

1 **AMHERST SCHOOL BOARD**
2 **THURSDAY, OCTOBER 20, 2011**

3
4 **Attendance**

5
6 **Amherst School Board:**

7 Peg Bennett, Lucienne Foulks, Nancy Head, James Manning

8
9 **Administrative Team:**

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

12
13 **Minutes Taker**

14 Beth Penney

Call to Order

15
16 **Call to Order**

17
18 Ms. Bennett called the meeting to order at 6:06pm.

19
20 **Announcements**

Announcements

21
22 **Principal's Reports**

23
24 Ms. Head discussed the praise AMS students got from the Ferry Beach
25 Environmental School.

26
27 Mr. Warburton and Mr. Dodge where told this as well; AMS students set the bar for
28 the work ethic and behavior while at the school.

29
30 Mr. Warburton discussed the reformatting of the principal's report and that they
31 will discuss the new format at the next meeting.

32
33 Ms. Bennett asked Mr. Dodge to discuss the professional development that
34 happened yesterday.

35
36 Mr. Dodge discussed how the staff re-worked the goals by doing a chalk talk and
37 then presented the ideas to the entire staff. It was a great meeting because the
38 teachers had a voice. Mr. Dodge thanked the board for this process because this is
39 the first time the entire staff has participated in making the goals.

40
41 **Ways and Means**

42
43 Carol Holden introduced Mark Vincent (Chair), Tedd Landon, Stephanie Hall and
44 Paul Prescott, Andrew Roe, Fred Iannelli, and Jacob Siwik (alternate).

45
46 Ms. Bennett welcomed the new members.

47 **Public Time**

48

49 No public present.

50

Consent Agenda

51 **Consent Agenda**

52

53 **Ms. Head made a motion to accept the consent agenda containing the minutes**
54 **from September 15, 2011, Treasurer's Report, Transfers, Unanticipated**
55 **Revenue: a. Special Revenue Fund 1. Amherst Middle School Activity Fund -**
56 **\$516.12 2. Wilkins School Activity Fund- \$562.61 3. Clark School Activity**
57 **Fund- \$153.66 4. Grant from Fidelity Charitable Gift Fund - \$205.00, General**
58 **Fund 1. Amherst School District - \$300.65. Mr. Manning seconded the motion**
59 **and the vote was unanimous.**

60 The board and Ms. Shankel discussed that the AMS roof repair was to repair a small
61 section over the library.

62

63 **Presentations/ Reports**

**Presentations/
Reports**

64

65 **FY12 – 1st Quarter Summary**

66

67 Ms. Shankel stated that as a result of hiring, there is some savings in salaries and
68 benefits and there has been some over expenditure in special education. At this
69 point the projection is a small surplus of \$31,000. The spending in special education
70 was for a para-educator and a few other small items.

71

72 **FY13 Budget Assumptions**

73

74 Ms. Shankel discussed revenues including no change in Title One or IDEA, state aid
75 is expected to be the same as the FY12 amount, Catastrophic Aid and Medicare still
76 have to be estimated and Catastrophic aid is paid out at 65%.

77

78 The board and Ms. Sparks discussed that the pay out for Catastrophic aid is way
79 down and was paid out at 100% only a few years ago.

80

81 Ms. Shankel discussed the Unreserved Fund Balance, which is usually at 1%. The
82 district tries to bid and get quotes to get lower amounts and return money to the tax
83 payers.

84

85 Ms. Shankel discussed that the State Aid will be more stable this year. She also
86 discussed projected enrollments for FY13; Clark –Wilkins will have 633 students
87 (the number includes 24 preschool students) and AMS will have 748 students,
88 which is a reduction from FY12. Ms. Shankel discussed staffing over the years and
89 the enrollment decreases including the reduction of 15.3 certified staff and 35.3

90 non-certified staff with a reduction of 256 students since FY07. She also discussed
91 the student load.
92
93 The board discussed that the preschool could have 32 or more students with a ratio
94 of 16 students to 1 teacher and that the plan is to keep a mixed classroom of 3yr.
95 olds and 4yr. olds.
96
97 Ms. Shankel discussed the staffing considerations including Administration, Special
98 Education, Teachers, and Special programs. She discussed health benefits
99 increasing 10% since FY12 for a total of \$310,578. She discussed the huge increases
100 in benefits even though there has been a reduction in staff. The rate increases are
101 over 30% since FY07. She stated that the district has been paying less and the
102 benefits have been reduced in order to keep the budget numbers similar and reduce
103 the impact. NH retirement for certified staff has increased 24.5% since FY12 for a
104 total of \$214,674. Ms. Shankel reminded the board that when salaries increase the
105 NH retirement increases because it is a percentage of the person's salary. Since FY07
106 there has been a rate increase of 205.4%. She reminded the board that much of this
107 increase is because of the reduction in the state's contribution.
108
109 Ms. Shankel discussed NH retirement for non-certified is projected to decrease by
110 26% for a total of \$44,955. The rate increase since FY07 has been 55.3%. Contracts
111 are in the 2nd year of a 2-year contract. The support staff is still negotiating a
112 contract.
113
114 Mr. Manning stated that the increase in Health Care and NH retirement is projected
115 to be \$500,000 from FY12 to FY13.
116
117 Ms. Shankel replied that this is correct with no other adjustments.
118
119 Ms. Shankel discussed retirements and operations including employee
120 compensation indexes, electricity, and fuel. She stated that switching AMS to
121 natural gas has shown a huge savings.
122
123 Ms. Foulks asked if Mr. Miner could come to a meeting to discuss electricity in the
124 buildings.
125
126 Ms. Shankel discussed that the buildings have been updated and they are very
127 energy efficient in their electricity needs. The high school is the building that needs
128 updating.
129
130 Ms. Shankel discussed updates that the schools need including new lockers and a
131 refurbished life skills room at AMS. A grant for this has been applied for, but if the
132 grant is not received the administration hopes the board will support financing
133 these items in the budget. Other AMS building needs include the remaining library
134 furnishings and the stage needs to be refurbished. The entire room will be upgraded
135 using the food service surplus. The building needs at Clark and Wilkins includes

136 overlaying asbestos tile in the 7 remaining classrooms, installing ceiling projectors,
137 fencing in the pre-school play area, and refurbishing Wilkins entryway.
138

139 Ms. Shankel discussed transportation. The SAU is in the 4th year of a 5-year contract.
140 A reduction in the number of buses is not possible, but there will be discussion of
141 using smaller buses with the next contract.
142

143 The board and Ms. Shankel discussed the state requirement to have bus service for
144 all students pre-K -8th grade. The distance from the school that the bus will pick up
145 students varies. They discussed the geography of the town limiting the ability to
146 reduce the number of buses and the capacity options for buses were discussed.
147 They also discussed the length of trips for students. Charging for bus service was
148 also discussed.
149

150 Ms. Shankel discussed the food service and the idea to not replace the van that
151 transports food between Wilkins and Clark. She explained other options to
152 transport the small amount of food.
153

154 Ms. Shankel discussed the technology needs including support for the revised Math
155 Curriculum, RTI, DI, and the need to focus on 21st century education and integrate
156 technology skills into the curriculum. The technology infrastructure and
157 replacement cycle upgrades need to happen. The math program review will need
158 textbooks, manipulatives, technology, and staffing considerations.
159

160 Ms. Shankel reminded the board that there was a funding shift in FY13 budget for
161 the preschool.
162

163 Ms. Sparks discussed the drastic reduction in out of district costs.
164

165 Ms. Shankel discussed the Expendable Trust and how the roof repair at Clark has
166 reduced the balance of this fund. The administration would like to have \$100,000 in
167 the fund and that will take two years.
168

169 The board and Ms. Shankel discussed the process of how money is spent from the
170 expendable trust and how the roof at Clark cost about \$80,000.
171

172 Ms. Bennett asked about the replacement cycle of technology and if the
173 replacements would happen with newer technology.
174

175 Ms. Shankel stated that those discussions were starting to happen.
176

177 Mr. Warburton stated that at the next SAU meeting there would be a discussion
178 about 21st century learning and technology.
179

180 The board and Ms. Heimarck discussed the small purchases needed for the Scott
181 Foresman reading program.

182 Mr. Warburton thanked Ms. Shankel for all of her hard work.

183

184 EF Educational Tours-Costa Rica: Sue Wilson – AMS

185

186 Amy Birck and Sue Wilson discussed with the board a trip they would like to take
187 AMS students on to Costa Rica with the company EF Tours. They want to take 12
188 students and if more want to go then they will have a lottery system to decide who
189 can go on the trip.

190

191 The board discussed the quality of the company EF Tours and determined it is a
192 very well known and used company. They also discussed the student to adult ratio
193 and the need for a male teacher if male students go on the trip. EF Tours covers the
194 insurance for the trip. The students will be staying in hotels when in Costa Rica.
195 The board asked to have the students come and present to the board when they
196 come back from their trip.

197

198 Mr. Warburton discussed the students who come to Amherst from other countries
199 and how they know several languages. He also discussed the importance of trips for
200 21st learning and to teach students how to get along, which may help to make a
201 peaceful world.

202

203 The board discussed making continued connections between the schools our
204 students travel to and the town's schools. The board discussed possible exchanges
205 and how these are the beginning conversations. The board also discussed 21st
206 learning and schools' having a presence in other countries.

207

208 Mr. Warburton stated that there is a need to promote foreign languages in our
209 schools. This is an important part of being able to communicate.

210

211 Ms. Foulks stated that these trips and their success could lead the way for making
212 further connections abroad. The students need to make public presentations so the
213 public can see the impact the trips have, so the public can embrace and be more
214 supportive of those programs.

215

216 Legislative update

217

218 Ms. Warburton discussed the NH school boards summary of the laws from last year
219 and the coming legislation. He stated that the information is on the NHSBA website.
220 He stated that the NH General Court is also a useful website.

221

222 Action Items

Action Items

223

224 Review Baboosic Lake property

225

226 Mr. Miner passed out to the board a booklet to answer their questions about the
227 property from when they walked the property.

228 Mr. Warburton has discussed with the town how to settle outstanding issues. They
229 will be meeting with the owners very soon and he will have an update at the next
230 meeting.

231

232 457 Plan

233

234 Carrie Morneau discussed the 457 plan, which is an alternative investment plan for
235 employees. It works similar to a 403b, but employees can withdraw the funds
236 earlier without penalty. She ran through all of the changes described in the board's
237 agenda packet.

238

239 The board and Ms. Morneau discussed whether they had asked for legal advise and
240 that the administration is very comfortable with the language because it is very
241 boilerplate for this type of fund.

242

243 **Ms. Foulks made a motion to adopt the 457 plan as presented. Mr. Manning**
244 **seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous.**

245

246 Sanction Italy Trip

247

248 Ms. Shankel stated that this trip has to be sanctioned because the tour company
249 does not have liability insurance. If the trip is a school sanctioned trip, Ms.
250 Haldane's NEA insurance would kick in if something happened. The school is not
251 insuring the trip because it is not a school supported trip.

252

253 The board and Ms. Shankel discussed the trip and the insurance coverage. They also
254 discussed the policy committee and how they are working on rewriting the field trip
255 policies. The policy committee will be bringing a new policy to the boards in
256 December.

257

258 Ms. Shankel will look into what EF Tours uses as insurance to help Ms. Haldane have
259 extra coverage.

260

261 The board discussed how to let parents and the board know what the school's
262 liability is for a school sanctioned and a school sponsored trip. They determined that
263 on the parent release, this should be noted. The board decided that they would be
264 more comfortable getting more coverage for this trip. The board asked Ms. Shankel
265 to look into the district's liability for both types of trips.

266

267 Ms. Shankel will look into these issues and follow -up with the board.

268

269 Ms. Bennett stated that she would be contacting board members soon to determine
270 assignments to budget committees with the Ways and Means.

271

272 Mr. Warburton discussed the BOD meeting for RESC at the Long View School in
273 Deerfield, NH. He described the excellent education for the needs of those types of
274 students that happens at these schools.

275

Adjourn

276 **Ms. Foulks made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:58pm. Mr.**

277 **Manning seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous.**