

MINUTES
AMHERST SCHOOL BOARD
Tuesday, August 14, 2007
Amherst Town Hall Meeting Room

Chair Dwight Brew called the meeting to order at 6:04 pm

CALL TO ORDER

Present:

ATTENDANCE

Amherst School Board- Pam Dudoff, Dwight Brew, Nancy Head, Jim O'Mara, (arrived at 6:10) and Peg Bennett

Administrative Team- Nicole Heimark, Betty Shankel, Mary Jennings, Kathy Skoglund, Porter Dodge, Gerry St. Amand

Minutes Recorder- Danielle Costa

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Superintendent's Reports

Mary welcomed everyone back from the summer. She explained that the next meeting in September will focus on school opening. Mary shared with the board what the SAU has been doing over the summer. Mainly, hiring 42 new staff members within SAU 39 and working on Literacy goals. She mentioned there would be a Literacy workshop next Friday, August 24, 2007.

The administration had met to discuss policy and has met with their attorney.

Mary informed the board that her assistant Maryanne Buonadonna would be on medical leave and Paula Learoyd will take her place for the next 5 weeks.

Mary also met with the Amherst Police Chief and has discussed the new plan for the Wilkins traffic. The new traffic plan will be shared at the next meeting.

Mary has also been in touch with the attorney to discuss the payment for the shed and the barn that has not been received from the Olsen family. Mary will update the board when the next step is taken or the fee has been received.

Pam asked for clarification to the 42 positions.

Mary clarified that the positions are replacement positions for the most part and are for all of the school districts in SAU 39, not just the Amherst School District.

Nancy asked if the Literacy training is available to the school board members.

Mary told the board to feel free to stop by, but it would be a training for the staff.

Principal's Reports

None

Dwight Brew opened the floor to the public.
There were no public members at the meeting.

PUBLIC TIME

CONSENT AGENDA

Pulled from the Consent agenda for this meeting were the June 7, 2007 meeting minutes
Budget transfers, May Manifest, and Lease Agreements.

**Motion to pass the consent agenda consisting of the May and June Treasurer's reports.
Motion moved by Pam and seconded by Nancy. All board members voted in favor of the
motion and the Consent Agenda passed unanimously. (5-0)**

June 7, 2007 Minutes

Changes to the minutes were made by the board.

Dwight asked for a motion to pass the amendments to the June 7, 2007 minutes.

**Motion to amend the June 7, 2007 minutes was made by Nancy and Seconded by Pam.
The amendments to the minutes passed unanimously (5-0).**

Budget Transfers

Jim inquired about the budget transfer 2008-01 and congratulated the administration for
the move toward tracking building expenditures more closely.

Nancy inquired about the Wilkins Textbooks, budget transfer 2008-02.

Betty explained that the textbook transfer was due to an increase in the prices and
shipping of the textbooks, since the prices were from the 2006 school year.

Nancy asked for price clarification.

Betty explained that the transfer was to realign the budget for the Social Studies
textbooks. She asked Nicole Heimark to clarify.

Nicole Heimark explained \$12,643.69 was transferred to the middle school to pay for the
price and shipping increases. The total for all social studies books was \$73,010.69.

**Jim made a motion to approve the budget transfers 2008-01 and 2008-02 and was
seconded by Nancy. Motion passed unanimously (5-0).**

Manifest

Jim referred to the June Treasurer's report and asked for clarification on Lunch Byte and
asked why the Ferry Beach Ecology School Payment was paid from the general fund

rather than from the activity fund.

Betty clarified that Lunch Byte is the P.O.S. system for food service and said she would clarify the Ferry Beach payment after research.

Nancy questioned the stop payment charges of \$132.

Betty clarified the stop payment and told the board that Ocean Bank reverses all stop payments and other service charges for the Amherst School District.

Motion to approve the May Manifest was made by Pam and seconded by Peg. Motion passed unanimously (5-0).

Portable Lease Agreement

Dwight asked for a motion to approve the Portable Lease Agreement.

Jim wanted to know how Ocean Bank became involved.

Betty explained that Schiavi Leasing Corp. interest rate was in the teens. And Ocean Bank interest rate was 4.37%.

Discussion ensued.

Nancy made a motion to approve the portable classroom lease agreement with Ocean Bank for a term of three years starting in September 2007 and running through September 2009, and to authorize the Superintendent, Treasurer and Board Chair to sign on behalf of the Amherst School District. The motion was seconded by Pam. The motion passed with four board members voting in favor, and one (Jim) opposing. (4-1)

Jim asked if there were any other documents that needed to be signed.

Betty explained that there were in the packet. Pgs. 10, 12, 13, 15, 16, and 19 would need to be signed by members of the board.

Betty clarified that she believed there were two motions referring to pg. 15 in the packet. The Lessee resolution would need to be introduced and adopt Exhibit E.

Motion by board to approve the resolution as outlined in Exhibit E made by Pam and seconded by Nancy. Motion passed (4-1).

Dwight asked for a motion to pass the Photocopier Lease Resolution for a four-year term from Sept. 2007- Sept 2010.

Nancy made a motion to approve the copier lease agreement with Ocean Bank for a term of four years starting in September 2007 and running through September 2010 and for the board to approve the resolution as outlined in Exhibit E,, and to authorize the Superintendent, Treasurer and Board Chair and Vice Chair to sign on behalf of the Amherst School District. The motion was seconded by Pam.

Jim asked how much the lease would cost.

Betty explained that it would cost \$8, 092 for 4 years.

Jim asked about interest.

Betty stated that it would be 4.37%.

Jim asked why the photocopier was not purchased.

Betty explained that the copier was leased because that is how it was budgeted for.

The motion passed with four board members voting in favor and one (Jim) opposing.

PRESENTATIONS

School Board Goal Setting

Mary passed out the SAU 39 School Board Goal Setting Process for 2007-2008

She explained the Past, Present, and Future plans. She then explained at this meeting the board will review the Past and Present and understand SMART goals. Between this meeting and next, possibly using the Angel Software, will discuss operational and strategic goal and strategies for achieving them. The board would bring those suggestions to the next meeting for decision making. At the next meeting the board would decide on an operational and strategic goal as well as establish other priorities for the district and the plan.

Mary asked how the board what they were doing this year to address the Amherst School Board Goals.

Goal 1: Shift Amherst School Board focus to be more policy centered.

Discussion ensued.

Goal 2: Create a school district strategic plan

Discussion ensued

Goal 3: To maintain financial systems to insure the taxpayers that all funds are spent appropriately.

Discussion ensued.

Goal 4: Improve communication between school boards, administrators, and the community.

Discussion ensued.

Goal 5: To challenge and support all students in Reading, Writing, and Mathematics.

Discussion ensued.

Dwight commented this should be the most important goal.

Goal 6: Successfully negotiate a new collective bargaining agreement (CBA).

Mary believes this has been successfully done. There is new legal service.

MBTI Profiles

Mary went over the MBTI Inventory taken by the school board and some administration.

Pam commented that this relates to the goal setting. She asked Peg to help encourage the board raise awareness of the public. She believes that there is still a disconnect. Pam believes that Peg can play a key role to help the school board.

Mary stated that the results could indicate that the board has a tendency not to come to closure.

Pam commented that some board and administration are comfortable with the overall meeting flow while other members need time to digest the material presented. Last minute changes to the board packet can be a disservice to some board members.

Dwight commented that much of the MBTI is on track but questioned the part about the board having difficulty coming to closure. He pointed out if you look at the meeting minutes; the items on the agenda are addressed.

School Board Self Assessment of the Superintendent

Evaluation of School Board Operational Procedures

Mary Jennings asked the board to look this over for the next meeting.

Pam commented that she looked at it and there were five items, which the board scored really low. Four of the five were related to Policy, and one was conveying information to the public. Pam also commented that the board scored really high on three questions.

Nancy commented that this gives a good chance for the board to zero in on what they need to work on. She would like to see how the administration views board performance and how they would rate the school board.

Mary told the board that she would have Bruce put it on Angel for the administration and principles to fill out.

Mary handed out the Becoming a Better School Board Member book to board and told the board that this book may hold ideas.

Mary went on to describe SMART goals and referenced the green handout.

After going over the handout, Dwight asked for clarification on the boards responsibilities for SMART goals.

Mary clarified and explained that she would like the board to brainstorm and to have each board member bring one or more goal for the school board to the next meeting.

Hiring Summary: FY08 Professional Staff

Mary explained that the 07-08 New Hire budgeted salary and referenced V.B. in the packet.

Dwight asked how the headcount was comparable to last year. Has the amount of staff gone up or down.

Mary explained that it basically stayed the same for the amount of professional staff. The Wilkins cut two teaching positions but added a literacy coach. Equaling a total of one loss. However AMS has added one more teaching staff this year than last year.

Mary commented that 11 non- professional staff had been cut from the budget.

Kathy commented that as more families move in, there may be a need. There have been a few families move in this summer.

ACTION ITEMS

Policy Revision KF: Facilities Use

Dwight discussed revisions to policy KF. First priority for the use of school facilities is granted to the school for school activities and second priority is given to the Town Recreation Department. Third priority is given to organizations with direct town affiliation and Fourth priority is granted to activities and organizations that serve the

youth of the community. KF states whenever a group is permitted to use school facilities, a district employee should be present unless the Superintendent or a designee determines that the employee presence is not needed. Discussions ensued about what is considered school facilities.

Betty explained that there would be a meeting next week regarding the lease renewal between Amherst School District and the Town of Amherst.

Both Jim and Dwight agreed to attend the meeting.

Pam made a motion to adopt the changes to Policy KF and was seconded by Peg. Motion was passed with four board members voting in favor and one (Nancy) opposed.

FY07 End of Year Report, DOE 25 &MS-25

Betty explained the End of Year Report and stated these were unaudited figures. However, the Unreserved Balance of approximately \$700,000 would be returned to the taxpayers to reduce future tax bills. Betty explained that benefit rates were lower than budgeted and outgoing teacher salaries were higher than incoming teacher salaries. They also saved on electricity and fuel due to a mild winter and fuel prices staying low. This also helped them save on fuel for busing.

Nancy asked that given the severe renovation needs, why are we giving the \$700,000 back to the community. Why are we not using it?

Discussion ensued.

Jim asked why the money couldn't be used to purchase the portables and the copier rather than lease them from Ocean Bank.

Discussion ensued.

Nancy made a motion to approve FY07 End of Year Reports, DOE 25 and MS-25. Motion was seconded by Pam. Motion passes with four board members voting in favor and one abstention (Jim).

Betty clarified that this is the report that is required to be submitted to the Department of Education. No changes will be made to the report, but changes will be shown on the Audit if there are any.

DISCUSSION

Master Plan Committee Report

The Master Plan Committee met with two community guests who agreed to share input.

The committee discussed two scenarios. The first scenario discussed at the last board meeting was going for a bond around \$3-\$4 million for critical renovations with the idea of completing the needed renovations within the next two to three years with smaller warrant articles or operating budget outlays. The Master Plan Committee would study space needs and put a plan into operation for meeting space needs depending on what happens to the demographics in the next few years. If the population goes up, consider an addition or a new 4/5 school. If it stays level, do the same. If the population goes down stay with the present setup.

Nancy discussed the advantages of this plan and what this plan does not address. The advantages are as follows:

1. Addresses taxpayers concern with increasing taxes
2. The need for renovations is critical
3. The school board gets time to study demographic trends, investigate alternatives
4. Long range plan with flexibility

It does not address:

1. Most of the people in the survey thought we should think in terms of a new building or addition as our next step. Survey respondents represented a higher number of people who voted for the renovations last year.
2. Long Term Savings
3. "Here and Now Problem with space not being addressed"

Nancy explained the Master Plan Committee looked at a second scenario. Option 2d. This would include renovations at Clark, Wilkins, and the middle school and add 9 classrooms at Wilkins. It would not increase traffic since no additional students would be added. Long-range plan would include watching the demographics. If student population declines slightly or stays steady in the next 10 years, the status quo will work. If it increases, an AMS addition or new 4/5 school can be considered. Wilkins can be grades 1-3, Clark become an Early Learning Center with an in-district Special Needs preschool. The plan would not include Brick School Renovations.

Nancy explained that there were ten votes. Two voted for a renovation warrant article in March, four votes for a renovation article in March and to study future needs, and four voted for renovations and addition warrant article in March.

Discussion ensued.

Nancy wants to wait until September for the board to come to a consensus about the Master Plan. The next Master Plan meeting is Aug. 30, 2007.

Nancy asked for permission to add four community members to the Master Plan committee.

Nancy made a motion to increase members of the Master Plan Committee by allowing up to four community members. Motion was seconded by Peg. Motion passed unanimously (5-0).

Policy: JFF Student Activity Accounts (1st reading)

First reading was done on Policy JFF.

Dwight asked if the public wanted to comment. No public members were in attendance.

Dwight asked that unless anyone has any comments about Policy JFF, they will do the second reading at the meeting in September.

Dwight asked for a motion to go into Non Public Session at 8:43 pm.

Motion to go into Non-Public Session per RSA 91-A:II (b) by Pam and seconded by Nancy.

By Roll Call Vote: O'Mara-yes, Dudoff-yes, Brew-yes, Bennett-yes, Head-yes.