

**MINUTES
AMHERST SCHOOL BOARD
April 3, 2008
Amherst Town Hall Meeting Room**

Present:

Amherst School Board: Peg Bennett, Dwight Brew, Pam Dudoff, Nancy Head, and Rob Graybill.

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

Minutes Recorder: Lyn Jennings

ATTENDANCE

Chair Dwight Brew welcomed Rob Graybill as a new board member and congratulated Nancy Head on her re-election to the school board.

A. Administrators Reports – Board members received copies of the Principals Reports in their board packets. Board members were given the opportunity to ask any questions they had regarding the reports and they had none.

**WELCOME NEW AND
RETURNING SCHOOL BOARD
MEMBERS
ANNOUNCEMENTS**

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

PUBLIC TIME

Dwight Brew asked board members if they wanted anything pulled from the Consent Agenda.

CONSENT AGENDA

The A. 1. January 3, 2008, Minutes were pulled from the Consent Agenda.

The A. 2. March 6, 2008, Minutes were pulled from the Consent Agenda.

The A. 3. March 18, 2008, Minutes were pulled from the Consent Agenda.

A motion was made by Nancy Head and seconded by Peg Bennett to accept Consent Agenda Items B. Budget – 1. Treasurer’s Report – February 2008, 2. Transfers, 3. Donation to Student Activity Fund, 4. Donation to General Fund, and Item C. Personnel – 1.Retirement, 2. Resignation and 3. Leave of Absence. All board members voted in favor of the

motion and the motion passed unanimously. (5-0)

A motion was made by Nancy Head and seconded by Peg Bennett to approve the A. 1. Minutes of January 3, 2008, as amended. All members of the board voted in favor of the motion and the motion passed. (5-0)

A motion was made by Nancy Head and seconded by Pam Dudoff to approve A. 2. Minutes of March 6, 2008, as amended. All members of the board voted in favor of the motion and the motion passed. (5-0)

A motion was made by Nancy Head and seconded by Peg Bennett to approve A. 3. Minutes of March 18, 2008, as amended. All board members voted in favor of the motion and the motion passed. (5-0)

A motion was made by Pam Dudoff and seconded by Nancy Head to reconsider the A. 2. Minutes of March 6, 2008 as amended. All board members voted in favor of the motion and the motion passed. (5-0)

A motion was made by Nancy Head and seconded by Peg Bennett to approve the A. 2. Minutes of March 6, 2008, with some additional amendments. All board members voted in favor of the motion and the motion passed. (5-0)

- A. **Committee Assignments** – Dwight Brew provided board members with a handout detailing Committee Assignments for the 2008-2009 School Board Year. The handout was dated 4/3/2008.

**PRESENTATIONS/DISCUSSION
ITEMS**

Dwight told board members the reason Pam Dudoff did not have many committee assignments was because she would be leaving the board in the next couple of months since her family was moving to New York.

A motion was made by Peg Bennett and seconded by Nancy Head to have Rob Graybill and Peg Bennett approve the manifests on behalf of the school board with Nancy Head serving as an alternate. All board members voted in favor of the motion and the motion passed. (5-0)

- B. **Renovation Update** – Nancy Head updated the board members on the Renovation project. Nancy read from her prepared notes.

Nancy said the first meeting with the architects, construction company project manager and the superintendent was held yesterday, April 2, 2008. Present from the school board and the school were Jim Miner, Betty Shankel, Dwight Brew and Nancy Head. The purpose of the meeting was to lay some ground rules, foster communication, define roles and responsibilities, and talk about the sequence of what happens next.

Nancy said following the meeting with the architect's group; the architect, the construction manger, the construction manager representatives and Jim Miner did a walk-through of the buildings.

Nancy said to avoid confusion, it was determined Jim Miner would be the school contact for the architect and the construction manager. Jim will report to the Master Plan Committee and the school board. The construction manager will hold weekly meetings detailing progress, which Jim will attend. The minutes of these meetings will be available to the school board. Frank Marinace and Ross Currier will be the major contacts for the architect and the construction manager.

Nancy told board members Jim Miner would make the day-to-day decisions. All requests for changes will filter through him. In order to expedite matters, once work begins Jim will need to be given the authority from the board to make changes not to exceed a certain sum such as \$5,000. Nancy said because they have a tight time schedule and need a fast turnaround on decisions, it has been suggested that we they have a building oversight committee to make decisions on larger sums up to a certain amount. Nancy said she would be bringing a proposal to the board next time listing specific amounts and suggestions for the oversight committee.

Nancy said the next step is for the construction managers to study the work to be done in consultation with the architect. It is expected that the scope of the work will be defined and a preliminary budget set up

within another month. At that time they will know how much work can be done this summer. Nancy said they want to do as much as they can without sacrificing quality of work for speed.

Peg Bennett asked if Nancy knew the makeup of the oversight committee yet. Nancy said no, this would be presented at the next school board meeting.

Dwight Brew thanked Nancy Head for the update.

- A. **2008-2009 School Year Calendar** – Dr. **ACTION ITEMS (1/2)**
 Jennings told board members the 2008-2009 School Year Calendar was reviewed by the Calendar Committee as well as presented at the SAU Board meeting on March 27, 2008. Dr. Jennings said two options were presented and the version before the board this evening was the preferred option which board members informally said they would support while at the SAU Board meeting.

Dr. Jennings highlighted some key dates on the calendar:

- School starts three days before Labor Day, August 27, 2008.
- There will be two staff In-Service Days – one on October 10, 2008, and the other on February 16, 2008.
- The December vacation will last a week and a half and begin on December 24, 2008.
- The end of the school year with no snow days is June 12, 2009, for Amherst and Mont Vernon and June 15, 2009, for Souhegan.
- The end of the school year with five snow days is June 19, 2009, for Amherst and Mont Vernon and June 22, 2009, for Souhegan.

Dr. Jennings said at the request of several parents, significant religious holidays would be noted on the calendar. Dr. Jennings said they would also include the dates of Parent Conferences, and Late Starts.

A motion was made by Peg Bennett and seconded by Pam Dudoff to approve the 2008-2009 School Year Calendar as presented by the Superintendent. All board members voted in favor of the motion and the motion passed. (5-0)

B. Authorization to sign:

1. MS-22 Report and FY09 Bond Application –

A motion was made by Nancy Head and seconded by Pam Dudoff to authorize the Board Chair, Board members, District Clerk, and Treasurer to sign all necessary bond-borrowing documents including the bond application, district clerk certificate, net indebtedness certificate and tax certificates as well as the MS-22 Report. All board members voted in favor of the motion and the motion passed. (5-0)

C. Policies – 2nd Reading – Discrimination Policies –

AC – Non- Discrimination – Pam told board members there were no comments at the first reading. Board members had no comments during the second reading as well.

ACA – Sexual Harassment and Sexual Violence – Pam told board members there were no comments at the first reading. Board members had no comments during the second reading as well.

Discipline Policies –

JICFA – Hazing – Pam said board members had no comments at the first reading and board members had no comments during the second reading.

A motion was made by Pam Dudoff and seconded by Peg Bennett to adopt Policies AC- Non Discrimination, ACA – Sexual Harassment and

Sexual Violence and JICFA – Hazing as presented.

Dwight Brew asked if there were any public comments regarding the policies however there were none.

All board members voted in favor of the motion and the motion passed. (5-0)

A motion was made by Pam Dudoff and seconded by Nancy Head to rescind the 1990 version of AC – Non-Discrimination, the 1994 version of ACA – Sexual Harassment and Sexual Violence and the 1990 versions of AC-R and ACA-R.

Dwight Brew asked if there were any public comments regarding the policies however there were none.

All board members voted in favor of the motion and the motion passed. (5-0)

- A. **Late Start /Staff Development** – Dr. Jennings said the SAU Board saw a presentation by Meredith Nadeau and Ann Allwarden about how late start days contributed to staff development and improved student learning. Dr. Jennings said they included this as a topic on the agenda since Amherst does not currently have Late Start days like Souhegan and Mont Vernon do.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Dr. Jennings said she wanted to get the boards questions regarding Late Start/Staff Development so the board could determine if they want to pursue this option further.

Nancy Head said she would like to see the structure of the sessions, an outline of what is covered and accomplished in these sessions. Nancy said she would like to see that there is a way to judge at the end to see how the goals were met.

Pam Dudoff said she would like to touch base with the Unions and look at how they can accomplish Late Starts/Staff Development within the faculty agreements. Pam said it is a matter of asking the union representatives how they go about implementing Late Start Days.

Pam said she would like to find out the concerns of parents, specifically at the elementary level. Pam said she was interested in what Mont Vernon has done, utilizing childcare at the school while staff development takes place.

Dwight said they should also look at childcare for the Middle School as well.

Peg Bennett asked how far in advance Mont Vernon and Souhegan prepared for Late Starts prior to implementation. Peg asked if it was appropriate if approved, should Amherst implement Late Starts in September.

Rob Graybill said he would be interested in hearing prior feedback from community members.

Dwight said he was on the board when they tried to implement Late Start days in the past. Dwight said some community members supported it and some expressed logistical concerns.

Pam suggested they let parents know through other avenues, not just the live broadcasts of the board meeting that they are considering Late Start days in case they would like to provide additional feedback.

Dwight said teachers are currently working on student-centered goals for next year and Late Starts would be a way to achieve the student-centered goal.

Dwight said if they implement Late Starts, they will want to evaluate them and asked how the administration would determine if Late Starts were a success.

Rob suggested the administration provide an overview of what Late Starts were in case parents had never heard of them before.

Meredith said Late Starts in Mont Vernon occur 10 times per year or once a month, the first Tuesday of the month.

On Late Start days, the students start school two hours

later than their regular start time.

Meredith said for parents that need their children to come at the regular start time, childcare is provided at the school.

Meredith said in Mont Vernon the late start time is used for Staff Development work.

Scott Prescott said for Souhegan, the late start time is used for Critical Friends Groups. Scott said they have eleven Late Start days at Souhegan since one is used for Senior Projects.

Pam suggested the administration provide the cost savings if Amherst decided to implement Late Start days. Dr. Jennings said she could provide this information at the next board meeting.

Dwight said if the board and administration decide to implement Late Start days, they would start them in the fall.

Rob Graybill asked what the bus schedule would be if Late Starts were implemented.

Dwight said the buses would run two hours later than their usual pick up time.

- B. **Alternative Start Time** – Dwight explained to board members Souhegan High School is looking at starting their school day at a later time, because studies have shown there is a benefit to learning. Dwight told board members they are not looking at implementing this program next year; it would probably be in a year or two.

Dwight said the reason Amherst has to look at the Alternative Start Time is because the High School and Middle School use a couple of shifts for the buses and it would impact the Middle School if Souhegan chose to implement an Alternative Start Time.

Dwight told board members Peg Bennett and Rob Graybill would participate on the Souhegan Alternative

Start Time Committee on behalf of Amherst.

- C. **Recreation Lease Agreement** – Board members received a copy of the Lease Agreement between the Amherst School District and the Souhegan Cooperative School District and the Town of Amherst.

Dwight Brew read from his prepared notes regarding the Lease Agreement.

Dwight said Betty has done a wonderful job coming up with this Lease Agreement.

Dwight explained the proposed agreement would make the school fields available to the Amherst Recreation Department when not needed by the schools.

The agreement is also being reviewed by the Souhegan Cooperative School District and the Amherst Selectmen. Dwight said barring any disconnects; the Lease Agreement will come back to the board at a future meeting for approval.

Dwight explained the board did not have to take any action on the agreement this evening, but it was being presented in order to answer any questions or concerns board members had regarding the proposed agreement.

Dwight said for at least 20 years, the Town of Amherst and the Amherst School District have had an arrangement where the school fields are used for recreation when not needed by the schools. Dwight said he believes the arrangement has worked out very well, and that it would be desirable to continue the relationship.

Dwight said the existing lease between the Town of Amherst and the Amherst School District was signed in 1985.

The proposed new lease is a three-way agreement between the Town, the Amherst School District and the Souhegan Cooperative School District.

Dwight said the new lease has been updated to reflect

the current fields.

The term of the new lease is 10 years and if it is approved it will start on July 1, 2008. The agreement will automatically renew on an annual basis unless one of the parties gives at least three years notice of intent for non-renew.

Dwight said the town will pay \$1 per year for the use of the fields, but will be responsible for all field maintenance.

Any improvements to any of the fields must be approved by the Amherst School District in advance, and will be done at the town's expense.

The schools use of these fields shall preempt the use by the town. This will include last minute rescheduling due to rainouts, etc. However, the schools will work in good faith to make the fields available for use by the town when not needed by the school district.

The town will maintain liability insurance that is satisfactory to the school district.

The lease also states if the district needs the use of the land where the fields are located, it may disallow the use by the Town. In this case, both the school district and the Town will endeavor to renegotiate this agreement to the extent that the facilities are affected.

Board members had an opportunity to make comments or ask any questions they may have had on the proposed lease agreement.

Pam said she spoke with their attorney and he recommended inserting a clause into the lease stating the Fields remain a Drug Free & Safe School Zone.

Pam said she would check with Attorney Graham and ask him if in certain places, the issue of drugs and a safe school are made clear such as the Student Handbook, would this be sufficient.

Dr. Jennings suggested inserting a clause that stated the policies of the Amherst School District apply.

Pam suggested they list the policies that should apply rather than say all policies.

Betty agreed to research the issue as well.

Nancy asked who would enforce the issue that the fields remain a Drug Free & Safe School Zone. First it would be school personnel then the Amherst Police.

Nancy asked if there was any timeframe associated with notifying the town should they need to expand their facilities. Betty said she would have to say three years, however, if needed sooner, they would have to come to an agreement with the town.

Nancy suggested we make sure we are on solid ground legally, and Betty agreed to look at this issue.

D. **Policies – 1st Reading** –

Discrimination and Discipline Policies

ACE - Rights of Disabled / Handicapped Persons – Board members had no comments regarding this policy.

KED – Board members had no comments regarding this policy.

IKE – Promotion and Retention of Students - Board members had no comments regarding this policy.

JCA –Change of School or Assignment Policy - Board members had no comments regarding this policy.

JEC – Manifest Educational Hardship - Board members had no comments regarding this policy.

JFAA – Admission of Resident Students - Board members had no comments regarding this policy.

JFABD – Admission of Homeless Students - Board members had no comments regarding this policy.

JG – Assignment of Students to Classes and Grade Levels - Board members had no comments regarding this policy.

Pam told board members all the policies presented to the board for their first reading would come back to the board for a second reading and approval at the next board meeting.

A motion was made to enter Non-Public Session pursuant to NH RSA 91-A:3 II (a) by Pam Dudoff and seconded by Nancy Head.

NON PUBLIC SESSION: RSA 91-A:3 II (a)

By Roll Call Vote: Dudoff - yes; Head - yes; Bennett - yes; Brew - yes; and Graybill – yes.

The board entered into Non Public Session at 7:22 p.m.

Nancy Head made a motion to come out of non-public session and to seal the minutes of the non-public session except for the portions related to the staff nomination and admin compensation. Peg Bennett seconded this motion.

Roll call to come out of non-public at 9:15pm
Brew - yes, Head - yes, Bennett - yes, Graybill - yes, Dudoff - yes

- A. **Professional Staff Nominations** – Nancy Head moved to accept the staff nomination as presented by the superintendent for the 2008-2009 school year. The motion was seconded by Rob Graybill. All board members voted in favor of the motion. **ACTION ITEMS (2/2)**
- B. **Administration Salaries** - Pam made a motion to accept the compensation package for administration for FY 2009 as presented by the superintendent in the amount of \$526,098 with the understanding that the appropriate budget transfers will take place at the next board meeting. The motion was seconded by Rob Graybill. The board voted 4-1 in favor of the motion.

The motion was opposed by Dwight who explained: “I voted against the motion, although I agree with the overall compensation package. I disagree with not reflecting all of the total compensation increase as salary, but instead showing some of this compensation increase as benefits.”

Motion to adjourn the meeting by Rob Graybill and Pam Dudoff seconded the motion. All members voted in favor of the motion and the meeting adjourned at 9:25 p.m.

REVIEW /ADJOURN MEETING