies and  
90 15 min. the board members need to create a sculpture. She stated that they may  
91 encounter many problems along the way and this is natural. She hopes to instill creative  
92 problem solving and the ability expressing ones self in her students. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century  
93 we need innovations and creative thinking skills. She told the board that when they bring  
94 the scissors back, she and the students would love to see their sculptures. She thanked the  
95 board for their time and support of the art program.

96 PUBLIC TIME

97 Dana Hestis stated that she has 2 children in Amherst and that there are spectacular things  
98 happening. She is finding an obstacle from Wilkins to AMS in the loss of  
99 communication. She stated that it is difficult to communicate with teachers about  
100 homework, tests, and projects. Angel is not used consistently. Some classes do not have  
101 books and assignments are only written on the board and there is no reference. She hopes  
102 that the Parent Portal can be utilized for parents to see how students are doing in classes  
103 and actually see grades. The students do not get tests back, and parents cannot see tests.  
104 She feels like she has no idea what types of tests are given because she has no access to  
105 that information. She is also concerned about the disparity between what children are  
106 doing in other groups at the same grade level. She used Math as an example. Classes have  
107 different projects and the grading is also different. Some teachers give retakes and take  
108 the retake grade as the final grade, some average the retake and the original, and some  
109 give no retakes at all. She is concerned because there are so many students on the honor  
110 role and some are on it because of the teacher they have.

111 Mr. Prescott asked if the disparity is class depended or within the class.

112 Ms. Hestis responded that the disparity is class to class.

113 Melony Sampson voiced similar concerns and also discussed the Social Studies packets  
114 that have been used for years and are blurry so the students cannot read them. When  
115 students are having a quiz on the information they have to google the information to  
116 study when they should just have a book.

117 Mr. Manning asked if they felt the communication changed from 4<sup>th</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> or as the  
118 student goes up in grades at the middle school.

119 Ms. Hestis explained her experience. As the child moves through there is less  
120 communication and some teachers have told students to not communicate with the  
121 parents. She sends emails every now and then for feedback from teachers. At Wilkins  
122 parents are involved and parents are invited into the classroom. Then at AMS the  
123 communication is not there and maybe there should not be as much parent involvement  
124 because the children are older but there still needs to be communication between the  
125 teachers and parents. Also, kids talk to each other about classes and the disparities  
126 happening.

127 Ms. Sampson stated that she has twins in 7<sup>th</sup> grade. She feels that 99% of parents do not  
128 know about the Parent Portal or when it was started. She found out about it 2 weeks ago.  
129 Mainly it is used for absences and grades are posted after the report card is sent out.  
130 Many other schools use the portal to see grades. She is also concerned about never seeing  
131 graded tests and if a parent had a question about the test they have to wait for the progress  
132 report. She explained that progress reports are inconsistent because some classes are on  
133 trimesters and others are on semesters. Specials do not need to give a progress reports.  
134 Her son received all A grades in core classes and a C in gym because of his behavior.

135 This issue could have been solved with a progress report or a meeting, but there was no  
136 communication with the parents and he was kept off the honor role for first time ever  
137 because of gym. Specials are counted equal to regular education classes. She would like  
138 the board to consider how core classes and specials are weighted and that all teachers  
139 need to provide parents with a progress report. She also wonders why the GPA is not a  
140 numerical GPA.

141 Mr. Prescott asked if the parents would like to see not just grades for papers, projects,  
142 quizzes and tests, but homework also in the Parent Portal.

143 Ms. Sampson stated that if homework is weighted, then yes.

144 Ms. Hestis stated that not all teachers weight homework the same and if the Parent Portal  
145 was utilized then parents would know if there was an issue.

146 Mr. Dodge stated that both parents had met with him prior to this meeting and he  
147 encourages any parent to come to him and the board with their concerns.

148 Jennifer Lohnes has similar concerns with her 8<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> graders. She has been involved  
149 with the Parent Partnership, which is more of a dialog, but she wants to see change. She  
150 wants to see grades and wants to know at any moment behind her kids back how they are  
151 doing. That way she will know if she should step in or not. She stated that the children  
152 get stuck between the parent and the teacher because the parent wants to know about  
153 grades, but the teacher will not release grades. Once grades are put in the progress reports  
154 get removed. She asked that parents be included in the committee looking at grades and  
155 grading. There needs to be something in place to hold teachers accountable also.

156 Ms. Bennett stated that the board would reach out to the three parents who voiced their  
157 concerns once they have further discussed these issues.

158 Peter de Bruyn Kops stated that three board members had a meeting and then wrote a  
159 letter to the editor and he wanted to know about the meeting. The letter to the editor was  
160 about a decision made by the board because 3 members is a quorum. Since the meeting  
161 occurred there needs to be minutes and he wonders how the letter got into the paper.

162 Mr. Prescott, Ms. Facey, and Mr. Manning wrote the letter to the editor supporting voting  
163 in Peg Bennett and Lucienne Foulks for another term on the board.

164 Mr. Prescott stated that he understood Mr. de Bruyn Kops point and that should not have  
165 happened, but as a town's person he has the right to give his opinion.

166 Mr. Manning stated that there was no meeting and the letter was written and edited via  
167 email.

168 Mr. de Bruyn Kops stated that reaching an agreement on something does constitute a  
169 meeting. The board needs to be a little more alert. He stated that it is encouraging that  
170 employees of the SAU and School district were not involved.

171 Ms. Facey stated that the letter was written and they discussed what was in the letter.  
172 This was a mistake.

173 Mr. Warburton stated that this was an oversight and it is unfortunate. He thanked Mr. de  
174 Bruyn Kops for bringing up a good point.

175 ANNOUNCEMENTS

176

177 Principals' reports

178 Ms. Foulks stated that she is really excited to see the different notations about connecting  
179 with SHS about the transition for the 8<sup>th</sup> graders going to the high school.

180 Mr. Warburton stated that he was impressed tonight with all the students who came, how  
181 well spoken they were, and how interested they were to be here. He thanked all of the  
182 students for coming and presenting. As a board and Administration we listen to concerns  
183 and are trying to make strides in many areas. He stated that he does not want parents to  
184 think that the board and administration is not listening and not trying to make positive  
185 changes. He would like to continue to show the accomplishments of the students every  
186 meeting. He stated that it is important for kids to hear that they are at good schools. The  
187 board and administration will deal with the issues and report out how they do so.

188 AMS 8th grade celebration

189 Mr. Dodge stated that at the Parent Partnership meeting parents asked about the 8<sup>th</sup> grade  
190 celebration, because people are try to plan the graduation ceremonies. The school has not  
191 set a date because they have graduation the night before the last day. The last day of  
192 school is a Friday and there is a school board meeting the night before. He asked if the  
193 meeting could be switched and to have graduation the 20<sup>th</sup> of June.

194 Ms. Bennett stated that it is ok to change the meeting and Thursday, June 20<sup>th</sup> would be  
195 graduation.

196 Mr. Warburton agrees that to set the date is important. The hours based calendar would  
197 help with many issues including this issue. The school board meeting will be changed to  
198 Tuesday June 18<sup>th</sup> at 6pm.

199 Mr. Prescott moved to start the meetings at 6:30pm. Ms. Foulks seconded the motion.

200 Mr. Warburton stated that no motion was needed. Meetings would now start at 6:30pm  
201 starting with the April meeting.

202 Correspondence

203 Ms. Bennett read a notification of the start of a new bargaining agreement for 2014-2015.  
204 Ms. Bennett explained that this is to go back to the table early to have something to  
205 present to the voters early.

206 CONSENT AGENDA

207 **Ms. Facey made a motion to accept the consent agenda containing the minutes from**  
208 **February 20, 2013, Treasurer's report, January 2013 and February 2013,**  
209 **Retirement request, and the Budget transfers. Mr. Prescott seconded the motion**  
210 **and the vote was unanimous, except Ms. Foulks abstained.**

211 DISCUSSION ITEMS

212 Advertising in the Schools

213 Mr. Warburton stated that he included the policy for advertising in schools in the agenda  
214 packet. He met with Paul Leveque and Paul has emailed the board his concerns.

215 Mr. St. Amand stated that this is the 3<sup>rd</sup> year focused on sending everything electronically  
216 to parents. Outside group's events are available via a link in the electronic newsletters  
217 that go out to parents. The school does not send hard copies out unless groups have a  
218 poster and they will put one copy up in the front window.

219 Mr. Dodge stated that they follow same policy, which started at AMS 4 or 5 years ago.  
220 The link allows the school to inform parents and filter, which events apply to Amherst  
221 kids and are age appropriate.

222 Mr. Warburton stated that the policy is clear that we are recognizing the events and  
223 linking them to the community events. Paul Levesque came to speak to the board about  
224 what has happened for Boy Scouts in the past because of this policy.

225 Paul Leveque explained that since there have been no flyers allowed in the schools the  
226 outside organizations have seen 60% less registration across the board, including sports  
227 and scouts. For Cub Scouts the practice was to meet with administration and then  
228 volunteer to put the flyer in the mailboxes for the kids. He is not asking to walk through  
229 the school, just for one flyer in September, one time a year, be put in mailboxes. The  
230 kids will go home with the flyer and ask their parents to join. Kids do not read the  
231 community page and the accessibility of it is not promoting what outside groups are  
232 doing. Cub Scouts was seeing 25 new kids per year and the last 3 years has been 8,6, and  
233 5. He is hoping the board will consider a flyer once a year to give the youth of the  
234 community a decent program.

235 Mr. Dodge stated that there could be a compromise, but going paperless is something we  
236 have committed to. Maybe on registration day the outside groups can set up a table where  
237 every parent can get to see the options.

238 Mr. Levesque stated that anything would be great. The scouts have also tried to have  
239 “Wear you uniform to school day” where the scouts hand out business cards. They will  
240 try this again in September.

241 Mr. Warburton thanked Paul. He would like to discuss the policy with the principals and  
242 the board. The topic will be on the agenda next meeting for discussion.

243 Mr. St. Amand added that Parent information night might be a good forum and that the  
244 student population is also down.

245 Mr. Prescott thanked the public for coming to the meeting and encouraged more people  
246 to come to future meetings. Hearing peoples concerns and ideas helps the board. He  
247 invites more people to come to discuss concerns and what they would like to see  
248 changed.

249 Strategic Thinking/Planning update

250 Mr. Warburton stated that an outside organization is coming to the SAU board meeting to  
251 help facilitate the discussion. The goal is to have something to report to staff and the  
252 community the first day for school, but it may not be a finished product.

253 Policies – 1<sup>st</sup> readings

254 **Mr. Manning made a motion to accept the first reading for policies BEB-**  
255 **Emergency Board Meetings, EBBD – Indoor Air Quality, and JLCK – Special**  
256 **Physical Health Needs of Students. Ms. Foulks seconded the motion and the vote**  
257 **was unanimous.**

258 **At 7:55 PM, Mr. Manning made a motion to enter into a NON-PUBLIC SESSION**  
259 **under RSA 91-A:3 II, a,b,and c. Ms. Foulks seconded the motion.**

260 **A roll call vote was taken:**

**Ms. Bennett Yes**  
**Ms. Facey Yes**  
**Ms Foulks Yes**  
**Mr. Manning Yes**  
**Mr. Prescott Yes**

261 **Present in the NON-PUBLIC SESSION:**

262 Amherst Board Members: Peg Bennett, Amy Facey, Lucienne Foulks, Jim Manning, Paul  
263 Prescott, Superintendent Peter Warburton, AMS Principal Porter Dodge, Clark/Wilkins  
264 Principal, Gerry St. Amand  
265 Mr. Dodge and Mr. St. Amand left the NON-PUBLIC SESSION at 8:50 PM.



266 Personnel matters were discussed in the NON-PUBLIC SESSION.

267

268 **AT 9:42 PM, Ms. Foulks made a motion to exit the NON-PUBLIC SESSION. Mr.**

269 **Prescott seconded the motion.**

270 **A roll call vote was taken:**

**Ms. Bennett Yes**

**Ms. Facey Yes**

**Ms Foulks Yes**

**Mr. Manning Yes**

**Mr. Prescott Yes**

271 Board members discussed Professional Nominations for the 2013-14 schools year as  
272 presented by Peter Warburton, Superintendent of Schools.

273 **Ms. Foulks made a motion to accept the Professional Nominations as presented.**

274 **Ms. Facey seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.**

275 Board members discussed the MS 22, the Report of Appropriations Actually Voted,  
276 presented by Betty Shankel, SAU #39 Business Administrator.

277

278 **Mr. Manning made a motion to accept the MS 22. Mr. Prescott seconded the**  
279 **motion. The motion passed unanimously.**

280

281 **MOTION TO ADJOURN:**

282 **AT 9:45 Mr. Manning made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Foulks seconded**  
283 **the motion. The motion passed unanimously.**