

MINUTES
AMHERST SCHOOL BOARD
Thursday, September 6, 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, Peg Bennett and Jim O'Mara

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

Minutes Recorder- Danielle Costa

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Superintendent's Report

Mary Jennings welcomed everyone back to a new school year. She informed the board that the enrollment this year is lower than budgeted for. There are currently 770 attending Clark and Wilkins and 818 at Amherst Middle School.

Mary discussed the fire at Wilkins on the first day of school and complimented those persons for a safe evacuation and bus dismissal. Mary explained that the fire had started from an extension cord in the ceiling of the computer lab. She announced the Fire Chief will return in a few weeks to check on the building. Mary stated that she will file a report to the DOE and ask for a waiver for the missed day.

Administrator's Report

Gerry commented on the fire in the computer room and how that affects the students and staff. He stated that 4 classes were displaced for one day but have now returned to their original locations. However Speech Language Pathology and Occupational Therapy will be relocated for approximately two weeks to the conference room. Gerry stated that NWEA testing is to begin next week, and that they will be using the laptop on wheels to administer the test. All students will receive computer class in their homerooms for at least two weeks. He thanked Porter for offering their computer lab, but stated that it was not needed. Gerry explained that the extension cord that caused the fire was connected to the LCD projector.

Pam commented about the fire inspection a few weeks before and asked if the extension cord was cited. She requested that the board receive a copy of the written report. She also asked if Primex would be able to do an inspection.

Mary clarified that there was a report given and just stated a list of items to be fixed. She noted that the extension cord was not one of the items on the list.

Discussion ensued about Primex coming to the building to do inspection.

Porter commented on a smooth start to the new school year. He announced to the board that the new flex schedule is underway and that NWEA testing has begun. He stated that NECAP will begin in Oct. Porter then went on to explain the continuing issue of overcrowding at the middle school.

Discussion ensued over spatial concerns.

Nancy asked if there was need for another portable.

Porter believes there is a need for another portable.

Porter went on to discuss the NWEA testing that is underway and stated that it takes about an hour and a half per group.

Nancy asked when results would be known.

Nicole stepped in and explained that teachers receive the students raw scores within 24 hours and all reports take 48 hours to be received.

Mary announced that the Amherst PTA will have a meeting on Sept. 11,2007 at the Clark School. Mary will do a presentation about goals and Nancy and Peg will be there to discuss the master plan.

PUBLIC TIME

Dwight asked for comments from the Public.

The speaker was Lynn Doherty. Lynn stated her concern for the students and staff at Wilkins and stated that all issues are listed in the Master Plan for Clark, Wilkins, and AMS. She asked how Wilkins passed inspection over the summer and questioned whether the same persons would be doing the upcoming inspection that passed the schools over the summer.

CONSENT AGENDA

The August 14 minutes were pulled from the Consent Agenda.

Dwight asked for a motion to pass the July treasurers report. Motion passed unanimously (5-0).

Motion to act on the August 14 minutes. Motion moved by Pam and seconded by Nancy.

Dwight announced that unless there are changes to a page or two, the minutes should be tabled due to the non public session minutes not being attached.

Discussion ensued over minutes being sent to all board members 36 hours after completion.

Pam asked for page numbers to be put onto the minutes. Changes to wording on pg. 5 were noted. Instead of the word “this” in the last paragraph, It should state: last minute changes to packet can be a disservice to some board members. On pg. 6, added “to superintendent”. Pam commented under Policy Revision KF that copy of policies amended should be attached to the minutes.

Dwight added on pg 2, under motion that it be added all board members voted in favor and consent agenda was passed.

Commented on June 7th minutes that changes need to be shown in the Aug. 14 minutes.

Mary stated that the June 7 minutes are posted on the website and asked if the board would like them brought to the next meeting.

Dwight declined but stated that changes have always been written in the next minutes and would like the changes to be captured going forward.

Dwight changed wording to his comment on goal 5, from Dwight voted that this be moved to goal 1 to Dwight commented that this should be the most important goal.

Dwight added wording changes to FY End of Year Report, to state “of approximately” 700,000. Striking wording “going back to the voter” and changing to “return to the tax payers to reduce future tax bills.”

Dwight inserted the word “of” under the Master plan committee report.

Nancy corrected on pg 2 the total for all social studies book was 73,010.69 corrected from 133,377.09.

Jim made change to pg 7, FY 07 End of Year, asked to add wording to his statement, Jim asked why that money can not be used to purchase the portables and the copier and asked to add “rather than to lease them from Ocean Bank.”

Motion to table minutes made by Jim and seconded by Nancy. Motion passed unanimously (5-0).

PRESENTATIONS

AYP and NECAP Results

Nicole reviewed AYP report and NECAP results for the 2006-2007 school year. She explained the decrease of students receiving scores proficient or better in Reading and Math scores. She explained that reading needs to be the focus after looking at the disaggregated information in Math.

Nicole explained the 2007 AYP report of students in Wilkins. She then explained how the schools made AYP individually, but the district did not. She explained that when both Wilkins and AMS were placed together, the district could then count economically disadvantaged and educational disabilities could be counted. Nicole then compared the scores of year 2007 to those of 2006. She noted that in Math, Educationally Disadvantaged and Educational disability only passed through confidence interval and 2%.

She compared 2007 to 2006 school year district AYP results and discussed the Index system. She noted that not only are we tracking a decline in our NECAP scores, but are also tracking a decline in our Index. Index in Reading last year was 94.7 and this year 94.1. She noted the concern of the economically disadvantaged population which had an index of 77 last year and this year have a score of 65.8. She also noted that although not as significant of a drop, but still quite large, the educational disability group had an index of 75.6 last year and a 74.8 this year.

She noted similar trends in Math, though it has not affected AYP.

Discussion ensued on the AYP data.

Dwight noted that there is a workshop being held in a few weeks to address the school board goals.

Discussion ensued on how subgroups are determined.

Mary commented that the administration would look at subgroup of Educational Disadvantage, or Special Ed. The administration will look at the percentage of the population in special education and how they are identified and also looking at the testing conditions for these students.

Curriculum Review plans 2007-2008

Nicole highlighted the 4 phase curriculum revision cycle. Year 1 is the Research and Identifying the Target, which is based on the National State frameworks. Year 2 is the developmental year in which the curriculum is developed. Year 3 is Implementation. This is when the teachers are asked to implement the curriculum in the classroom. Year 4 is the evaluative year where the district looks at successes and failures and makes the changes that are needed. The curriculum revision cycle runs over 7 years. She noted that after the 4th year informal evaluations, mapping, dialogs on lessons and activities can be shared. She also noted that the revision cycle has been off since 2002-2003. Nicole highlighted where the district is across all subjects currently.

Discussion ensued on the Curriculum Revision Cycle.

ACTION ITEMS

Amherst School Board FY08 Goal Setting

Mary reviewed the SMART goal plan for the school board. She stated the mission and the SAU 5-year goal. She shared examples of SMART goals.

Dwight stated the plan in the weeks ahead was to figure out what realistic goals are.

Discussion ensued on goals.

Mary reiterated the “Hedgehog Theory” and asked the board what can they do?

Discussion continued on school board goal setting.

Dwight asked the board if the date of September 21 would work for the workshop to discuss goals.

Jim asked if they could know where the curriculum stands for the workshop in order to help them set goals.

Recommendation from Master Plan Committee

Master Plan committee met on August 30 to discuss the recommendations to the Amherst School District. The committee revisited the two options discussed at the school board meeting last month. Nancy named the four community members that were added to the committee.

After discussion, it was decided by the Master Plan Committee to center the recommendations on the renovations. The committee spoke to the building and grounds personnel to prioritize the needs and decided to recommend presenting the major part of the renovations. She mentioned that although this is not the most cost effective way to do things, it would have less immediate impact on the tax rate, a major concern expressed in the survey. In addition several voters preferred that it be staggered rather than be done all at once.

Nancy highlighted that they are not ignoring the space needs, but for now portables will be used. They would like to form a study committee to evaluate the Wilkins site for a potential edition. And if in agreement, they would ask for permission to do a topographical boundary study, traffic study, and geotechnical study to see if the Wilkins site can be considered as a site.

Nancy moved that the Amherst School Board propose to the Amherst voters in March 2008 a renovation plan for the ASD, furthermore that the Wilkins site be considered as a potential option for future space needs.

Discussion ensued.

Original motion was discussed and board decided to split the original motion into two separate motions.

Nancy moved that the Amherst School Board propose to the Amherst voters in March 2008 a renovation plan for the Amherst School District Schools. Motion was seconded by Pam. Motion passed (4-1), Jim opposed due to the motions lack of specifics and direction and more information is needed before voting on next year's operating budget.

Nancy moved that the Wilkins school site be evaluated as a potential option to meet future space needs. Motion seconded by Pam after asking for clarification.

Jim asked the chair if this motion removes the option for new structure. Dwight stated that it does not remove the option. Discussion ensued.

Motion passes (4-1), Jim opposed

Policy JFF: Student Activities Account- Second Reading

No comments made on Policy JFF at first reading on August 14, 2007

No public comment.

Motion to adopt made by Jim and seconded by Pam. No discussion. Motion passes (5-0)

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Policies EB, EBBB, ECAF, EEA, EEAE, EEAEA- First Reading

Policy EB- Safety Program

Pam described both EB Safety Program and Policy EB Workplace Safety Program. Pam highlighted and clarified the formation of the Joint Loss Management Committee and the Crisis Management Plan. She clarified that while we have a Crisis Management Plan we do not have a Joint Loss Management Committee in our buildings. She explained that these types of committees in business workplaces do a great job of identifying safety issues and providing safety training as well as reducing accidents. If this policy is passed, it will cause a formation of a joint loss management committee. She explained that the current policy Workplace Safety does a good job of setting out what a workplace safety

committee does. Pam recommends that this be done on a joint policy because they do two different things and complete a full package.

Dwight asked for clarification to all districts having the same EB policy. Pam clarified that all districts have the same EB policy. Pam asked if the board members are comfortable with this approach.

Mary stated that the RSA 281-A: 64 that state that if there is a union, an association must elect 4 members. The AEA is not aware of this yet and would need to be informed.

Pam clarified that this is a proposed amendment.

Dwight explained since it is not included on the agenda it will be considered a first reading.

EBBB- Accident Reports

Pam explained that EBBB states that accident reports need to be filled out and there is a special state form that needs to be used if an Automated External Defibrillator (AED) is used.

ECAF- Audio and Video Surveillance on School Busses

Currently there is a bus camera policy EEAEF, but this policy is outdated and only looks at video and not audio. It's time frames are not compliant to the state RSA and is quite different than the new policy. Pam is suggesting eliminating the current policy and have a first reading of the new policy.

Pam commented that the bus company is in compliance.

Public comments- Maria Heaney commented on language. She asked for the word may removed from the first paragraph and ask for will be to be put in its place. In the fifth paragraph asked that the word viewed be added to Recordings may be requested and viewed... And under Building administrator specify Principal and add periodic audits to the list.

Mary commented that the changes sounded good, and would recommend either placing the periodic audits either in the list or have it in the procedures.

Gerry asked for the clarification of the word "will" in the last paragraph to clarify in what setting the video and audio will be viewed.

Jim clarified that it would be a procedure that the board would look to the staff for guidance.

Dwight asked for legal guardian to replace parents.

EEA- Student Transportation Services

Pam explained that this policy includes changes made at the SAU meeting and commented that it also noticed that in C. from a logistical standpoint this could be cumbersome if the school board is approving each bus stop. Pam reviewed RSA 189:6. She stated that it is in the RSA that the bus stop is established by the school board. She asked the attorney if they could delegate the authority, he cautioned her, but Betty and Mary would prefer that this be delegated.

Mary recommended running the EEA by the district attorney to see what they mean by established by the school board.

Discussion ensued.

Jim commented on ECAF in the first paragraph, RSA 570-A: 2 K (1), (2). By including list of those who can review, he asked if the school board may be able to mediate.

Discussion ensued as to who is able to view and listen to the recordings.

EEA discussion ensued.

Maria Henney commented on Resolution of Conflicts and asked that it not state last appeal, but change to further appeal and asked that it is specified who is on the committee and ask that the word last be taken out so that if the parent feels it is necessary they can appeal to the school board that the option is still available.

Steve Coughlan asked that in the last paragraph, the word Board's was removed to state District Transportation Committee.

Discussion ensued

Pam will check the RSA about suspension of length of time

EEAE- School Bus Safety Program

Pam stated that the district is compliant with this bus safety program.

Maria recommended that time frame and specifics and guidelines on driving record.

Pam stated that she will check the DOT guidelines and will research this.

EEAEA- Fitness for Duty of Bus Drivers and Those Performing Safety Sensitive Transportation Functions

Pam stated that this version was discussed at the SAU board meeting on Aug. 30, 2007.

Looks at the medical examination, bus driver's certificate and criminal background investigation and the mandatory drug and alcohol testing.

She stated that the DOT holds the employer responsible and currently the Amherst School District is not the employer. This policy allows for both, whether you are or are not the employer and covers the district in both situations.

Maria asked that the Motor Vehicle Record (MVR) be added.

Motion made by Nancy and seconded by Peg to go into Non Public session RSA 91-A: 3, II (b).

Head (yes), Bennett (yes), Brew (yes), Dudoff (yes), and O'Mara (yes)

Meeting adjourned at 8:43 pm