

Amherst School Board
June 3, 2010

Attendance

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Amherst School Board:

Nancy Head, Peter Maresco, Peg Bennett, Rob Graybill, Lucienne Foulks

Administrative Team:

Mary Athey Jennings, Nicole Heimark, Elizabeth Shankel, Porter Dodge, Gerry St. Amand, Renea Sparks

Minutes Recorder: Beth Penney

Public Hearing: Expendable Trust Fund

**Public Hearing:
Expendable Trust
Fund**

Call to Order

Ms. Head called the hearing to order at 6:04pm

Jim Miner presented that the present balance in the trust is \$127,316.

The committee would like to use some of the funds to replace the roof on east wing of Wilkins. The issue is there is leaking between the roof and the overlay. We are also losing insulation value because of this. Three bids ranging from \$88,055 - \$110,060 dollars have been obtained. Each bid comes with a 15-year warranty and removal of the old roof. We will get 22-25 years out of the new roof. We recommend going with Melanson Co. to replace the roof.

Ms. Bennett made a motion to adjourn the public hearing. Mr. Graybill seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous at 6:08pm.

Regular Meeting

Regular Meeting

Ms. Head called the meeting to order at 6:08pm.

Announcements

Announcements

Dr. Jennings stated that she regretfully accepted the resignation of the Vice Principal at AMS. There are three finalists, who will be brought forward to Mr. Dodge and we will need a special meeting the last week in June to conclude the hiring.

Ms. Head stated congratulations to David April for receiving the Eddy and for winning the state level award in Physical Education.

47 **Public Time**

Public Time

48

49 No Public

50

51 **Consent Agenda**

Consent Agenda

52

53 Ms. Head stated there are two items not in the consent agenda.

54

55 Ms. Sparks explained the Request for Occupational Therapy (OT) proposals and
56 made the recommendation to hire Linda Gott for OT. OT is split between AMS and
57 Clark/Wilkins. This hire is an additional service for AMS. This person will cover
58 overflow hours for AMS.

59

60 Ms. Sparks explained the second item, which is a memo for a particular type of
61 service from Autism Bridges. We have contracted with this company for the last few
62 years and I am pleased with their services. The estimate for next year is \$33,000.

63

64 Mr. Graybill made a motion to accept the consent agenda containing the minutes
65 from May 6th, the April treasurers report, the manifest, the retirement, the special
66 services and the two additions as previously described. Mr. Maresco seconded the
67 motion and the vote was unanimous.

68

69 **Presentations**

Presentations

70

71 **Reading Street Pilot**

72

73 Nancy Maguire, the reading coordinator for the SAU, made this presentation with
74 the support of many teachers.

75

76 The Scott Foresman Reading Street program is a 4 year roll out, which started last
77 year in Mont Vernon, so they are in year 2 with the program.

78

79 The program is fully implemented in Kindergarten and there are 2 classrooms in 1st
80 and 2nd grade in the Amherst schools. Next year there will be full implementation in
81 1st, 2nd, 5th and 6th grade if the surplus budget is voted through. The year after there
82 will be full implementation K-6.

83

84 Katie Kennedy presented, representing the 2nd grade program, she discussed the
85 likes, challenges, and action steps in the 2nd grade. We like that all kids are exposed
86 to grade level text and skills. The stories in the core program are high interest
87 containing both non-fiction and fiction each week. The challenges are that there are
88 only three levels of books, which does not meet all levels of kids. We use books from
89 the guided reading room to integrate into book groups for the other students.

90

91 Donna Niland representing 1st grade presented a 1-week overview. Kids enjoy the
92 morning warm-ups, questions of the week, read aloud on Mondays, sing with me big

93 books, and the reader theater. We have spent a lot of time making games to support
94 the lessons. We like that the skills of reading happen daily, student's motivation is
95 high, and there is a high level of expectation and technology integration. The
96 challenges are we received the materials in disorganized manner because the
97 materials were given to the teachers and not purchased. The time spent to make
98 games and the lack of common planning time has been a struggle. The strategic
99 intervention did not work for all students.

100

101 Mr. Graybill stated that his daughter is in 1st grade and he wants to publicly
102 recognize Pat and Donna because his daughter's reading is phenomenal.

103

104 Liz Alexakos presented representing the kindergarten. There are extensive
105 resources with the program. Each unit has a manual, 6 stories, big and small books,
106 which are a mix of fiction and non-fiction, and amazing words each week. The
107 vocabulary is presented as pictures, which enhances oral language. The level
108 readers do not meet the needs of all children especially the lowest level readers. The
109 program has strong connections from text to text. The children can make the
110 connections too and there are science and social studies connections too.

111 The Scott Foresman assessment is kid friendly and gives the teacher a variety of
112 information because all skills are assessed at the end of each unit. The end goal is
113 that children see themselves as readers. They have confidence, skills, and success.

114

115 Ms. Maguire presented what's next. There was training on May 19th for new
116 teachers to the program. Next year grades 3 and 4 will start the Guided reading
117 program and 1st and 2nd will have full implementation. Each team of teachers has a
118 work session before fall. The Scott Foresman trainer returns in October.

119

120 Ms. Bennett asked about the kids who need a more linguist program. What do we do
121 in that case?

122

123 Ms. Niland replied that they do all of the same things, but the linguist readers use
124 level games to incorporate with all of the kids. This way all kids are exposed to
125 Reading Street. Some kids have different vocabulary each week, but all kids are
126 exposed to the grade level reading whether they are reading at that level or not.

127

128 Ms. Foulks asked if this is common with all programs.

129

130 Ms. Maguire replied there are always kids that will not be met with all programs, but
131 we have a lot of resources and a lot to draw on. Teachers use resources they have
132 used before and they also use reading coaches as resources.

133

134 Scott Foresman gave information from school districts that have used the program
135 for many years. We have pulled activities from these schools and there is a wealth
136 of online resources.

137

138 A discussion ensued amongst the board with the following topics being discussed.
139 They commended the teachers for all of their hard work in implementing the
140 program because the first year is always the hardest. The board discussed how the
141 schools have tried many programs in the past and now they have the resources to
142 meet the needs of all students, but with this program all students have a core
143 program, which is being taught no matter the students reading level. The board
144 discussed why they started this program and did not stay with the other programs.
145 The reason for the switch is because this program will provide consistency across
146 grade levels, the teachers have already seen an improvement in the student's
147 reading levels increase at a faster rate, and that the program has high expectations
148 and the students are meeting them.

149

150 Preschool Proposal

151

152 Ms. Sparks stated that many people were involved in putting this presentation
153 together. In November 2008, we brought a preschool presentation to the board. We
154 want to bring forward the proposal again prior to budget time to prepare before the
155 FY2011/2012 budget. We want to do partial implementation of a 4yr old class for
156 11/12 and a 3yr./4yr. old program in 12/13. There are a significant number of
157 preschool students with special needs who will be entering kindergarten in FY 12
158 and many that will be in the population in future years. A public preschool will
159 provide the district with more connection with families, control and consistency
160 over the program, and more control over projecting the budget. To get state
161 approval we must have a 50/50 ratio of regular students and students with special
162 needs. The class size must be 12 students total. We are looking at an AM/ PM
163 option preschool for FY12. For the 3 yr old class in FY 13, we have preliminary
164 information about the population of special education students. We are looking at
165 having residents of Amherst and Mont Vernon be allowed to come to the preschool.
166 The pros for curriculum and instruction would be Scott Foresman has a Reading
167 Street program for Preschool, NH has early learning guidelines we would follow, and
168 we will better be able to control the preschool outcomes for state testing.

169

170 Considering the population of expected special education students we would need 1
171 certified teacher with a special education endorsement, 3 paraprofessionals and
172 related service in OT, speech, physical therapy, and behavioral management. This
173 program will have a total cost of \$296,000.

174

175 The 8 special education students currently budgeted will cost the district \$373, 596.
176 There will be a cost saving of \$77,000 by implementing the preschool program.

177

178 The paraprofessionals would be staffed to the school not to individual students,
179 which would allow the class to absorb additional students. Currently, for out of
180 district placement we have to hire one on ones for each student.

181

182 The tuition needs to be discussed to defray the cost. We are seeking support to
183 conduct additional research to bring back a presentation in September and then
184 have a formal proposal for the board in October.

185

186 A discussion between Ms. Sparks and the board ensued. The main points of the
187 discussion were as follows. The board liked the schedule of the presentations and
188 proposing this program. The current students who are “placed out of district”
189 receive services at home; Sunrise, local preschools and some come to Clark and
190 Wilkins for services. The 50/50 ratio of students is to receive a designation from
191 the state to have the least restrictive setting possible for the special education
192 students. The board would like to see a plan for if the program does not achieve
193 enrollment of a 50/50 ratio of students. The board would like to see the financials
194 for several scenarios of enrollment numbers. The program would charge a
195 competitive tuition. The special education students will not pay tuition because the
196 district is responsible for these students from ages 3- 21 yrs of age or until they
197 graduate high school. Once the 3 yr old class was implemented they do not plan on
198 combining 3yr olds and 4 yr olds. The preschool proposal committee will conduct a
199 survey similar to the kindergarten survey to get an idea of enrollment from the
200 community. The board discussed space needs and for next year there would not be
201 additional space needed. The year after to add the 3yr old class the space needs are
202 unknown. The goal is eventually to move all of 1st grades to Wilkins with out getting
203 more portables. If the preschool population goes up there are several options. The
204 board is leery of asking the town’s people to pay money to build a new school
205 because of the serious financial obligations. The district is paying \$12,000 to
206 Sunrise for students and then an additional \$16,000 for speech, OT, aides,
207 behavioral services, evaluations, and an extended school year. The preschool
208 committee needs to do more research about how to determine who gets into the
209 program. Many districts around Amherst have a similar preschool program with the
210 50/50 split, except Milford.

211

212 Kindergarten Survey

213

214 Mr. St. Amand stated that they surveyed the incoming kindergarten families in
215 March about a 2.5 day and 0.5 day program. The board wanted an additional survey.
216 This survey was sent to 114 families. 79 families returned the survey. 25 expressed
217 interest in 2.5 day program. Many families included additional comments that
218 stated that the teacher placement mattered more than the number of days in the
219 program. 34 families prefer the 0.5 day current program. 14 families would not
220 attend because they need a full day, 5 days a week program. Some families have
221 moved away. There is definite interest in families and interest in a full day program
222 5 days per week, but the interest is not strong enough for 2.5 day program. There
223 was a huge gender imbalance in the interested families. We recommend not moving
224 forward with the 2.5 day program for next year. We also recommend that another
225 proposal not be brought forward for 2 years so we can focus on the preschool
226 proposal. In the future we need to explore a full day, 5 days per week program. A

227 number of people were interested in this and there is lots of research out there to
228 support full day kindergarten programs.

229
230 Mr. Maresco asked Mr. St. Amand to bring a proposal forward earlier and with a
231 longer-range plan next time.

232
233 2010-2011 Technology Budget

234
235 Bruce Chakrin presented and he started with the technology that should be used for
236 best practice in a 21st century classroom:

237
238 Digital projectors can be used everyday by every teacher. A lot of kids are visual
239 learners and benefit from things being projected on the screen.

240
241 Document cameras are cameras on a stand with lights that projects the image that is
242 under a camera. Teachers can do lots of things with this camera.

243
244 Interactive white boards, also called Smart Boards, are technology that is interactive
245 with diverse curricular materials that comes with the software. This technology
246 allows kids to get up, work in small groups, or individually.

247
248 Personal response systems use clickers for students to respond to the teacher. We
249 would like more to be able to use them more often.

250
251 Digital Learning Centers are small computer clusters. A group of computers in every
252 classroom would allow for teachable moments and allow kids to do research at the
253 moment.

254
255 Voice amplification systems magnify the sound of the teacher's voice. Research
256 shows when students can hear better they learn better. There is a trend to put these
257 into classrooms. We have 8 in the middle school and they are very successful.

258
259 Video players are needed because there is a lot of content that is delivered on DVDs
260 and all curriculum systems come with DVDs.

261
262 Mr. Chakrin handed out a report from the State Technology committee, which shows
263 student achievement using technology.

264
265 Mr. Chakrin continued that a 21st century classroom must have technology
266 integration, which has a student centered vs. teacher centered perspective. Students
267 learn to use technology in core curriculum. By embedding technology in the core
268 curriculum we enhance teachers' ability to better engage students and help the
269 students to learn better. Technology does improve student achievement. There is a
270 lot of professional development needed with technology and we are doing a lot. We
271 have been doing teacher lead workshops, grant funding teachers to the National
272 Technology Conference, sending teachers to the state conference and NISTY

273 conferences, and have a support site with Angel for professional development. We
274 are also encouraging teachers to do online PD offerings, including the use of
275 interactive whiteboards. We have more opportunity for co-teaching with technology
276 integrators and are working on developing a peer-coaching model.

277

278 Some of the 21st century skills include the core subjects, global awareness of how
279 core content areas relate to what is happening in world, reasoning skills, problem
280 based learning, communication skills and collaboration, literacy skills including how
281 to evaluate information, media literacy, and the ITC skills.

282

283 The interactive whiteboards and document cameras are extremely coveted by the
284 teachers who use them.

285

286 A lengthy discussion amongst the board ensued over the concern for the amount of
287 money being spent on technology and the concern over how technology is always
288 being updated and needs to be replaced or fixed often. The board's concerns lie in
289 using \$45,000 in next year's budget for new technology plus the surplus budget for
290 technology. They feel that a \$100,000 spent on technology will not get the return
291 for the value in the education the students will get. Technology is a tool, but will
292 never replace the teacher. They have concerns about the time teachers will spend
293 learning the technology and developing curriculum to use it and that this time will
294 be taken away from other important things the teachers need to do. The board
295 would like to see that skills that could be taught associated with each type of
296 technology.

297

298 Ms. Heimarck stated that they had made another column that included the grade
299 level skills, but they did not want the board to misunderstand that these are the only
300 possibilities with each piece of technology.

301

302 Mr. Chakrin, Ms. Heimarck, Mr. Dodge and Mr. St. Amand offered words of support
303 for spending the money on technology. Their main points are summarized below.
304 The technology staff provides a large amount of support to the teachers when using
305 technology. Teachers are asking for more technology and are training to use the
306 technology. Teachers are excited about the level of engagement of their students
307 when they use technology. Once lesson plans are developed they are shared and
308 there are many lesson plans out there that can be downloaded. The integration
309 specialists at AMS are offering courses after school that are well attended, but
310 enough technology is not available for all of the teachers to use. Technology changes
311 faster than we can keep up, but we do our best to evaluate new technologies without
312 trying to be on the leading edge and keep costs down. Technology goes very
313 quickly, but kids are learning in those short snippets. In classrooms with technology
314 kids are more engaged.

315

316 Mr. Dodge stated that he is a big proponent of technology because kids are
317 comfortable with it and are savvy. Technology is a valuable learning tool that we
318 cannot put a number on.

319

320 Mr. St. Amand stated the children we are getting even in K and 1st are digital natives.
321 We can not get ahead of them. The Document cameras and student response
322 systems are used effectively. I feel students will be at a deficit if we are not using
323 technology. It is difficult to stay ahead of the technology, but we have come far. I
324 would hate to see us step back. The assistive technology is also important to help
325 special education kids. In the near future we will stop seeing handwriting being
326 taught and will need to teach key boarding at a younger age.

327

328 Ms. Heimark stated that 10 years ago significant studies came out about learning
329 styles. 90% of the teaching and learning was auditory based and the most at risk
330 learners are visual learners. Technology and these tools are the pieces of equipment
331 that address the visual learners. As kids are exposed at a younger age to visual
332 technology, kids are learning visually.

333

334 Dr. Jennings stated that the literacy goal has been pushed forward and what we have
335 not shown is how technology has helped the literacy program. The program review
336 in math is coming, which will cost out professional development, textbooks, and
337 technology. This process will show you how technology supports the content.
338 Teachers cannot wait for the technology. We want to provide the teachers with the
339 technology.

340

341 Dr. Jennings stated we have \$45,000+ in the budget for next year, would you like to
342 lower that number?

343

344 Mr. Graybill stated that the \$45,000 + surplus = \$100,000 and I do not feel we will
345 get the return for \$100,000. I support the document camera investment and other
346 technology that enhances learning efficiently.

347

348 Dr. Jennings stated that we did vote on and the voters accepted the FY11 budget.
349 The technology plan was adopted at the SAU meeting. I am concerned if we cut the
350 FY 11 budget and then are not inline with the voters and not inline with the SAU
351 vote.

352

353 Ms. Head replied that the technology plan was adopted at the SAU, but the Amherst
354 School Board has not adopted it yet.

355

356 Dr. Jennings suggested that reductions come from surplus budget and not from the
357 FY11 budget.

358

359 Ms. Bennett stated that she supported the \$45,028 that we agreed on, but have
360 different emphasis on what is purchased.

361

362 Mr. Graybill stated he understands, but just because voters approved the budget, he
363 is not comfortable with spending it all. He is not comfortable moving forward
364 spending the money with what we are looking. I want to see specifics. What are the

365 most important items and the highest value items? I would like to see highlights in a
366 few pages including why these pieces of technology are important.

367
368 Mr. Maresco stated that when we delayed at last meeting we wanted to understand
369 things better. All of the items in the budget and surplus go along with current
370 technology plan. All of the items are centered on the technology plan and eventually
371 we will buy these things and the prices will go up or down. I feel it is beneficial to
372 approve both the surplus and the FY11 budget.

373
374 Ms. Shankel reminded the board that the budget for new equipment was cut in half
375 and last year the schools purchased zero new equipment. The Ways and Means
376 committee supported this budget. We have already cut the budget.

377
378 **Mr. Graybill made a motion to approve and go forward with FY11 budgeted**
379 **technology. Ms. Bennett seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous.**

380
381 Ms. Bennett asked how the board feels about spending the surplus money on
382 technology.

383
384 **Mr. Graybill made a motion to not approve the spending of the surplus money**
385 **on the technology as stated. Ms. Foulks seconded the motion.**

386
387 Ms. Heimark stated that one item related directly to curriculum initiatives are the
388 Stem carts used with new science curriculum at AMS.

389
390 Mr. Chakrin stated that to deliver more quality service in the internet speed the
391 expansion switches for the server are needed.

392
393 Mr. Graybill stated that he does support infrastructure needs and asked is there
394 anything else?

395
396 Mr. Chakrin stated the other item is the projector for the multipurpose room.

397
398 Ms. Bennett stated that the document cameras are necessary and useful. Do we
399 want to consider spending surplus for them and the projectors?

400
401 Ms. Shankel stated that would be \$28,350 for all of these items.

402
403 Ms. Head stated that the Ways and Means wanted to see a technology plan that the
404 board was happy with. I am not happy with the technology plan because it is vague
405 for K-8.

406
407 Mr. Chakrin stated that the plans are general because the plan is based on no future
408 budget. The plan is a best practice for this type of plan.

409
410 Ms. Head stated this is a lot of money and no way of judging its effectiveness.

411 Mr. Graybill stated the items in the surplus request were cut from the original
412 budget.

413

414 **Mr. Graybill amended the motion to authorize the administration to purchase**
415 **equipment necessary for curriculum and infrastructure totaling \$12,650. Mr.**
416 **Maresco seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous.**

417

418 FY10 Budget Surplus – Non-technology

419

420 \$141,197 is the current figure without the technology.

421

422 Ms. Sparks, Ms. Shankel, Jim Miner and Mr. Dodge reviewed the items as discussed
423 at the meeting in May.

424

425 **Mr. Maresco made a motion to accept the \$141,197 expenditure of the surplus**
426 **budget as presented. Ms. Foulks seconded the motion and the vote was**
427 **unanimous.**

428

429 **Action Items**

Action Items

430

431 Expendable Trust Funds

432

433 **Mr. Graybill made a motion to allocate funds as presented for replacing the**
434 **east wing roof of Wilkins. Ms. Bennett seconded the motion and the vote was**
435 **unanimous.**

436

437 Renovations Master Plan

438

439 Jim Miner reviewed the renovation plan and stated that the remaining balance from
440 the original bond is approximately \$89,010. The proposal is to spend a portion for
441 technology infrastructure change and to re-floor the Multi-purpose room.

442

443 Mr. Chakrin stated that this is an upgrade of the wireless infrastructure in the 3
444 buildings. We need a managed system to control who gets access to our network.
445 This makes it more secure. Currently the wireless devices are wide open, and we
446 are concerned with security.

447

448 **Ms. Bennett made a motion to accept the renovations master plan as**
449 **presented including the upgrading of the wireless network. Ms. Foulks**
450 **seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous.**

451

452 Policy JICK

453

454 Dr. Jennings stated this is a change to the policy the Amherst board first saw, it was
455 also presented at the SAU level. The administration is going to training for the new
456 bullying law, which was passed by the legislature.

457 Mr. Dodge stated we are under a timeline to get policies into the student handbooks.

458

459 Dr. Jennings stated the change is in the wording “the principal”, which has been
460 changed to “principal or designee” and “superintendent or designee”.

461

462 **Ms. Foulks made a motion to accept the policy JICK as currently stated. Mr.**
463 **Graybill seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous.**

464

465 **Mr. Maresco made a motion to go into non-public session under RSA 91-**
466 **A:3 II. Ms. Bennett seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous at**
467 **9:33pm.**

**Adjourn to
Non-public
Session**

468

469 **Peter motioned to go into non-public session. Peg seconded the motion. A**
470 **unanimous roll call vote was taken. The Board went into non-public session at**
471 **9:33.**

472

473 Dr. Jennings presented a candidate for the position of Reading Specialist to the
474 Board. Discussion ensued.

475

476 **Rob made a motion to come out of non-public session. Peg seconded the**
477 **motion. A unanimous roll call vote was taken. The Board came out of non-**
478 **public session at 9:38.**

479

480 **Peg motioned to accept the Superintendent’s recommendation to hire Rebecca**
481 **Flynn as the Reading Specialist. Peter seconded the motion. The motion**
482 **passed unanimously.**

483

484 **Lucienne motioned to adjourn. Peg seconded the motion. The motion passed**
485 **unanimously and the Board meeting ended at 9:40.**

486

487

488

489

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491