

1 Amherst School Board
2 Thursday, June 21, 2012

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, Porter Dodge, Gerry St. Amand, Nicole Heimark, Renea Sparks, and
11 Betty Shankel

12
13 Minute Taker

14 Beth Penney

15
16 CALL TO ORDER

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

18 ANNOUNCEMENTS

19 Principals' reports

20 Mr. Manning stated that the Clark Wilkins field days were fantastic. The kids had a great
21 time and David April did a tremendous job.

22 Mr. St. Amand and Ms. Foulks stated that they also enjoyed the field days.

23 Ms. Bennett told Mr. Dodge that her son enjoyed the step-up day to the high school.

24 Mr. Prescott stated that the whole step-up process is impressive and that he has heard
25 nothing but good things.

26 Mr. Manning asked about the step-up day to AMS.

27 Mr. St. Amand stated that the day went well over all, kids seemed to like it, and it was
28 extremely smooth, but as always there are little things to tweak for next year.

29 Mr. Dodge discussed the Mount Vernon transition. Step up Day was June 7th combined
30 with Shadow day. The students came and shadowed a student in the school and had step-
31 up day at the end because Mount Vernon ended the year earlier than AMS. Mr. Dodge
32 had also met with kids and parents prior to Step-up Day. It was a good day and there
33 were a lot of nice comments as kids were leaving. The Mount Vernon 6th graders also
34 come to AMS dances and play sports with Amherst kids.

35 Correspondence

36 Ms. Bennett read a note from Katie Lynch, the senior who focused on Foreign Language

37 for her Senior Project. Ms. Bennett went to her final presentation and Katie was thrilled
38 to have a board member there.

39 Ms. Bennett also read a letter from Peter Desnoyer and the AEA to inform the board that
40 they would like to bargain a new contract for 2013/2014. The first negotiation session
41 was last Wednesday to set dates.

42 **PUBLIC TIME**

43 No public present.

44 **CONSENT AGENDA**

45 Ms. Bennett asked to table the May 17th minutes.

46 **Mr. Prescott made a motion to accept the consent agenda containing the May 1st,**
47 **2012 minutes; Treasurer's reports for April 2012 and May 2012; Unanticipated**
48 **Revenue: Donation to C/W Student Activity Fund - \$200.00 from Westat, Donation**
49 **to AMS Student Activity Fund - \$1,323.99 from Amherst Junior Women's Club,**
50 **Donation to the AMS General Fund - \$38.00 from Grondins Photographers; RFP –**
51 **Occupational Therapy for FY13; Resignation letter. Ms. Facey seconded the**
52 **motion.**

53 Ms. Bennett asked about the RFP.

54 Ms. Sparks stated that the RFP was for an Occupational Therapist Contracted service at
55 AMS. This has to go out to bid and there was only one response, which was the same
56 company that AMS has used in prior years. The hours in the RFP and the hours budgeted
57 for are the same. Ms. Sparks is happy with the company's services and so is the staff. It is
58 not unusual to get only one bid and there are not many companies out there for this type
59 of service. The district has a good relationship with this company.

60 Ms. Bennett asked about Jackie Veal's resignation letter and what is happening to replace
61 her.

62 Mr. Dodge stated that Ms. Veal was incredible and the school is going to really miss her.
63 There were resumes out there from previous positions and the position was posted and is
64 now closed. The school should be able to replace her by fall.

65 **The vote was unanimous.**

66 **PRESENTATIONS/REPORTS**

67 Mr. Warburton stated that he met with the four teachers taking positions at SHS and they
68 are fantastic candidates. The schools have pools of candidates and they are better
69 qualified than in past years.

70 Mr. Dodge stated that they have been working to fill another reading position and the

71 administration will be bringing a candidate to the board soon.

72 175-Day Calendar

73 Ms. Shankel stated that this is coming from the SAU board meeting. At the last SAU
74 board meeting there was a straw vote to bring this proposal to each district. Mt. Vernon
75 and SHS have already moved to go forward with the 175-day calendar. Ms. Shankel
76 reviewed the objectives of the change including having a more stable end of the year date
77 without lowering instructional time for the year. She discussed assumptions including the
78 number of student days not exceeding 175 days, not reducing to less than 170 days and
79 that the school day for whole year will be increased by 20 minutes. There will also be
80 increased para-professional time by 15 min., food service worker days would be
81 decreased by 5 days, and employee contracts will have language added. The AEA and
82 PPC would need to be negotiated and both groups are in favor of the change. She showed
83 how the instructional hours would change: required instructional time at AMS is 990 hrs.,
84 they currently have 1021 hrs., and the change would increase to 1050.5 hrs. (with no
85 snow days) or with 170 days 1020 hrs. For Clark Wilkins the required hours is 945hrs.,
86 they currently have 985hrs., and the change to 175 days would increase the hours to
87 1015.5hrs. and with 170 days there would be 986hrs. She discussed the new bell times
88 when adding 20 min. and the latest drop off would be 3:18pm AMS and 4pm at
89 Clark/Wilkins.

90 Ms. Shankel discussed the support staff contract adjustments, which would give a total
91 savings based on FY13 rates of \$31,877. She discussed the transportation contract ending
92 in FY14 and the first year implementation would be FY14. In the current contract, the
93 school's can reduce the days under 180 for a 45% savings. Any number of days below
94 180 would save the district money.

95 Ms. Shankel discussed the SPED impact and forming IEPs. IEPs now have a caveat that
96 will change if the calendar changes. The Extended School Year could run two extra
97 weeks with maximum estimated cost of \$40,300.

98 Ms. Shankel discussed the need to buy software for tracking appropriate number of hours
99 and contracts. This software needs to be purchased regardless of changing the calendar.
100 The total financial impact for 175 days would be a cost of \$3,038 and for 170 there would
101 be a cost of \$2,499.

102 Ms. Shankel discussed the implementation needs including a new AEA and PPC
103 agreement, the purchase of the time sheet software, and putting the professional
104 development days after February.

105 Ms. Facey asked if at the end of the transportation contract and a new contract is
106 negotiated would there be a greater savings.

107 Ms. Shankel stated yes, the contract would have a maximum of 175 days and recognize

108 that there could be as few as 170 days and there would be savings for the difference.

109 Ms. Foulks thanked Ms. Shankel for her hard work.

110 **Mr. Manning made a motion to accept the 175-day calendar as present for FY13/14.**

111 **Ms. Foulks seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous.**

112 End of Year Survey Questions

113 Ms. Bennett stated that they made a few changes to questions and got some feedback.

114 The survey would be sent out before July 4th.

115 The board discussed the following changes to the survey: Making sure there was in
116 introduction to the survey explaining items like the Learner Expectations and 21st century
117 learning, changing the “sprise” website to the School and SAU website, and adding the
118 Milford Cabinet to Question 1.

119 Mr. Warburton stated that he would have the board preview the introduction and the
120 survey again before sending it out.

121 The board thanked Mr. St. Amand, Mr. Dodge, and Mr. Warburton for their hard work.

122 Superintendent Evaluation Committee

123 Mr. St. Amand stated that the committee met once with 7 attendees and others
124 communicated via email. They have broken into sub groups to look at an evaluation
125 format and a survey for Staff to respond to. The Evaluation format will be done for
126 August and will be presented at the SAU board meeting. The Staff survey will be done
127 for the fall and the survey will be done electronically.

128 **DISCUSSION ITEM**

129 Policies

130 EEAA –Video Surveillance on School Property

131 Mr. Warburton stated that the policy committee met and asked to have a different policy
132 for each school and not the same one for the entire SAU. This policy will look different
133 than in prior drafts.

134 The board discussed changes that were made.

135 Mr. Dodge gave a history of why cameras were installed at AMS. He stated that there are
136 cameras at all entrances and they are video monitored. A person must be buzzed into the

137 school and this is videoed monitored that way people can be intercepted from the office.
138 There are some cameras in hallways for the safety of the children. The cameras at the
139 doors also scan the property. The cameras are not monitored 24/7. All of the windows at
140 the school are labeled also. He stated that all of these safety measures were the good
141 work of Mike Knox.

142 Mr. St. Amand stated that at Wilkins there are 21 cameras that monitor entrances, exits,
143 playgrounds, the portables, hallways, and parking lots. Clark has 15 cameras that monitor
144 the same areas. The cameras have been helpful for vandalism especially in the summer.
145 The cameras are not monitored 24/7.

146 Mr. Dodge thanked the policy committee because they recognized the wording of the
147 policy would limit how the cameras could be used.

148 Mr. Warburton stated that if the cameras are used effectively they could help to rule
149 things out. He stated that the schools enjoy a very positive relationship with the Amherst
150 Police department and they are very happy with the SROs. The administration has to ask
151 the superintendent to view a tape and this has been very helpful to track when tapes are
152 looked at.

153 Mr. St. Amand stated that all buses have cameras on at all times and are a tremendous
154 help to rule out incidents.

155 Mr. Prescott stated that in paragraph 4 the wording needs to be clearer, so it is understood
156 that the superintend may not always authorize the viewing of the tapes.

157 Ms. Shankel stated that the sentence should start with “Only the superintendent” and
158 change the word “will” to “may”.

159 Edits to Policies per OCR

160 Ms. Sparks stated she is very happy with the changes and the policies have been vetted
161 with the Office of Civil Rights. In the student handbooks, the policies need to have a link
162 that works rather than the entire policy written out and there needs to be a note of where
163 people without the internet can get a copy of the policies.

164 **Ms. Foulks made a motion to accept the revisions of the policies AC – Non-**
165 **Discrimination, ACA- Sexual Harassment and Sexual Violence, ACE – Rights of**
166 **Disabled/Handicapped Persons, and JICK–Pupil Safety and Violence Prevention.**
167 **Ms. Facey seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous.**

168 ASD Parent-Student Calendar

169 Mr. Warburton stated that the SAU is looking at not using this calendar because so many
170 people view it online. They are trying to stream line and save money. The hope is to not

171 produce these calendars next year.

172 The Board agreed with a straw vote.

173 **ACTION ITEMS**

174 **ASD Charter - School Maintenance Expendable (SME)**

175 Ms. Shankel stated that this was a charter set-up to govern the SME trust fund. The
176 charter was set-up in 2003 and revised in 2005. The charter calls for 5 citizens from the
177 town to participate. The SAU recently advertised for this committee and another
178 committee for SHS and has gotten no response for either committee. The administration
179 is asking to alter the committee from 5 to 2 citizens and to add member of Board of
180 Selectman to the committee so they have better understanding of the expenditures. The
181 committee would then have 2 citizens, 2 school board members, and a selectman. The
182 administration would serve as advisory members with no vote. The citizens would serve
183 for 2 years.

184 The Board liked the addition of a selectman.

185 **Mr. Manning made a motion to adopt the revision of the charter. Ms. Foulks**
186 **seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous.**

187 Ms. Bennett stated that there is no July meeting. In August, the board would start the
188 year with goals. The board would like a presentation from the principals about how the
189 schools did with the building goals.

190 Ms. Heimark organized the recent professional development days, which were Tuesday,
191 Wednesday, and Thursday. These days included work sessions across the campuses of
192 AMS and SHS. There were 5 trainers for the new math programs and teachers worked in
193 grade span groups. Math teachers worked with grade level transition plans to implement
194 new curriculum and explored transition guides making small changes. Thursday was a
195 paid day and all math Teachers and literacy teachers were there to support the initiative to
196 have a language rich program. The teachers left the day with the first unit or more
197 planned for next year and the grade levels crossed referenced those plans with the grade
198 level below. Ms. Heimark recognized Jan Eccleston and Crista Burrell for all of their
199 hard work and the support they gave to the teachers. During the professional days they
200 also unrolled the common core state standards in literacy to all teachers. There was a
201 keynote in the morning to layout the basics and then the teachers went into cross-district
202 and grade level groups to further discuss the standards. The feedback about the keynote
203 was that the keynote should present to the board and the community.

204 Ms. Heimark stated that a small committee would gather to discuss assessment in Math
205 this summer. She discussed the new Math program's assessment type and how it is
206 different from what the students are use to. The committee will work on how to
207 implement assessments so that they are fair and equitable and allow students to have
208 success. The goal is to build math confidence. There will be parent nights to discuss the

209 shift in assessment in the fall. Some staff will be going to a training conference for Math
210 in Focus in August.

211 Ms. Heimark discussed the ways that the new Math program will continue to be
212 evaluated including using the software called Survey of an Active Curriculum to help
213 measure teachers thinking and practice. She explained how the software works. They
214 will also use student assessment components to track the success. She discussed several
215 ideas the Evaluation committee will look at this summer including pre-assessments and
216 end of chapter tests.

217 Ms. Heimark discussed Finland's performance, where the schools are based on trust and
218 there is no supervision and evaluation of teachers. She feels the schools need to work on
219 the trust and honesty factor through self-reflection and the ability to share individual
220 results.

221 Mr. St. Amand thanked Ms. Heimark for all her work to coordinate all staff and also
222 thanked Jan and Crista for their work. He stated that their skills that are superior to the
223 Math In Focus people.

224 **Mr. Manning made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:25pm. Ms. Facey**
225 **seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous.**