

**MINUTES  
AMHERST SCHOOL BOARD MEETING  
THURSDAY JANUARY 6 2011 6:00 P.M.  
SOUHEGAN COOPERATIVE HIGH SCHOOL INFO CENTER**

**Present:**

**Amherst School Board:** Peg Bennett, Lucienne Foulks, Rob Graybill, Nancy Head, Peter Maresco

**Administrative Team:** Gerry St. Amand, Porter Dodge, Nicole Heimarck, Mary Athey Jennings, Renea Sparks

**Budget Advisory:** Betty Shankel, Mark Vincent

**Public:** Larry Ballard, Alice Giausso, various other Amherst School District teachers

**Minutes Recorder:** Melissa Spicer

**Public Hearing**

## I. PUBLIC HEARING

Ms. Head opened the public hearing at 6:03pm.

Ms. Shankel discussed the education jobs funding. She said this is an amount of money being split between the state and the school districts for support of educational jobs and or benefits. She said Amherst would be receiving \$109,503.40 if the board accepts this money.

Ms. Head asked if there were any questions from the public about the funding, however there were none.

In response to a question from Mr. Graybill, Ms. Shankel explained that the only requirement for using the funding is that the money must be used towards educational jobs and or benefits.

Ms. Head called the board meeting to order at 6:06.

## I. CALL TO ORDER

**Principal's Report**

## II. ANNOUNCEMENTS

In response to a question from Mr. Maresco, Mr. St. Amand explained Techsplorations. He said it is an offering that focuses on technology and electricity and how they impact daily life. He said it has been set up as an exhibit for students and faculty to view.

Mr. St. Amand discussed the National Geographic finals. He said Nikki Hit was the winner and will take a test and based on results could go on to the national level competition. He said Eleanor Farris was the first runner up.

Mr. St. Amand also said that SAU 39 professional development met today and realized they needed an Amherst school district board representative on the committee. He said the meetings take place on the first Thursday of the month and interested board members should notify Ms. Head.

### III. PUBLIC TIME

Ms. Head asked if there were comments from the public.

Larry Ballard, who has been a music teacher in the district for 15 years, spoke about his concern for the direction the district is moving in. He explained that he is concerned for his own well being along with his children's who go to school in the district. Mr. Ballard expressed his dissatisfaction with the district's choice to cut art and music education after elementary school and the elimination of tech ed. and life skills. He also said that the prospect of facing another year without a contract is scary. He said that the addition of a contract for teachers would be a small statistical increase to the district's budget but has a large impact on teachers and their families. Mr. Ballard suggested actively soliciting staff members to reduce costs elsewhere in the budget. He said that he and others work too hard to be treated like this and asked for a contract to treat teachers fairly.

Ms. Head asked if the board had questions and then if the public had any more comments.

Alice. G. Giarusso discussed the situation for Amherst teachers as they attempt to settle a fair contract. She used a metaphor to explain her desire for a contract for teachers. She expressed her thoughts on the importance of a contract for teachers to be as successful as possible.

### IV. CONSENT AGENDA

**Ms. Foulks made a motion to approve the consent agenda. The motion was seconded by Mr. Graybill.**

Mr. Maresco made a change to the minutes from December 14, 2010.

**The vote was unanimous to accept the minutes as amended (5-0-0) and the consent agenda was adopted.**

### V. PRESENTATIONS/REPORTS

Dr. Jennings reminded the board that this is the final stage of the budget.

Ms. Shankel presented the changes to the budget. She said an addition error was corrected and the SAU budget was increased. She said there is a .69% increase in this budget over last year's operating budget.

Mr. Graybill asked if acceptance of funds changes the .69% increase, but Ms. Shankel explained that it doesn't because this is the expenditure side of the budget, not the revenue.

Ms. Shankel then discussed the revenue sheet. She said that line 3 shows that \$23,371,144 is the total expenditures. She said the revenues show how that cost is paid for. Federal grants and local revenues cover some of that expenditure, leaving the balance at \$20,796,867. She said the first amount to take off from that is adequacy aid if approved and then also take off the state property tax. She said this is how the Amherst tax assessment was determined, which is the amount of the budget that must be covered with property taxes. She said the district is looking at an impact of a \$.08 increase per 1,000 over last year's.

Ms. Shankel gave a summary of what the estimated tax impact will be. She said if the operating budget fails, the district would operate under the default budget, which would be a tax impact of negative \$.03, a decrease of \$12 on a \$400K home. If the new budget passes, it will be an increase of \$.08, a \$32 increase on a \$400K home.

Mark Vincent from the Ways and Means Committee gave a brief report. He said the committee took a vote and was unanimously in favor of the budget article and the capital facilities warrant article.

**Mr. Graybill made a motion to present the budget at the public hearing. The motion was seconded by Mr. Maresco. The vote was unanimous (5-0-0).**

**Ms. Foulks made a motion to accept the money from the Federal Education Jobs funding. The motion was seconded by Mr. Graybill. The vote was unanimous (5-0-0).**

### **Policy JKAA- 3<sup>rd</sup> Reading**

### VI. ACTION ITEMS

Dr. Jennings said at the last meeting the board had questions about what parts were the law and what parts could be adapted to the district.

Ms. Sparks explained some of the changes to the policy. She said the word child was replaced with student in the policy. She said the term "physical restraint" was clarified. Also, Ms. Sparks said that the policy now says that the building principal or designee has to notify the parents "no later than 24 hours." She explained that the school has 7 days to get the restraint form to parents in the mail, but parents may get the form earlier from the school.

Ms. Head made grammatical changes to the policy. She also asked that the word "preferably" be added in the sentence

Mr. Maresco expressed concern with the definition of “parent” in the policy. He said it did not make sense to him that an 18-year-old student would have to be asked before physical restraint was used against him or her.

Ms. Sparks explained that it is very unlikely for there to be a student who needs restraint over the age of 18 who does not have a guardian over them already with a behavioral plan or IEP. She said if there were a student who could make their own decision who needed frequent physical intervention, law enforcement would be involved.

**Ms. Foulks made a motion to accept Policy JKAA as amended. The motion as seconded by Ms. Bennett. The vote was unanimous (5-0-0).**

#### VII. DISCUSSION

The board said they would contact each other to decide on a time to meet to plan for the public hearing.

#### VIII. NON-PUBLIC SESSION

**Ms. Foulks motioned to move to a non-public session RSA 91-A:3 II (a) at 6:50pm. The motion was seconded by Ms. Bennett. The vote passed by roll call vote (5-0-0) Foulks: yes, Bennett: yes, Head: yes, Maresco: yes, Graybill: yes.**

The board discussed the current status of contract negotiations.

Dr. Jennings presented information regarding administrator benefits.

**Ms. Foulks motioned to come out of non-public session, which was seconded by Ms. Bennett. A unanimous roll-call vote was taken and the Board came into public session at 8:02 p.m.**

**Ms. Foulks motioned to accept the retirement benefits as proposed by Dr. Jennings with the adjustment that employer contributions could only be made to 403b or 457 accounts. Ms. Bennett seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.**

**Ms. Foulks motioned to change the administrator contracts to be per diem rates based on a 260 day contract period. Mr. Maresco seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.**

#### IX. ADJOURN

**Mr. Maresco motioned to adjourn, which was seconded by Ms. Bennett. The motion passed unanimously and the meeting was adjourned at 8:07 p.m.**