

MINUTES
AMHERST SCHOOL BOARD
Thursday, January 3, 2008
Amherst Town Hall Meeting Room

Present:

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

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

Ways & Means Committee-David Citarelli

Minute Taker – Susan M. Frenette

Public Hearing began at 6:05 p.m., called to order by Dwight Brew, Chair.

A. To Accept Donation

Dwight Brew asked Porter Dodge to address the donation.

Porter Dodge informed the board members that a last year, the foundation's donation purchased speech-to-text software, for writing assignments support. He asked the Board members to accept and extend our thanks to the Donahan & Poulack families and 'The Donna Anne Poulack Foundation' for their generous support.

Dwight Brew closed Public Hearing and stated that the Board will address the donation in the Consent Agenda items.

A. Administrators' Reports - Principals

Board members received Administrators' Reports and Dwight Brew asked board members if there were any questions.

Nancy Head asked where information on the Rachel's Challenge program would be available. Porter Dodge stated it would be published in the newsletter and on the AMS website prior to the program, on January 17. He directed those interested in learning more, to the Amherst Middle School website for information.

Peg Bennett stated that she volunteered to support the OXFAM Banquet and congratulated Amherst Middle School for a fine program. She commented on the remarkable student poetry, and said it was an excellent program.

ATTENDANCE

I. PUBLIC HEARING
II. CALL TO ORDER

III. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Peg Bennett asked Porter Dodge if the surveys had been returned, and what was the participation rate? Porter Dodge replied that all students and staff participated, and the total return rate was 25%, statistically excellent. The final data will be reviewed with NELMS in mid-February.

Mary Jennings praised Gerry St. Amand for an excellent Holiday Program before break. On Friday, students attired in their pajamas, were treated to tickets to listen to The Polar Express, read by Gerry St. Amand.

A. MINUTES

Dwight Brew stated, the meeting is now in Public Time, and asked for any items that need to be pulled from the consent agenda.

Nancy Head asked to pull the minutes of October 4, 2007 and December 6, 2007. Dwight Brew asked to pull the minutes of August 14, 2007 and September 21, 2007.

Dwight Brew asked for a motion to approve the remaining consent agenda items, as presented, consisting of (B.) Financial (1.) Treasurer's Report for November and (C.) Acceptance of Donations (1.) \$10,000 for Special Education Purposes.

Nancy Head made a motion to approve the remaining consent agenda items, as presented, consisting of (B.) Financial (1.) Treasurer's Report for November and (C.) Acceptance of Donations (1.) \$10,000 for Special Education Purposes. Peg Bennett seconded the motion; no further discussion noted. All board members voted in favor of the motion. The motion passed unanimously (5-0).

Nancy Head made a motion to accept the August 14, 2007. Pam Dudoff seconded the motion.

Dwight Brew asked to amend the minutes to move Policies section to follow the Non-Public minute's section.

No further discussion noted; all board members voted to accept the August 14, 2007 minutes as amended. The motion passed unanimously (5-0).

Pam Dudoff made a motion to accept the September 21, 2007. Nancy Head seconded the motion.

Dwight Brew asked to amend minutes calling attention to the organization chart for SAU39 Mission (see flow chart, p. IV.A.3). The Board Goal to change from 'blank' to

IV. PUBLIC TIME V. CONSENT AGENDA

include the following words: “Identify, publish, and communicate to the public a set of metrics that can be used to track individual student achievement, and also be used to compare the Amherst School District’s year to year progress, and to compare the Amherst School District with other cohort school districts.”

Discussion ensued. Pam Dudoff suggested to add the following “including current year’s status” after the word metrics and before the word that, to Dwight Brew amended language.

Mary Jennings asked to amend and to add attendance of administrators, Nicole Heimarck and Porter Dodge, previously omitted.

No further discussion noted; all board members voted to accept the September 21, 2007 minutes as amended. The motion passed unanimously (5-0).

Nancy Head made a motion to accept the October 4, 2007 minutes. Pam Dudoff seconded the motion.

Discussion ensued.

Nancy Head proposed the following amendments:

p 24 to change spelling of “Teedman” to “*Tiedman*”, at all instances; p 26 to change “NASDEQ” to “*NESDEC*”, at all instances and on p 27; p30 to change the 6th paragraph to read: “*Betty agreed with Jim stating they should not wait until the new 2008-09 school year, but suggested they wait in the Fall and begin the process in the Spring ’08 after deliberative*”; p31 (at 6th paragraph) to change the word “initiative” to “*introduced*”; p34 to add the word “*not*” before the word mastery; p35 to add the words “*similar to an example of physical growth --* ” before the word it; p40 (at 5th paragraph) to add the words “*at this time*” after the words Master Plan; p42 (at 1st paragraph) to add the word “Assistant” before the word Principal.

No further discussion noted. All board members voted to accept the October 4, 2007 minutes as amended. The motion passed unanimously (5-0).

Peg Bennett made a motion to accept the December 6, 2007 minutes. Pam Dudoff seconded the motion.

Discussion ensued.

Nancy Head asked for the following amendments to the December 6, 2007 minutes:

p25 (Administrator Report, 1st paragraph) to change the word "budget" to "Auditor's";

Peg Bennett asked for the following amendments to the December 6, 2007 minutes:

p36 (at 3rd paragraph) add, "*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.*", after the words Food Service and to strike all words until the next sentence. "Peg Bennett stated that that lunch revenue..."; (at 4th paragraph, 2nd sentence) to strike the sentence in its entirety and replace with the following: "*Peg Bennett state 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.*"

p37 (at 1st paragraph) to amend and add the words "primarily due to the portables and Academic Dean position" before the word "*lean*".

Pam Dudoff asked for the following amendments to the December 6, 2007 minutes:

p26 (at 5th paragraph) add the words "is typically reported back to the participants." after the word results; delete the *bracketed wording* and replace with "NELMS survey";

(at 6th paragraph) first sentence, after the word St. Amand, add the words "is reviewing" and delete "*to review*"; second sentence add the word "is" before the word glad; fourth sentence, delete the word "and" after the word award.

p30 (3rd paragraph) at Consent Agenda, change the word "are" to the word "*the*"

p31 (last paragraph) at the end of the first sentence, add the words "*in order to reference what policy and revision is adopted.*"

p34 (2nd full paragraph) add the word "*each*" before the word summaries; change the word "committee" to "*subcommittee*".

p45 (5th paragraph) add the paragraph, before the

highlighted motion paragraph.

Pam Dudoff clarified that changes were made at the SAU39 Board meeting, then discussed at the Amherst School District Board meeting; followed by adoption and adoption of the policy.

No further discussion noted; all board members voted to accept the December 6, 2007 minutes as amended. The motion passed unanimously (5-0).

Dwight Brew stated all items in consent agenda have been addressed and proceeds to agenda item, Presentations.

VI. PRESENTATIONS

A. FY09 Proposed Budget

Dwight Brew stated that this portion of the meeting would address the budget.

1. 3rd Draft Presentation

Mary Jennings distributed Third Draft of FY09 budget, showing Draft 1, Draft 2, and Draft 3 reflecting all changes made throughout the process. All changes recommended at the December 6, 2007 meeting were incorporated.

Discussion ensued; Dwight Brew thanked the administration for their revisions and for the friendly format.

2. Default Budget

Betty Shankel stated that the Default budget is made up of all contractual items (ASSA, AEA), obligations for Special Education requirements, GASBY laws, statutory benefits (dental), decreases of 40 staff reductions, decrease in Special Education Transportation, fuel surcharge, interest payments, and no transfers to expendable trusts. This results in a default budget of \$22,183,85 and after adjustments \$22,086,294.

Pam Dudoff asked about a decrease a line item regarding music. Betty Shankel stated that it is a very small amount (not a staff position), a stipend and she would research. Porter Dodge offered it might be a carryover for contracted services, such as equipment tuning.

Dwight Brew called attention that the 2008-09 default budget is less than the current year operating budget. Jim O'Mara clarified for that the default budget proposed for next year is even leaner, and if followed statutory

requirements would be larger. Discussion ensued.

Jim O'Mara stated that if the default budget is adopted the Amherst School District Board can put forth a supplemental appropriation, if necessary.

3. Public Information for Budget/Renovations

Mary Jennings distributed a memorandum on Budget Information. She suggested that a new approach utilizing a 4-page newsletter could be sent out ahead of the Voter's Guide mailing to overview major issues and direct voters to the website for more detailed information.

Discussion ensued. Dwight Brew summarized by saying the consensus of the board is if the newsletter can be printed within the existing budget, to proceed. He also recommended that a PDF be posted in advance for the voters, and mailed before the Voter's Guide. Mary Jennings confirmed and stated it would mail 3 weeks before, and before February vacation; it could be used at other informational meetings and presentations before the vote in March. Peg Bennett asked to see a draft before printing. Mary Jennings agreed.

Nancy Head asked the board members to meet before the February deliberative session in order to discuss the recommendations for hiring a Project Manager for the building renovations, if approved by the voters.

B. Enrollment Projections

Mary Jennings distributed a memorandum on Enrollment Projections. She stated the accuracy between NESDEC and NHSAA are represented, citing NHSAA was more accurate for K-4 and NESDEC was more accurate for Grades 5-8.

Discussion ensued. Pam Dudoff stated that the Principal and Administration's forecast have been the most accurate. Dwight Brew summarized that external vendors are required for projections and acts as a good crosscheck and validates our own data. He stated that \$2,290 needs to stay in the budget, but the provider can change. Nancy Head asked if projections need to be done every year, or could they be done every 2 years? Mary Jennings said projections are only good for 5 years but she would consider every other year. Pam Dudoff said that she would take this up at the next SAU39 board meeting.

A. Warrant Articles for Public Hearing

Betty Shankel reviewed the Warrant Article. Jim O'Mara called attention to the format of item #11 and item #12 and the potential confusion for the voters. Betty Shankel will review the wording for clarity and will review with counsel and get their opinion. Discussion ensued.

Dwight Brew asked if there is a motion to bring an information worksheet on Amherst School District Annual Meeting Warrant for Articles 12 ,13, and 14 (without including the written commentary or recommendations) to deliberative session.

A motion was made by Jim O'Mara to bring an information worksheet on Amherst School District Annual Meeting Warrant for Articles 12, 13, and 14 (without commentary or recommendations) to deliberative session. Pam Dudoff seconded the motion. No further discussion and all board members voted in favor of the motion. The motion passed unanimously (5-0)

A. POLICIES – 1ST READING

Pam Dudoff reviewed policies and asked for questions or comments from the ASB. None was forthcoming.

School Community Relations Policies

KA - School Community Relations Policies

Student Policies

JH – Student Absences and Excuses

JI – Student Rights and Responsibilities

JLCF – Wellness

JLDBA – Behavior Management and Intervention

Pam Dudoff acknowledged no comments forthcoming; she will bring a 2nd Reading to the SAU39 Board meeting review and for public comment.

Porter Dodge asked for clarification on JLCF (p8) regarding Policy for Concessions for non-school day events or programs. Is the policy only during school hours? If no, who is responsible to administrate? Pam Dudoff replied that it is a policy that applies only to students during the school day. She suggests striking the words “after school day.”

VII. ACTION ITEMS

VIII. DISCUSSION ITEMS

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). Peg Bennett seconded the motion. No further discussion; all board members voted in favor of the motion. The motion passed unanimously (5-0)

Dwight Brew called attention to Personnel; no discussion forthcoming.

A. Renovation Update

Nancy Head reported that new information has been uploaded to the website and soon a Question & Answer section will be added to respond to the citizens. She asked to meet with the board before the February deliberative session.

Jim Miner was asked by Nancy Head to comment on his coordination with the architects. Jim stated that the market is weak and construction is starting to slow. He was encouraged the administration was able to line up contractors if the Warrant Article is passed

Dwight Brew recapped meeting and called for motion to adjourn.

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

The meeting adjourned at 8:04 p.m.

IX. PERSONNEL

VIII. OTHER

**IX. REVIEW OF MEETING/
ADJOURNMENT**