

MINUTES
AMHERST SCHOOL BOARD
October 4, 2007
Amherst Town Hall Meeting Room

Chair Dwight Brew called the board meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.

CALL TO ORDER
ATTENDANCE

Present:

Amherst School Board: Peg Bennett, Dwight Brew, Pam Dudoff, Nancy Head, and Jim O'Mara.

Administrative Team: Porter Dodge, Nicole Heimarck, Dr. Mary Jennings, Elizabeth Shankel, and Gerry St. Amand.

Minutes Transcriber: Lyn Jennings

Chair Dwight Brew said he would be revising the Agenda a little bit since he was going to start the meeting with the Status of the Court Case first.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- A. Administrators' Reports - Board members received copies of the Administrators Reports in their board packets.

Dr. Jennings said she wanted to pass out some administrative information that was communicated to the board via e-mail. Dr. Jennings explained the Brick School Newsletter went out to the entire staff and deals largely with the communication between the staff and the Brick School Office. Dr. Jennings said it's for the board to look at. Dr. Jennings complimented Carrie Morneau, HR Director who spearheaded the project. Dr. Jennings said this project is in line with the goal setting the Brick School staff has been working on.

Dr. Jennings said at the last meeting the board asked for an update on where they are in the curriculum review cycle and Nicole Heimarck will be bringing to the board what she thinks should be a revision to the curriculum revision cycle. Dr. Jennings provided board members with an update on where they are in the curriculum revision cycle so far. Dr. Jennings said a presentation will be done later detailing what they believe is a realistic curriculum review cycle.

Pam Dudoff had a question for Gerry St. Amand. Pam said in Gerry's report, he spoke about the final installation and staff training with the new cameras. Pam asked if they were security cameras. Gerry said yes, they were security cameras. Pam asked if

the cameras were at both Clark and Wilkins and Gerry said yes, they were.

Pam said in Porter's report, he spoke about continued overcrowding and space needs. He also said at certain times of the day, there are no available classrooms to meet their needs. Pam asked Porter to talk about what he is doing, where the students are going, and are they private enough in order to aid the Special Education students.

Porter said as he mentioned in his report, it is difficult to find areas for some of the children because of their needs, they need private space to work for whatever reason. Other issues include finding places to bring the children to work one on one or with a couple of students to help the children out that aren't quite getting it in class and need some extra help.

Porter said with the new schedule and over use of rooms during a certain time of the day for example they have a classroom they made out of a stage area, which can't be used from 11:00 – 1:15 because of the cafeteria noise. Porter said in hallways they use petitioned areas for private areas but they are not as private as they'd like them.

B. Report on Board Workshop – Dr. Jennings thanked the board for coming to a special meeting held on a Friday morning where they reviewed the goals of the board and data that might be helpful in the future for goal setting.

Dr. Jennings said at his point, the board has several goals and they will be moving forward. Dr. Jennings said of course the primary goal is to support the District wide strategic plan, improving student performance in all subject areas by focusing on reading.

Dr. Jennings said she thinks the board is going down a strong road with several goals that can keep them going and at a future meeting we need to start building our agendas around the board goals. Dr. Jennings said they want to do presentations and information sharing that fits what the board wants to do.

Dwight Brew invited comments from the Public but none were forthcoming.

PUBLIC TIME

Dwight Brew asked if any of the board members wanted to pull anything from the Consent Agenda.

CONSENT AGENDA

Pam Dudoff pulled the September 6, 2007, Minutes from the

Consent Agenda.

A motion was made by Nancy Head and seconded by Pam Dudoff to approve Consent Agenda Items. B. Financial 1. Treasurer's Report – August 2007; 2. Budget Transfers; C. Acceptance of Donations to Activity Fund – 1. Target - \$210.83 (Wilkins); 2. Target - \$302.70 (AMS). All members of the board voted in favor of the motion and the motion passed unanimously. (5-0)

A motion was made by Pam Dudoff to approve the September 6, 2007, minutes as amended. Jim O'Mara seconded the motion. The motion was withdrawn.

Under Administrator's Report on page 1, Dwight Brew asked to include what SLP stands for – Speech Language Pathology.

On Page 2 under Public Time Dwight asked to change the wording to read Dwight asked for comments from the Public but none were forthcoming.

On Page 2 under Public Time, the second paragraph, include the speaker was Lynn Doherty.

On Page 5, under Recommendation from Master Plan Committee, the second paragraph, After discussion, it was decided include the words *by the Master Plan Committee* to center the recommendations on the renovations.

On Page 5, strike the third and forth sentences in the second paragraph and replace it with the following: 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.

On Page 7, in the first paragraph change the word schools to districts.

On Page 8, 7th paragraph, change the word Public to Maria Henney.

On Page 8, 8th paragraph, change the word Kauffman to Coughlan.

On Page 9, 2nd paragraph, change MBR to MVR (Motor Vehicle

Record)

A motion was made by Pam Dudoff and seconded by Peg Bennett to table the Minutes of September 6, 2007, until the next board meeting. All members of the board voted in favor of the motion and the motion passed unanimously. (5-0)

A. Status of Court Case – Dwight Brew said the Amherst School Board has been trying for several years to resolve the Olsen’s building a barn on the Amherst School District property.

V. PRESENTATIONS

Dwight said in March of 2006 the School Board placed a warrant on the ballot requesting the authority to transfer a minimal amount of land to the Olsen’s for \$5,000 so the Olsen’s would own the land the barn was built on. The voters approved the warrant.

Dwight said since March of 2006 the School Board has been attempting to obtain an agreement with the Olsen’s according to the terms of this warrant. After trying to come to an agreement for over a year and a half, the board feels additional actions may become necessary to resolve this issue.

Dwight said they’ve asked their Attorney, Kristen Yasenka to outline what has been done to date, what our offer is, and to answer any questions the board may have.

Dwight asked Attorney Yasenka to give the update.

Attorney Yasenka said she is an Attorney with the McLane Law Firm located in Manchester, NH.

Attorney Yasenka said she was at the board meeting to give a summary of what has happened to date in the court proceeding.

Attorney Yasenka provided a brief history of the litigation:

Prior to 2003, the Olsen’s brought a suit against the town of Amherst regarding ownership of land on Baboosic Lake Road. In this litigation, the court determined the proper boundaries of the property and in essence determined the school district owned a certain portion of it on which the Olsen’s built structures.

The Supreme Court has affirmed this decision and that it’s no longer an issue.

Attorney Yasenka said the Town of Amherst also brought a related lawsuit regarding violations of set back requirements from the Olsen's barn and shed and in that case the court found the barn and shed violated the set back and they were built almost entirely on property the defendant's did not own. This case has been concluded and it has not been resolved in that the Olsen's have not corrected the violation of the zoning.

Attorney Yasenka said because the violation has not been corrected, the District instituted this action, by what is called a Petition for Declaratory Judgment and Injunctive Relief, which was filed on September 20, 2004.

In this petition, the District asked the court to declare the District has exclusive rights to the property, which is Tax Map 6, Lot 96 that the District is entitled to preliminary and permanent injunctive relief and command the Olsen's to remove the barn, shed, vehicles, trailers, and any other property from it's land and also to remove the swimming pool to the extent it has violated set-back standards. In this action, on June 23, 2005, the District filed a motion for Summary Judgment, which is a pleading filed with the court and the court ruled on it and found the district owns and has exclusive rights to the property and it ordered the Olsen's to remove the barn, shed, vehicles, trailer and other personal property and remove the swimming pool to the extent it violates the set-back.

The Olsen's moved to reconsider this decision and the court denied it on September 15, 2005.

The Olsen's did not appeal and the time for appeal has expired so that is the ruling order of the court.

In November 2005, the District filed a motion for contempt, but withdrew it because negotiations began with the Olsen's.

A warrant article was placed on the ballot on March 14, 2006, the District was given the authority to sell a portion of the property to the Olsen's and it was for \$5,000. After this time the District engaged in several discussions regarding a lot line adjustment with the Olsen's. Attorneys from the McLane Law Firm visited the Olsen's at their property, made telephone calls, and had correspondence in the interest of settling this matter. Attorney Yasenka said there came a time when the Olsen's had come to some agreement and had given the McLane Firm a check to hold in Escrow for \$500 and the District agreed they could work for the other \$4,500 to pay for the land.

Attorney Yasenka said despite all these negotiations an agreement could not be reached that was satisfactory to both the Olsen's and the School District. During that time, the District also met with Mr. Tiedman of the Planning Board to review the lot line adjustment plan and surveyors went out to the property to lay the boundary line adjustments and over the course of March 2006 – May 2007 the District and the Olsen's had been trying to reach an agreement. When no agreement could be reached, and over two years since the court order, the District filed a Motion for Contempt with the court on May 25, 2007.

A Hearing was held on August 8, 2007, which I was present for representing the District, and the Olsen's were present for themselves. After the Hearing, the Court issued an order, it extended the time for the Olsen's to comply with the order by sixty days and it ordered the Olsen's to remove the barn, shed, and any other property belonging to them within sixty days of the date of the order. It required the Olsen's to pay a fine of \$50 per day to the Amherst School Board for every day after the sixty days have expired the violation remains in place. The motion of decision of the court order was August 13, 2007, so the sixty days expire on October 13, 2007.

Dwight Brew asked Attorney Yasenka if she could speak briefly to the terms of the agreement the School Board put forth.

Attorney Yasenka said the most recent proposal for the terms would be a \$5,000 payment from the Olsen's.

Attorney Yasenka explained the Olsen's would be required to sign an agreement saying they would pay the \$5,000, sign the shed agreement, co-operate with the District, attend any further Planning Board meetings that would involve the lot line adjustment.

Dwight asked if any members of the Public had any comments.

Dennis Olsen of Baboosic Lake Road asked to speak.

Dennis said the way he understands the agreement as he read it, he would be signing away his rights, not holding any of the boards responsible, any agents responsible, and he would not be able to bring forward any future suits. Dennis said this is what he was uncomfortable with in what they were signing. Dennis said they are willing and still willing to pay the \$5,000 and basically follow what the warrant article said. Dennis said it didn't say they had to

sign anything. He said if this stipulation is going to stay, then he will do what is necessary and legal by law.

Dennis said they are willing to work with the District and what he would really like to do is work with the School Board. Dennis said they have never discussed anything with the board, it has always been through the legal channels. Dennis said this is the problem with the issue we are not speaking. Dennis said he is not their enemy, I live in this town, and am part of the community and I am willing to work, but I don't want to be pushed around.

Dennis said if he has to sign a stipulation that waives all his rights, he will not do it.

Attorney Yasenka said she thought the board is willing to work with the Olsen's to come to a resolution on this issue. Attorney Yasenka offered Mr. Olsen the opportunity to discuss the issues outside this meeting either with her or the board or with her and the board.

Pam Dudoff asked if Attorney Yasenka could explain to the board and the public what the purpose is for the type of language that Dennis Olsen was referring to in terms of signing papers that in effect would make this a final and binding settlement.

Attorney Yasenka said she thought Mr. Olsen was referring to a release clause. She said by signing it, it's not releasing any rights beyond the right to not bring an action back after they've had a settlement.

B. FY09 Budget Preparation –

1. **Introduction of Ways and Means Committee Members** – David Citarelli, Chair of the Amherst Ways and Means Committee for 2007-2008 introduced the other two members that were at the Amherst School Board meeting. They included Leslie Heins, and Dana Redmond. David said other members of the committee included Jason Hennessy, Tedd Landon, David Yabroudy, and Deb Naro.

Dwight Brew said the school board looks forward to working with the Ways and Means Committee this year.

2. **Budget Assumptions** – Mary Jennings provided board members with a handout regarding the Budget

Assumptions for the FY08 Budget.

Mary explained there would be a series of four meetings, one of which they have already had which was to try to set the goals for this year and next so the administration knows their priorities.

At this meeting, Mary said the administration is bringing to the board a list of assumptions they want the board to review before they create any line items and to make sure the administration is on the same page as the board.

Mary told members of the board she hoped the presentation tonight would give the administration some guidance so at the November 1st meeting, they could present Draft 1 of the Budget. Mary said they also invite the Ways and Means Committee to give the administration feedback as well.

Mary said she has met with the administrators and they agree with the assumptions she will be presenting tonight.

Enrollments: Mary said **NESDEC** does the enrollment projections every year and the enrollments for this year came in January of last year after the SAU had submitted to them that their enrollments had dropped a lot. Mary said they rely on the projections as well as what they know to be true enrollments. (trends)

Mary said the projected enrollment changed a bit from what was projected last year from **NESDEC**.

	Clark/Wilkins	AMS
FY09 Projected	719	841
FY09 Budgeted	766	805

Mary said she is comfortable with the projected number of 805 for next year at AMS because there will be a decline in the number of Mont Vernon students attending AMS.

Mary said she and Gerry met and went over the projections for Clark/Wilkins and they are comfortable that 766 students will show up based on birth dates and **NESDEC** projections.

Mary provided the Class size/Student Load and said it is the same as the last several years.

Kindergarten-Grade	18:1
Grades 2-3-4	20:1

Middle School Teams	80 student load
Middle School Specials	20-25

Next Mary highlighted Staffing:

- Administration: Staff and Student Supervision – relates to the number of students to the number of teachers needed to supervise. Mary said if there were an increase or decrease in this number, it would be related to the functions of the administration.
- Special Education: Case Loads
- Custodial: Facility square footage
- Support staff: Staff support and special education Individualized Education Plans
- Teachers: Class size, teacher loads and special programs

Mary said for Staffing Benefits they are projecting a Health Care increase of 8%, a Dental increase of 5%, and no increase as it relates to the Employer Contribution to State Retirement.

Mary provided a handout, which detailed a Salary Comparison for the schools in our area as compared to the SAU 39. Mary explained we want to be competitive within the area or districts we find ourselves equal to academically.

Mary said the graph shows Amherst salaries, Souhegan High School salaries, along with a career growth factor. The graph also shows Souhegan High School salaries without a growth factor.

Mary said they think the districts salaries are competitive so they are not planning on negotiating any changes to the salaries. Mary said this is informational only.

Mary explained the AEA Contract is in its first year of a three-year contract, the ASSA is in its 2nd year of a three-year contract, and the Non-union staff in August 2007 received a 3.4% increase based on the Economic Consumer Index.

Mary said they would like New Hires to begin at a MA Step 5 rate. Mary said this is what they used last year and would like to again this year.

Mary said for NH Retirement, five employees per CBA receive additional benefits per section 14.4.

Mary said for Operations they are estimating a 10-15% additional cost per order for Delivery and Shipping costs.

They are not expecting any increases in Utilities due to the District Usage practices. Mary said they've been able to manage the increases by monitoring and changing their usage practices. Mary said this past year they did a great job saving the taxpayer money.

Pam Dudoff commended Jim Miner and his staff for being such good stewards of the community's resources.

Mary also thanked the board for giving them the tools and money to upgrade the unit ventilators because without this they would not have been able to save so much money.

Mary said they are investigating the possibility of Lease Purchase for the following items:

- Modular Classrooms – Middle School may need more portables.
- Technology
- Copiers – Betty said the contract on the copiers for the district is up.
- Plow Truck – needs to be replaced

Nancy Head said she thought the town plowed the schools. Betty said Nancy is correct however, the schools do some plowing. Betty said they use the plow truck to do clean up work after the towns initial plowing.

Dwight asked Betty if she has had any discussions with the town to see if they can pick up the remainder of the plowing in order to save the taxpayers the expense of purchasing a new vehicle and maintaining it.

Betty said the truck is a 1996 vehicle with 150,000 miles. Betty said they do use the vehicle for other uses, not just plowing. Betty said if they don't use it for snow removal in the future, they would need a vehicle for other uses besides plowing.

Nancy Head asked if it was a pickup truck and Betty said yes, it was.

Dwight asked if they have received any estimates for a new truck.

Betty said they are estimating the cost of a truck with a plow at \$30,000. Betty said they could also look at something used if that were a better option.

Betty said the lease on the copiers is up this year, therefore, at the end of the year they will have to give 10 copiers back and the estimated cost to replace the 10 copiers is \$80,000.

Betty suggested instead of leasing the copiers, they lease purchase the copiers which will flatten out the costs and at the end of the lease the copiers won't have to be given back.

Dwight asked if given the unique situation with the 10 copiers was Betty recommending entering into a lease purchase so in the future not all the copiers would have to be replaced in the same year so subsequent purchases could fit into the operating budget. Betty said yes.

Jim O'Mara said they definitely would want to spread out the lease purchase of modular classrooms over time. Jim said however, to lease technology it would not be the most economic choice and it would not allow the district to stay on the cutting edge.

Jim agreed with the recommendation to make a one-time purchase of a plow and a truck.

Pam said an analysis should always be done to determine if it is better to lease or purchase. Pam said it should not be a standard choice for all items.

Dwight agreed with what the other board members said. Dwight said he prefers to have as few lease agreements as possible.

Mary said regarding Maintenance and Repairs they've already seen a Capital Plan and a Technology Plan. Mary said the administration worked hard on these plans last year and they are not necessarily bringing everything forward to them for approval this year but if everything is not funded the plan may have to be extended beyond its 3-5 year duration.

Mary said Jim Miner has a plan for each school and replacement needs are done on a rotational basis.

Mary said the Transportation Contract is in its 3rd year of a 3-year

extension. Bids for the 2009-2010 school year will go out in 2008.

Peg Bennett asked if there were other options for Transportation beyond First Student. Mary said there are some local companies that operate in the area as well as Laidlaw.

Jim Miner asked if they could start the bid process a bit earlier so that companies outside the area that have an interest in bidding will be able to do so.

Betty agreed with Jim stating they should not wait until the new 2008-2009 school year, but suggested they wait until the Fall and begin the process in the Spring, '08 after deliberative.

Mary said the Food Service Program is self-supporting at both Clark/Wilkins and AMS except for the cost of the capital equipment.

Pam said based on the new Wellness Policy and State and Federal experts saying healthier food is expected, there are indirect costs, therefore she is not comfortable with setting the limit of a self supporting Food Service Program.

Dwight said he felt comfortable with a budget and nutrition plan that meets the districts nutritional guidelines and breaks even except for capital.

Pam Dudoff said she just wanted to give the public a heads up since there is increased encouragement to provide fresh produce, healthier alternatives and the more healthier you get with food, it may be more difficult to break even. Pam said if at some point it is a healthier choice for the kids, and the budget needs to be supplemented she'd like to see the board willing to have the conversation.

Jim O'Mara said if their comes a time they are not able to break even, he would hope the Food Services Director would be comfortable to go to the Superintendent to say its not going to happen.

Mary provided the Initiatives Affecting the Budget:

- Year Two of the Strategic Plan – Reading and Writing Across the Curriculum.

Mary said the Principals and the Literacy Teams will be building

their budgets for next year and they have not set their goal for next year yet. She is not sure whether or not reading will have been completed. This is something the administration needs to determine. Mary said tomorrow they have a full in service day for grades K-12 working on Literacy.

- Curriculum Review Cycle – Mary said they are finishing implementing Science which they plan on implementing next year, which will carry some costs. Mary said this year costs went to Social Studies.
- RTI (Response to Intervention) – **introduced** last year, the administration believes this will save them money in the end.

Mary said there has been a cultural shift in the schools and they hope to see some results in the budget this year.

Nancy Head asked if there would be an update on RTI and how it is progressing.

Mary said yes, either during the budget discussion or with the principals.

- Actuarial Study GASB45 – Mary said it is a new law. The cost for the study is \$25,000 and needs to be put in the budget.

Dwight asked if this cost is an annual cost and Betty said she doesn't believe it would be an annual cost.

- District Shared Employees (v. SAU) – for maintenance and technology.

Mary said she was seeking guidance and recommendations this year. Mary said they have been tracking the hours for the maintenance man for each of the districts and charging the appropriate district as necessary.

Mary said this is a way an employee can belong to a district but the district doesn't assume all the funding for him.

Mary said this could also be true for Technology, since technology personnel can also be utilized in other districts.

Mary said there are two options:

- Continue the practice of putting an employee into the budget and funding the employee through other districts whenever used.
- Have the employee move out of the Amherst District, Mont Vernon District, Souhegan District and become an SAU employee and each of the districts send money to the SAU District through the SAU Budget.

Dwight asked when the shared maintenance person went into effect. Mary said during the budget process last year – since July 1st.

Dwight said he would be interested in knowing the billable hours outside the Amherst District. Dwight said it is very important they understand what the other liabilities are before determining where the employee should reside.

Dr. Jennings said they would work on this assumption and will bring the results on the billable hours to the next board meeting.

Mary provided the projected Revenue Assumptions:

- Federal, State Grants – Title I will increase as it did last year, and Title V will decrease.
- State Aid – they are anticipating the same as last year - \$2,231,611
- Catastrophic/Medicaid Aid (Special Education) – Determined later in the year, after the money has been spent.
- Tuitions – Mont Vernon to AMS – no other tuition students other than staff members.

Mary told board members they currently have one Expendable Trust for Facility Maintenance. Currently, Amherst does not have Expendable Trusts for Land/Capital Reserve, Unfunded Liabilities for Retirees and Special Education.

Dr. Jennings said the balance in the Facility Maintenance Expendable Trust is \$100,000.

Dr. Jennings said if Amherst wanted to set any of the above-mentioned Expendable Trusts up they could, and other districts have them.

Nancy Head said they spoke about setting up a Special Education Expendable Trust last year but didn't do it.

Dr. Jennings told board members she would like to hear from them as to what they would like to see in the budget.

Jim O'Mara and Peg Bennett both said they could provide some suggestions to be included in the budget at the next meeting.

Pam Dudoff said since the Goal of the SAU 39 is to engage and challenge all learners could the administration present other tools or strategies that would enable the district to make progression toward this goal.

Dr. Jennings said in the curriculum area, they would try to highlight this area.

Dwight Brew suggested since Warrant Articles are voted on in December it would make sense to put the warrant articles on the table now and the legal wording could be put into place so it is not being done at the last minute.

Board members agreed to determine at the November meeting what they wanted to go through as special warrants so the warrant articles could be created.

Dwight thanked Mary for her presentation. Board members agreed the information was very useful.

C. NWEA Testing 2007-2008 – Nicole Heimarck wanted to share with the board some of the Northwest Evaluation Assessment Association data. Nicole said this assessment is used in our schools.

Nicole said last year was their pilot year and this year is their first official operational year for NWEA.

Nicole highlighted three key themes:

1. Map Basic – Measurement of Academic Progress
2. Reports
3. Pilot Results – grades 2, 4, and 6 last year

1. MAP Basic –

Nicole explained the purpose of the test and that it links directly to instruction. It is an assessment tool that is designed to provide:

- immediate access to data
- identifies skills and concepts for instructional planning
- aligned to state standards

Nicole said once the student has taken the assessment, they receive immediate results on the student. The results identify skills and concepts the student may be strong or weak in.

Nicole said a common question she gets asked is why is NWEA so unique and why are we doing it.

Nicole explained the difference between this test is it's an instruction level test and **not** a mastery test.

Nicole explained they are doing the MAP test because of the following:

- It provides the instructional level of the student – true read of where their ability is.
- Provides a road map for students toward achieving mastery.
- Is not a test for determining mastery of skills, NECAP is a mastery assessment.

Nicole explained how the assessment works:

- MAP is an adaptive test, which is taken by students on a computer.
- In Amherst the students take a reading and mathematics test.
- The results/raw data are reported in a Rasch Unit. It's very easy to use this raw data, it's presented as an Equal Interval Scale.
- **Similar to an example of physical growth**, it measures a child's growth from year to year.
- Students on average are expected to get 50% of the questions incorrect because it's an instructional test.

Nicole explained they receive many reports through NWEA.

- Students
- Teachers
- Parents
- District

Nicole provided a slide, which, showed once the child, completed the assessment, what the teacher and student see as immediate

results.

Nicole said they receive Teacher Reports in a variety of formats.

- Teacher and Class Report by Goal (Fall) – helps plan out flexible grouping.
- Teacher and Class Report by RIT Range (Fall) – helps plan out flexible grouping.
- Achievement Status and Group Report – Class Summary (Spring)

Nicole said most students take assessments twice a year, once in the Fall and then in the Spring.

Nicole explained what reports Parents receive.

- Individual Student Report (Fall and Spring) – provides the parents with the raw scoring of their child.
- Individual Student Progress Report (Spring) – used when you assess a child up to four times per year.

Nicole provided a list of reports available to the District and SAU:

- MAP Grade Level Reports – look at data by grade level.
- District Summary Report by Grade
- District Summary Report by School
- Student Growth Summary Report – available by School and Grade Level (Spring)

Nicole explained how they used the reports and explained their role.

- Information used to inform instruction and decision-making – goes back down to the classroom level.
- Communicate with others, across districts, between schools, classrooms, school boards, etc.
- Goal setting with students – NWEA provides the district with a goal setting worksheet for each student, also provides the raw data and growth target.
- Multiple levels of Data – great tools, which can be used to measure a students' progress.
- NWEA Nationally normed.

Nicole explained teachers could access reports within twenty-four hours. They have access to the following:

- Teacher reports
- On line Individual Student Progress
- Class Roster
- Instructional resources – Nicole said this is available through NWEA, and they are beginning to learn how to use this resource this year.

Nicole explained the Lexile Framework for Reading – when the district receives Lexile scores on students, they basically have their independent reading level.

Nicole said a Lexile is a unit for measuring text difficulty that is linked to the RIT score.

It is also a resource that allows teacher to use the students RIT score to find appropriately challenging books, periodicals, and other reading material.

Nicole said they share the Lexile scores with parents so they know what books are appropriate for their child to read independently.

Nicole provided the Pilot Results for 2006-2007 in Reading.

Nicole provided the Student Growth Summary by Grade Level.

Nicole presented a slide, which showed the Target Growth in Mathematics.

In Grade 2, 28.6% met their target growth, in Grade 4, 31.7%, in Grade 6 35.7% and in Grade 8 34% met their target growth.

In Reading in Grade 2, 40% met their target growth, in Grade 4 almost 47% met growth, in Grade 6, 48% and in Grade 8 42% met their target growth.

Pam asked Nicole if in her conversations with NWEA are they in the process of adjusting their growth targets based on where you are in relationship to the norm or can they give you some formula to be able to do it so we can have a more meaningful growth target.

Nicole said this issue is not unique to our district, and they do re-norm every 3 years and they are in the process of re-norming and it will be revealed sometime in 2008.

Dwight Brew asked if other districts that are doing these tests see

the same trends, for example Bedford.

Nicole said she hasn't had a conversation with Bedford recently. She said they don't have access to their reports because they are private to the district. Nicole said it is a conversation she could have with them at some point, however since last year was a pilot year they have been busy focusing on learning through the students and teachers.

Dwight said in 8th grade reading, there was a very small increase in the district, much smaller than the rest of them. Because this doesn't count towards student's grades, are students taking this test as seriously as they should, which could cause the scores to be different?

Nicole said they need to consider national research and as you move through the educational path and as kids get older, growth decreases significantly with age, particularly in 8th, 9th, and 10th grade, especially in Reading. Nicole said many of the 8th grade readers are actually on the RIT scale testing beyond the 10th and 11th grade level.

Nancy asked if we knew how many teachers are actually using the results to change instruction.

Nicole said she couldn't speak to this at present, since they really haven't seen the full reports, but can say last Spring when they received their ASG reports, they all went through the reports with her. She said last year the reports were reviewed in grades 2, 4, 5, and 8 and this year it is new for grades 3, 5, & 7 so they have some more work with those teachers since they are new to them.

Nicole said they are planning more in house workshop sessions (1/2 day sessions) by grade level because they found they were very powerful days for the administration and teachers.

Peg asked if the district is taking advantage of the instructional services available through NWEA.

Nicole said yes, it is called the DeCart Learning Continuum and they have access to it, and are using it.

Dwight asked Nicole when she thought she would have other interesting data to be able to report back to the board.

Nicole said they just ordered their reports and they will see the data

next week. Nicole explained the administration would not be able to dive into the results until mid month. Nicole said she needs to focus her time on planning the workshops for teachers and believes she could report back to the board in early winter.

Dwight thanked Nicole for her presentation.

D. Master Plan –

1. **Recommendation from Master Plan Committee** – Board members received a handout entitled Master Plan Report, Amherst School Board, October 5, 2007.

In the handout, the Master Plan Committee was recommending they concentrate on renovations and they look somewhere in the range of \$4 million. They recommended not necessarily going for all the renovations again, and to have respect for the taxpayers concerns about their taxes.

Nancy said Jim Miner put together a list of the recommendations – these items aren't new, they were all in the Master Plan and all items the board is aware of from last year. Nancy said they looked at the priorities and what was in the Master Plan and decided these would be the ones they'd like to see done this year.

Nancy said the committee looked at surveys, met with the administration, and the architect and they all provided input. Nancy said the figure they came up with was \$4 million. She said the committee is focusing more on the items rather than the dollar amount.

Nancy said this figure keeps the needs of voters for tax relief in mind. Nancy said if these renovations go on a warrant it would be 20% less than the 2006 request.

Nancy said the Master Plan Recommendations accomplish the following:

- Address the highest priority needs, safety needs, and ADA needs.
- Would be part of an organized long-range plan, which the survey said the voters would like to see.
- Addresses all of the safety issues.
- Allows for flexibility of funding including warrant articles, operating budget, surplus funds, and Expendable Trust Fund.

- Allows for further tracking through demographic trends.
- Co-ordinates with the Capital Improvement Plan

Nancy asked board members to look at the Renovations 2008 page of the handout. Nancy explained most of these recommendations from the Master Plan were put into place this past Summer. A total of \$205,000 worth of renovations have been completed.

Nancy explained renovations that were in Priority 1 and Priority 2 are the old Master Plan minus ones already done and minus ones that were scheduled to be done, have been grouped for the board according to safety, heating and ventilations, space renovations, etc.

Nancy presented the Tentative Renovation Proposal Dated October 2007.

Clark \$1,041,000
 Wilkins \$2,246,000
 AMS \$706,000

Total \$3,994,190

Nancy said these are the items the Master Plan Committee would like to see on the Warrant next year.

Dwight summarized Nancy's presentation by stating the following:

The Master Plan Committee created a list of necessary renovations and decided they all are still relevant.

Dwight said the committee and board members have been respectful of the message we received from the voters saying figure out how to do this with a smaller warrant.

Dwight said the plan presented by the Master Plan Committee is to do the core items for \$4 million and some of the items have already been addressed.

Dwight said they are not eliminating any of the items but they are not going to accomplish everything in the Master Plan **at this time**.

Dwight said the numbers have been worked and re-worked with the architect however they haven't gone out to contractors so we don't have bids from multiple contractors so in doing this the numbers are going to vary so we will have to make adjustments. Dwight said it is still our intention to do all this but depending on where the

numbers come in, a couple of things may be deferred to the operating budget or a future year.

Nancy said under no circumstances would the amount of money change. Nancy said they would do what they could with the funds they have available.

Nancy said this is what will be presented to the Capital Improvement Plan Committee, along with any changes the board members may make.

Nancy pointed out in her handout their were details about renovation plans for 2010, 2011, and 2012. Nancy said it is a draft long range proposal and by no means is it cast in stone

A. Policies – First Reading -

DISCUSSION ITEMS

CA – Administrator’s Goals for SAU – Pam Dudoff told board members to look in the footer of the policies. Pam said if she did not make suggested changes to the policy she would provide the reason why. Pam hopes this new process will save time.

Dr. Jennings said at the last SAU 39 meeting the Administration had not had a chance to review some of the policies however, all the ones the board is reviewing tonight, have been reviewed by the Administrators and they are comfortable with all of them.

There were no comments by board members on Policy CA.

Pam said at the next board meeting the 2nd reading would take place.

A. **Policies – 2nd Reading** - Pam told board members the changes made to the policies were noted in the footer and if a change was not made it was noted why not.

ACTION ITEMS

Pam told board members the last time they met they had a question on Policy ECAF as to who could request a copy of the videotape.

Members of the board wanted to add school board or its agents and Pam said she would check with the attorneys. Pam checked and they said it could be added but it is implied in Superintendent or designee and is also covered in the appeals process of student discipline due process policies.

Pam asked the board how they wanted to proceed, leave the school

board or its agents in the policy or remove it.

Board members agreed they wanted to leave School Board or its agents in the policy.

A motion was made by Pam Dudoff and seconded by Jim O'Mara to approve Policies EB, EBBB, ECAF, EEA, EEAE, and EEAEA as presented. All board members voted in favor of the motion and the motion passed unanimously. (5-0)

A motion was made by Pam Dudoff and seconded by Jim O'Mara to rescind Policy EEAEF – Bus Cameras adopted on August 8, 1994. All board members voted in favor of the motion and the motion passed unanimously. (5-0)

- B. Representative to SAU Budget Advisory Committee –**
Dwight Brew told board members they need to appoint a citizen from Amherst to sit on the SAU Budget Advisory Committee.

Nancy Head had a nomination.

Nancy nominated Charlene Carper to be on the SAU Budget Advisory Committee. Peg Bennett seconded the nomination.

Nancy said Charlene is a retired Bedford Assistant Principal; she is very interested in Education and interested in serving on this committee.

All board members voted in favor of the nomination. (5-0)

Pam Dudoff said at the last meeting they spoke about our insurance company doing a review of our facilities and playgrounds, like they did a few years ago. She said the information the board and administration received was very helpful. Pam asked what the status of this request was, did the SAU office look into doing this again.

OTHER

Mary said she would need to get back to the board on this.

Motion to adjourn the meeting by Jim O'Mara. Second by Peg Bennett. All members voted in favor of the motion and the Meeting adjourned at p.m. (5-0)

**REVIEW /ADJOURN
MEETING**