

MINUTES
AMHERST SCHOOL BOARD
Thursday, December 6, 2007
Amherst Town Hall Meeting Room

Chair Dwight Brew called the meeting to order at 6:10 p.m. **I. CALL TO ORDER**

Present:

ATTENDANCE

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

Administrative Team-Lisa Ambrosio, Mary Jennings (arrived at 6:40p.m.), Nicole Heimark, Betty Shankel, Porter Dodge, Gerry St. Amand, Kathy Skoglund, and Jim Miner

Ways & Means Committee-David Citarelli, Leslie Heins, Tedd Landon, Dana Redmond and David Yabroudy

Other – Sheryl Burke, Melanson & Heath

Minute Taker – Susan M. Frenette

II. ANNOUNCEMENTS

A. Administrator's Reports

Dwight Brew advised that Mary Jennings will be joining later this evening. Sheryl Burke from Melanson & Heath; will present 2007 Auditor's report. He stated that this item would be placed ahead of the agenda items.

Announcements will follow the administrator reports from Porter Dodge and Gerry St. Amand. Dwight Brew asked if there were any questions from ASB members for either regarding their reports.

Pam Dudoff asked Porter Dodge to elaborate on space needs now that the AMS Drama Club is underway and how it relates to the Master Plan Renovation.

Porter Dodge stated that a classroom area was made of the stage and area in the back. The items and tables formerly kept in the back need to be moved regularly. The former teacher's lounge (room beside the cafeteria) is now used as an office for aides. The stage is used for the after school programs and for the theater props. When the AMS Drama Club uses the space, the entire area must be cleared off and moved into the halls, and then moved back when finished with the space. It is problematic and illustrates the necessity for the additional space needed at AMS.

Pam Dudoff asked for clarification, "for the Master Plan

would there be portable storage closets?”

Porter Dodge replied, “No, the Master Plan includes a new area to be built at the back of the Gymnasium for this storage requirement, and it quadruples the current storage.

Pam Dudoff commended all of the work done for the security and lockdown procedures. “We cannot underestimate the importance of addressing the attention to student safety and security.” She also commended the school nurse for the implementation of the height and weight screenings to calculate the BMI, and to look at the effectiveness of our Wellness Policy, “It is important work.”

Pam Dudoff wondered if the results of the surveys done by the Parents/Staff/& Students will be summarized and be given back to the parents that participated, and if it would be shared with the ASB.

Porter Dodge stated that the NELMS (New England League of Middle Schools) group will give a full report, completely and it will be transparent to everyone. “We have asked all the parents, all the students and the staff to participate in the survey.” and stated that after discussing results with Dr. Jennings, he assumed that the results will be shared. “It is a positive way to see how we are doing based on the *Turning Points 2000 Report on Middle Schools in America* and expects that a report would be presented to the ASB.

Pam Dudoff commented that as a courtesy of people who participate in a survey, the summary of the is typically reported back to the participants, the results of the NELMS survey and encouraged AMS to provide it. “It is one way to increase the participation rate, and those that taking it believe that if I take the time to participate, I will learn what the results are.”

Pam Dudoff was very interested to see that Gerry St. Amand is reviewing the video tapes of bus run to identify any areas of potential safety and behavioral issues in need of attention. She had not previously noted this effort being done in the past and is glad that attention is being paid to it. Additionally, the flexible grouping and differentiated instruction is very exciting to see it happening. She also recognized the difficult decision to eliminate the “Perfect Attendance” award but believed it represented a smart and

safe decision and encourages any student to stay home if they are ill.

Peg Bennett asked Porter Dodge to share the information about the *Not-So-Secret-Service* program at AMS.

Porter Dodge informs that the program was initiated last year by the AMS Guidance staff (Maggie Kim, Deb Tumas, and Thomas Knapp) to involve other students not participating in athletics/drama/arts programs at AMS. The group formed last year, had Movie Nights to support the local community charities with the donations raised, and it is a nice way to introduce community service projects, early at AMS.

Peg Bennett asks if the programs were well attended. Porter Dodge informs that last year movie nights were well attended and why we are continuing again this year. Dances are not always popular with all students and this was.

Dwight Brew asked if there are any more questions, none were forthcoming. (He noted for information that the ASB meetings are broadcast LIVE, and going forward would also be rebroadcast the following Thursday at the same time.)

B. Settlement with Olson family

The ASB and the Olson family have reached a settlement agreement and both parties are pleased. The ASB has authorized a transfer of slightly more than 1/10 of an acre of land in exchange for \$5,000 to ASD (received and held by ASB) from the Olsons; both parties are requesting related lot line changes to the planning board for approval.

III. PUBLIC TIME

Dwight Brew asked if there are any members of the public that wished to address the ASB, but none were forthcoming.

V. PRESENTATION

A. Auditor's Report FY07

Dwight Brew introduced Sheryl Burke, Melanson and Heath to present the Auditor's Report FY07 and thanked

her for coming to the meeting.

Sheryl Burke thanked ASB for the opportunity to prepare the Auditor's Report FY07 and distributed copies of financial statements and management letter.

- Records review was very clean, no auditor initiated adjustments, and only a few general ledger adjustments were needed.
- Independent Auditor's Report reviewed, "a clean audit" is offered as professional opinion and is materially and fairly stated in compliance with GAAP (generally accepted accounting principles), guidelines for financial procedures.

Sheryl Burke provided a brief overview of financial statements and management letter review for all documents submitted. She identified the sections by page number in the financial statements, their purpose, and how they are used for analysis of the financial records of the Amherst School District.

Dwight Brew invited the Ways & Means Committee to ask any questions or share comments regarding the presentation. David Citarelli stated Ways & Means declined invitation at this time, but would to questions later, if needed.

Sheryl Burke stated that a new "Management Letter" is a by-product of the audit process and comments on how data is captured and measured. A new audit standard SAS112 (Statement and Auditing Standards 112) changed what auditors report to the boards. Previously it was less formal; we could discuss the issues with the board. She stated it is now required in the Management Letter to address internal control deficiencies. Sheryl Burke reviewed individual comments in the Management Letter and cited examples from the document with recommendations to the board.

Dwight Brew asked the ASB if they had any questions. He thanked Sheryl Burke for coming in, especially in December as in the past it was in January. It gave us the opportunity to make any corrections sooner than later and it was appreciated by the ASB.

Dwight Brew asked Betty Shankel, "Can you address all the items identified?" and "Do you need any support from the ASB or from others?"

Betty Shankel stated the ASB was able to get policy and procedures. There is new policy guidance for standard accounting but perhaps purchasing and PO problem needed some new procedures developed going forward. She expected the new audit standard to be difficult to comply with and to implement immediately.

Sheryl Burke commented that this is a new procedure for the accounting firm also and in effect for all 2007 audits. She offered to provide guidance if needed.

Dwight Brew asked if this is likely to be a multi-year fix or will it be complete in 2007 to Betty Shankel.

Betty Shankel stated that the administrators will begin the process this year, but it will take some time to document all of the procedures and will take quite some time to implement in its entirety.

Dwight Brew thanked Betty Shankel for the work of the administration to implement changes; the ASB has noted their efforts and thanked them and Sheryl Burke.

Pam Dudoff is pleased that the new audit function and that improved management controls are now in place (to comply with new audit function/process). She asked if a new auditor position would be needed in-district.

Betty Shankel stated that she did not anticipate that a new auditor needed to be hired initially -- a new position need not be necessary. More appropriately, changes were needed to existing systems in-district, in order to meet the new requirement for better checks and balances.

Sheryl Burke stated that the existing staff can expand their tasks and duties and to perform their administrative documentation in different manner. She believed a new internal auditor was not needed. She stated that some changes have already begun, and administrators are doing their work differently.

Discussion ensued between ASB members, Ways & Means, and Sheryl Burke. Questions asked and answered.

Dwight Brew thanked Sheryl Burke and Betty Shankel and Lisa Ambrosio for their work

Jim O'Mara stated that copies of the documents are available at the Brick School for anyone who is interested in reading any of the documents. Further, he formally recognized that Melanson and Heath provided the report in less than 2 weeks time after the end of the audit and wished to recognize this excellent effort.

Dwight Brew asked the ASB to return back to the Consent Agenda as outlined in the 12/06/07 Agenda (previously skipped over in order to review the Auditor's Report first.).

IV. CONSENT AGENDA

A. MINUTES

Dwight Brew asked for any items that need to be pulled from the consent agenda.

Pam Dudoff asked to pull the minutes for October 4, 2007.

Dwight Brew asked for any other minutes. He asked to pull the minutes of August 14, 2007 and September 21, 2007; and that will leave in the consent agenda the June 28, 2007 minutes and the November 1, 2007 minutes.

B. FINANCIAL

1. Treasurer's Report – October 2007

Dwight Brew asked to review Treasurer's Report for October 2007 and the budget transfers.

Dwight Brew asks for a motion to approve the consent agenda.

Jim O'Mara asks to pull the budget transfer for 2008.08.

Pam Dudoff makes a motion to accept the remaining consent agenda items A.1 Minutes – June 28, 2007, A.5 Minutes – November 1, 2007 and Treasurer's Report October 2007. Jim O'Mara seconded the motion. No further discussion noted, all board members voted in favor of the motion. The motion passed unanimously (5-0).

Dwight Brew called attention to the August 14, 2007 minutes. He asked the board if this was the last part of the

minutes that needed approval.

Mary Jennings asked to comment. She stated that at the September meeting, the August 14th minutes were presented, and revised, but not approved because the remainder of the meeting that was recorded by the SAU39 secretary, as the meeting had gone into non-public, was not part of it. I brought for you, the minutes as you corrected in September. She noted that the ASB had reviewed and corrected them, and reassured the board that they have been reviewed and are able to be approved, understanding it has been some time since the meeting in August. The meeting minutes in your packet are a continuation of it.

Dwight Brew asked the board to recollect that some policies were approved in September. He recommended that the ASB pick up the remaining at the next meeting.

Pam Dudoff stated that we adopted changes to Policy KF and it was not attached.

Dwight Brew asked if the ASB would be willing to approve at the next meeting.

Dwight Brew called attention to the September 21, 2007 minutes to discuss goals. He recalled that the goals on district wide assessment were more specific and that the ASB was going to identify and publish metrics of accountability. He offered his copy of minutes/notes taken and incorporated into the formal minutes, before approving the minutes.

Pam Dudoff stated the minutes need to include a draft about communicating to the public about the assessments that we have and that there may be another item to include.

Dwight Brew requested to keep the minutes open at this time and to review at the January 2008 meeting.

Mary Jennings asked Dwight Brew (and others) to send their copies to her for the goal setting session as she took responsibility for the minutes.

Dwight Brew called attention to the October 4, minutes.

Pam Dudoff states that the board adopted (6) safety policies and these policies need to be attached to the minutes in order to reference what policy and revision is

adopted. She asked to state the policy and match the title of the policy (specifically state the version that was adopted) and to formally document references before minutes are approved by the ASB and to do it at the January 2008 meeting.

2. Budget Transfers

Dwight Brew asked Jim O'Mara to discuss the budget transfer 2008.08.

Jim O'Mara called attention to the out-of-district placements update with programs being brought back in district. He asked if district is within budget.

Kathy Skoglund addressed the question. "Yes, we are under-budget slightly at this point, but we always budget anticipated students in the out-of-district budget. Early Intervention notifies us of students, and their general classification of need (mild, moderate, severe) prior to coming into the district, and Special Instructional Services formulates their budget accordingly. The forecast attempts to give the department flexibility. Further, the out-of-district placements are low because the EIPP (early intervention partnership program) is now carrying forward into Grade 5, particularly because there are more students, particularly those on the spectrum.

Jim O'Mara asked Kathy Skoglund if she sees the trend growing.

Kathy Skoglund stated. "Yes, our intent, and what we want at Special Instructional Services is to meet the needs of more students in-district; the training of staff and parents allowed for more children to remain in-district.

Dwight Brew noted reporting information that was provided to Ways and Means with numbers of special education students in each grade. Ways and Means noted a significant difference in the number of students younger grades (Grades 1-2-3-4) vs. older grades (Grades 5-6-7-8). "Is this a coincidence?"

Kathy Skoglund stated that it is true and not coincidental because evaluating students who are referred/identified in Grades K-1-2 is not as accurate

because of their academic history. The number of students identified in the primary grades is lower. Students at age 5 or 6 are less distinct and broader as compared to students in that are age 7-8-9. Special Education is cautious, both by law and by philosophy to identify at 5-6-7. One of the criteria that must be addressed is to evaluate if adequate or appropriate instruction was provided to the student. This is necessary and required in order to properly identify students because some children have not had adequate instruction. We are also now required by new federal legislation to look at RTI (Response to Intervention); it gives instruction and intervention to help the student. If the student responds to the intervention, it defines the problem better and can determine if the deficiency is “in the instruction” or if it is a “learning disability”. I advise everyone to interpret these numbers with caution, as they are typically artificially low. There are two fallout points across the continuum. At Grade 2/3, students with weaker language skills --the classroom expectations change from “oral and aural” to “written and read there is an immediate fallout point. At Grade 6/7, there is another fallout point and another big shift, noting it is due to the academic expectations at school.

David Citarelli asked if the identification leads to what is in the IEP (Individualized Education Program).

Kathy Skoglund replied not necessarily, it is the “coding” or “identification” does. Once a student is identified, as required by the State of NH, only then does an IEP develop.

Dwight Brew asked for further questions. (None forthcoming)

A motion was made by Jim O'Mara to approve the budget transfer. Pam Dudoff seconded the motion. No discussion and all board members voted in favor of the motion and the motion passed unanimously (5-0)

V. PRESENTATIONS

B. FY09 Proposed Budget

Dwight Brew stated that this portion of the meeting will address the budget. “The first draft was presented by the

administration at the November meeting. Since that meeting, the administration has come up with additional changes. The board has not had the opportunity to make comments or revisions on either version. He recommended that the administration present the second draft budget and to highlight changes from the first draft, explain retirement assumptions used and respond to questions raised by the Ways and Means Committee.”

Dwight Brew suggested that after the administrators presentation the ASB make recommendations for changes.

Pam Dudoff stated that the board agreed to listen to each of the summaries from budget subcommittee.

Dwight Brew stated that the budget committee summaries would follow the administrations presentation of the second draft budget.

1. 2nd Draft Presentation

Mary Jennings distributed 3 packets (white, orange and yellow) and recognized and commended Betty Shankel and the administrative staff for their hard work to revise draft 2 so quickly. “The budget is a discussion of our educational values. The budget addresses those concerns.” She stated that the budget drivers (white sheet) are chiefly enrollments, staffing and class size, and fixed costs. The enrollments are based on historical data and projections adjusted accordingly for staffing and class sizes, using the assumptions.

- Fixed costs (employment contracts, health care costs) are static and not variable. Cites statistics in report.
- Special instructional services are increased by 11.2% from last year
- Retirement benefits and inflation – will increase budget

The new programs (initiatives) are reflected in the budget and budgeted accordingly in order to implement if approved. Ways & Means had noted of particular interest:

- Spanish program at the elementary level is aligned with curriculum standards – (see memorandum from Mary Jennings for program details)
- New Academic Dean to Amherst Middle School

(with salary & benefits) and cited statistics and responsibilities at AMS; including the emphasis on academics and staffing.

- Proposed Full-day Kindergarten with fees, resulting in a self-supporting program (using grants & tuition) and would also address the issue of early literacy access for students. Mary Jennings believed that this program would be welcomed by the community and many families would take advantage of the opportunity if it were offered. (She noted the elimination of the Pre-school initiative to promote Full-Day Kindergarten)
- Proposed a “Salary Set-aside” for teaching staff as enrollment is based on projections and not bona fide number, the set-aside would be prudent and a safeguard measure if needs changed unexpectedly and provided for conservative staffing at all schools.
- Proposed the purchase of new truck (discussed the merits of purchase vs. continued repairs)

Mary Jennings stated that a review from the first draft FY09 to second draft FY09 is detailed, and included the costs for each initiative. A brief overview of items was presented Mary Jennings. She reviewed the Revenue Sheet; noting the main difference is the unreserved fund balance. Mary Jennings asked Betty Shankel to comment:

Betty Shankel stated that 1% is more realistic and noted the return of funds to taxpayers, so it results in increases for next year. The difference by removing the new initiatives would result in an increase of 5.2% or \$.49 over last year’s budget. Betty Shankel noted that another difference from FY09 Draft 1 to FY09 Draft 2 is tuition because of the tuition forecasted for Kindergarten; the second draft does not include the initiative.

Mary Jennings invited questions regarding changes and hoped that the new budget information would allow the board to accept the recommendations, but she respects the wishes of the Amherst School Board and the town.

Clarification questions asked by Jim O’Mara and answered by Betty Shankel about Draft 1 and Draft 2.

Dwight Brew invited subcommittee recaps and asks Pam Dudoff for her subcommittee report.

Pam Dudoff reported on Clark/Wilkins subcommittee budget meeting with David Yabroudy from Ways and Means, and Gerry St. Amand. Details were discussed and reviewed.

Pam Dudoff reported on Professional Development & Curriculum subcommittee budget meeting Jason Hennessy from Ways and Means, and Nicole Heimark. Pam noted the decrease in textbook costs praises pilot implementation and notes it will ultimately be cost effective for the district. Details were discussed and reviewed.

Dwight Brew asked if there are any questions from ASB or Ways and Means for Pam Dudoff. None forthcoming, he proceeded to ask for subcommittee report from Peg Bennett.

Peg Bennett reported on Food Services subcommittee budget meeting with Ted Landon from Ways and Means, and Franceen Lupa. She highlighted that expenditures are due to almost entirely to contracted salary and benefit increases. It will have fewer repair costs in '09 because much of the food service equipment will be replaced in FY08. Peg Bennett stated that that lunch revenue will not meet expenses and likely would result in a 3% lunch cost increase for all schools, unless the freezer is approved in the Master Plan bond.

Peg Bennett reported on the School Bus Contract subcommittee budget meeting with Deb Naro from Ways and Means and Lisa Ambrosio from the Finance office. Peg Bennett stated that the current contract is in effect until June 2009 and it will be put out to bid in the spring '08 for consideration of other bus companies. The fuel surcharge was addressed in the budget (re: fuel vs. mileage)

Betty Shankel replied. She described that the amount of fuel surcharge will likely be assessed on the number of miles not amount of fuel in gallons – the contract with the bus company was reviewed and it is in fact based on gallons not mileage and the budget was corrected accordingly in Draft 2.

Peg Bennett stated that 2009 expenditures would likely be higher and that a committee would be needed to develop a proposal request (RFQ). Peg Bennet asked for questions

from ASB and Ways and Means, none were forthcoming.

Jim O'Mara asked what the new lunch price will be. Peg Bennett replied the price would be approx. \$2.65, noting that historically it had increased \$.10 to \$.15 each year.

Peg Bennett reported on the Amherst Middle School subcommittee budget meeting with Deb Naro and David Citarelli from Ways and Means. Peg Bennett reported that the AMS budget increases are primarily due to the portables and Academic Dean position but it is lean. The portable classrooms are needed because of the current space needs, as Special Instructional Services are using the previously available space. She supported the new AMS Academic Dean position in principle but could not recommend including in the FY08 budget at this time, citing that it may jeopardize a 'yes' vote for the Master Plan.

Pam Dudoff suggested that the Academic Dean position at AMS might change the title to Assistant Principal for Grades 5/6 to be a more accurate description, based on her discussions with Nicole Heimark.

Nancy Head reported on the Special Instructional Services subcommittee budget meeting with Leslie Hines from Ways and Means and Kathy Skoglund. She congratulated Kathy Skoglund for working on a very challenging budget, especially noting the costs of Special Instructional Services were up (190 IEPs this year vs. 187 IEPs possibly next year) and noted that this is not a truly anticipatable quantity at any time. Nancy Head stated that statistically Amherst has been increasing the count of students with special needs, and was following the trend like all southern NH towns.

Nancy Head stated that the caseload was reviewed; Amherst is in the middle range of the state average, 12:20. RTI (Response to Intervention) had not been formally started but was expected to help address any over-identification of students in Special Instructional Services. She noted that the EIPP expanded to Grade 5 at AMS. Betty Shankel addressed the staff realignment and Kathy Skoglund clarified EIPP program.

Dwight Brew reported on the Technology subcommittee budget meeting with David Yabroudy from Ways and

Means, and Bruce Chakrin, Sharon Verrill, Dean Lipson and Eleana Sheldon. Dwight stated that the budget had increased due to replacement of equipment (including printers) and integrated technology better in the classrooms. A consideration to replace teacher desktop systems with laptops in future years was recommended.

David Yabroudy stated that the technology infrastructure shared by all schools would result a net decrease for the District, but an increase at Clark/Wilkins because of the replacement program, an increase at AMS because of the replacement program, and an increase because of the library automation with bar codes. He acknowledged that it would increase the library staff availability to the students, once implemented.

Pam Dudoff questioned Betty Shankel about technology support if there was a new position at Wilkins and AMS.

Betty Shankel stated the line numbers were previously budgeted as “consultants”, and are not a true as staff and needed adjustment in the budget accordingly.

David Yabroudy noted that the administration was asked about how the systems/technology were replaced and how the inventory accounted for. He affirmed that all systems/technology was in use appropriately in the district offices and properly accounted for in inventory at all schools.

Jim O'Mara reported on the Building & Grounds Maintenance subcommittee budget meeting with Ways and Means and Jim Miner. Jim O'Mara stated that his observations initially noted a 2% decrease but after further review, more reductions were taken, and now after line-by-line review, a net 2.7% decrease was reflected.

Jim Miner stated that more reductions were taken by identifying delays in repairing equipment; it has had tax impact as it avoids replacing repaired equipment with new.

Jim O'Mara stated that budget draft is a best-case scenario and purposefully did not make any significant changes and to hold the status quo, to enable the second warrant article [Master Plan Renovations] to pass.

Jim O'Mara called attention to the proposal for initiative to repave the AMS parking lot, noting that it had not been

done in 30 years. He supports this budget and supports the purchase of a truck. The truck has served its useful life, and it is cost prohibitive to maintain. He stated that it needs to be replaced for student and staff safety, throughout the year.

Dwight Brew asked if there were any questions from the ASB for the Building Grounds & Maintenance subcommittee and none were forthcoming.

Dwight Brew proceeded to thank the Administration for their time to prepare the information, the subcommittee members and Ways and Means members for their diligent efforts in preparation for this meeting to review the budget.

Dwight Brew stated he would like any remaining ASB questions, by Ways and Means Committee opinion, and then any ASB recommendations for the budget.

Pam Dudoff asked Nicole Heimark about status and use of the Spaulding Lawrence Trust Fund.

Nicole Heimark replied that the fund was used this summer for literacy initiative training and in-service programs.

Pam Dudoff commented about use of the NESDEC enrollment projections and their validity and continuing the subscription/membership. She stated the actual town and school data has been more valuable and accurate.

Discussion ensued.

Mary Jennings recommends keeping the line item in the budget to provide the Administration with long-term projections (updated annually), for budget planning, without specifying a provider at this time, noting the ASB concerns.

Jim O'Mara asked to add comments regarding a new Pilot program initiated by Building Grounds & Maintenance regarding the shared use of an AMS/ASD salaried employee. He noted that there was a significant cost savings to the district and asked Jim Miner to comment on the program.

Jim Miner shared that the individual's time was captured and invoiced to the appropriate school. The cost of utilizing this individual as compared to hiring private

subcontractors resulting in over \$23,000 labor savings and other charges typically assessed by private contractors. He expects that this program will save the entire SAU over \$40,000 over time. He also informed the board this individual uses the truck that is the budget initiative and without it, this program could not be implemented.

Jim Miner stated that this individual is very capable, and highly skilled. Utilization of his skills saved the district 80% over what would have been paid to private contractors.

Jim O'Mara stated that the employee possessed a high degree of expertise/skill and it is not a dollar-for-dollar offset but a very worthwhile approach to managing expenses to the district.

Nancy Head asked, "Is there a recommendation for class size by the State of NH?" Gerry St. Amand replied, "Yes, the ratio is 25:1 per state standards."

Nancy Head asked, "Could our Grade 1 accept more students in existing classes rather than hire a new teacher?" She inquired to determine if there is enough flexibility in our existing classes to absorb a larger enrollment in order to decide if the salary set aside was critical to the ASD.

Discussion ensued.

Nancy Head asked Nicole Heimark to explain the new pilot Reading program. "When was the last time our program was updated?" and "How old is our current program?"

Nicole Heimark stated that our current program is 9 years old and a "guided-reading" type of program. Currently she is completing a full literature review to meet best practices for K-2 level literacy in reading instruction. She stated that the pilot reading program was supplemental and not a new stand-alone program.

Peg Bennett asked Mary Jennings if the Grade 5/6 team size numbers were accurate. Mary Jennings stated that the numbers were an extrapolation, based on 20:1 student to teacher ratio at AMS.

Dwight Brew asked if there were any more ASB questions; no other question asked. He asked for the Ways and

Means Committee to share their opinion.

2. Ways and Means Committee Report

David Citarelli reviewed that the Ways and Means Committee had been addressing the new initiatives in the last two meetings. He stated that all members share a unanimous consensus/opinion and summarized their commentary and opinion on the new initiatives proposed in the Draft 2 budget. (Details reviewed for all initiatives: Spanish Language Program, Full-Day Kindergarten, AMS Academic Dean, and Salary set aside).

Ways and Means cannot support the new initiatives at this time; a leaner budget is necessary to ensure the bond for the Master Plan Renovations passes by the voters.

David Citarelli expressed the appreciation of the Ways and Means Committee to the administration and the ASB, to answer our questions and helping us analyze the data for the FY09 budget.

Mary Jennings replied to commentary by Ways and Means. Questions asked by ASB members regarding the program and answered by the Administration.

David Citarelli thanked Mary Jennings for the discussion and clarification. He stated that Ways & Means would consider supporting a Foreign Language program, with no break in instruction K-8 and would like to see the whole cost of a program across all grades, not just for one year – ideally, a full pro-forma plan and if available, data and research demonstrating how foreign language study supports other academics.

Dwight Brew asked for the specific recommendations by the ASB to the administration for the budget.

Pam Dudoff asked to discuss eliminating the Salary Set-aside and to consider utilizing delaying new technology purchases until after January to act as a buffer in lieu of the set aside proposed in the budget, as had been done in prior years.

Jim O'Mara added that the ASB had granted the Superintendent and Building Heads to utilize left over retiree wages offset against the new hires at lesser cost, in prior years. Those funds could be accumulated and might

be enough to equal the new initiative salary set aside.

Dwight Brew respectfully requested consensus or motions.

Jim O'Mara stated that the members present respect the wishes of the voters. He stated that the ASB placed only 2 warrant articles on the ballot for the voters. He stated that he believed each of the initiatives had excellent merit, but given the response of the voters last year, and the competing interest of the Master Plan Renovations this year, he recommended that these items be deferred.

Dwight Brew stated that the key vote is 60% for the Master Plan renovations, Master Plan. He recognized that initiatives in prior years have been conservative and successful. He recommended a prioritization and to consider a "Master Plan for the new Initiatives", to solicit and seek community support, and to use community support in the determination of the hierarchy.

Nancy Head stated she supported all of the proposed initiatives in principle; however, given the timing to put them forth this year may harm the potential success of the Master Plan by the voters.

Dwight Brew asked for any other comments by the ASB.

Jim O'Mara stated that the Truck [for Building Grounds and Maintenance] should not be classified as a new initiative, as it is a replacement. He commented further, "Please know that the ASB members and Administrators respect the voter's desires to have a lean budget in March."

Pam Dudoff stated that she supported the emerging consensus of tabling the new initiatives in order to get the Master Plan Renovations approved by the voters. She recommended that the Administration to identify new initiatives vs. long range planning.

Dwight Brew proposed clarifying the new initiatives: "It is the Spanish program, Full-Day Kindergarten, Salary set aside." Discussion by the ASB and Administration ensued.

Mary Jennings verified that the ASB would like the budget to exclude the Spanish Language Program, Full Day Kindergarten, AMS Academic Dean and the Salary set aside.

c. Clause “14.4” or Early Retirement

Mary Jennings stated that she is informing the ASB that it has discretion whether to fund more than 3% (or more than 5 staff positions) for early retirement. She requested the ASB to decide if more than 5 positions in order to notify the AEA by January.

Dwight Brew stated that the ASB follows what the contract requires, and to keep the number to 5.

3. Warrant Articles

Dwight Brew summarized that the ASB members reviewed the operating budget with requested revisions and to propose only 2 warrant articles: (1) for the Master Plan Renovations and (1) for the Operating budget

Discussion ensued about the numerical order of bonds (for reference by other community organizations).

Jim O'Mara stated that if the voter were in favor of the Master Plan Renovations bond, how the ASB would reconcile the timing of the bond to start at the end of the 2008 school year and not wait until July 1, 2008, the new school year.

Dwight Brew acknowledged the timing issue and assured that the proper wording of the bond would be written to address the timing issue. Betty Shankel agreed this is typical procedure for a bond.

VI. ACTION ITEMS

A. Master Plan Recommendation

1. Selection of Project Manager/Construction Manager

Dwight Brew called upon Master Plan committee chair, Nancy Head.

Nancy Head stated that the committee would procure a Construction Manager and start interviewing and potentially hiring, before the bond passes. The cost impact to the district would be zero if the bond failed, but it needed to be negotiated with the potential Construction Manager, sooner than later.

Jim O'Mara asked if this is usual procedure and would

be the employment contract be contingent upon the bond passing. Mary Jennings stated it would and that it is common industry practice for these types of projects.

Nancy Head asked the ASB to consider granting permission to the Master Plan Committee to begin the process of hiring a Construction Manager.

Jim O'Mara clarified the role of Construction Manager as an agent of the ASB, one that reports directly to the ASB members and has the best interests of the community.

Pam Dudoff clarified for the record that the ASB is not assuming that the bond will pass; it is understood and recognized that it is passed only by the voter's pleasure.

Nancy Head agreed, but stated that "We need to be prepared if it is passed so we may be able to move forward quickly."

A motion was made by Jim O'Mara to authorize the Master Plan Committee commence interviewing a Construction Manager, should the bond pass by the voters. Nancy Head seconded the motion. No further discussion and all board members voted in favor. The motion passed unanimously (5-0).

2. Building Aid Application

Mary Jennings asked to begin the process to apply for building aid and to complete and execute the application.

A motion was made by Jim O'Mara to permit Mary Jennings, Superintendent to sign application forms to apply for Building Aid. Pam Dudoff seconded the motion. No further discussion and all board members voted in favor of the motion. The motion passed unanimously (5-0).

Dwight Brew advised the board that it would now review ASB policies.

B. POLICIES – 2ND READING

Pam Dudoff began reviewing policies:

Health Related Policies

EBBC – Emergency Care and First Aid

Pam Dudoff advised that there were no changes from the first reading – asked for questions or comments; none presented by ASB.

IMAH – Health Education – Daily physical activity
Pam Dudoff advised that there were no changes from the first reading – asked for questions or comments; none presented by ASB.

JLCD – Administering Medication to Students
Pam Dudoff that changes would be forthcoming after SAU Board meeting– asked for questions or comments; none presented by the ASB.

Administrative Policies

EH – Data Management (Public Use of School Records)

Pam Dudoff advised there were no changes from the first reading – asked for questions or comments; none presented by the ASB.

GBCD – Background Investigation and Criminal Records Check

Pam Dudoff advised that changes will be forthcoming after SAU Board meeting – asked for questions or comments; none by the ASB.

Dwight Brew asked about policy KA. Pam Dudoff stated that KA School, Community and Home Relations would not be included, as it is still needed to be reviewed under VII. Discussion Items.

Pam Dudoff clarified that the changes were made at the SAU Board meeting, then discussed at the Amherst School District Board meeting; followed by adoption of the policy.

A motion was made by Pam Dudoff to adopt policies EBBC Emergency Care and First Aid, IMAH Health Education, EH Data Management (Public Use of School Records) and Peg Bennett seconded the motion. No further discussion and all board members voted in favor of the motion. The motion passed unanimously (5-0)

VIII. OTHER

Pam Dudoff informed the ASB members that Paula Learoyd is revising the entire Amherst Policy manual and has retyped/reformatted the document with the correct legal citations. She requested that Paula Learoyd should be formally recognized for her efforts, taken on her own initiative.

Dwight Brew formally recognized the efforts of Paula Learoyd and offered the gracious thanks of the ASB.

Dwight Brew discussed the policy of proof of insurance for use of space by state agencies and to research potential liabilities for public meetings.

Mary Jennings offered to verify that the state agencies are exempt from the requirement to provide proof of insurance, to use district facilities for public meetings.

Dwight Brew advised that ASB members need to consider development of specific metrics for student performance.

Pam Dudoff asked for the status on Primex inspections for all facilities and school buildings. Betty Shankel advised that Primex declined the ASB invitation to provide building inspections. Mary Jennings is convening a Joint Loss Management Committee and is requesting all staff to provide and report issues of concern.

Jim O'Mara kindly reminded everyone to attend the Spaghetti Supper at Wilkins School, Sunday December 9, 2007, and to stop by the Brick School for cider!

Dwight Brew acknowledged the absence of the Auditor's Report in the board packet sent via email prior to the meeting. Mary Jennings recommended utilizing the Angel website and email and consider for all future meetings. Dwight Brew supported receiving board packet, and ideally as one large document, via email or more than one email to facilitate meeting preparation by all ASB members.

Jim O'Mara kindly reminded everyone about the Christmas concert, December 27, 2007 and noted it is same evening as the SAU Board meeting.

IX. REVIEW OF MEETING/ ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Pam Dudoff to adjourn the meeting. Jim O'Mara seconded the motion. No further discussion and all board members voted in favor. The motion passed unanimously (5-0)

The meeting adjourned at 9:35 p.m.