

**AMHERST SCHOOL BOARD  
MINUTES  
MAY 8, 2008**

**Present:**

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

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

Minutes Recorder: Wendy Boehm

**I. ATTENDANCE**

Dwight Brew called the meeting to order.

Dwight said it was the first public hearing to accept an anonymous donation in the amount of \$5,000.00.

Dwight asked Dr. Jennings how this donation would be used. Dr. Jennings said the money is to be targeted toward Special Education at the Wilkins School. She said Gerry St Amand had consulted with the staff, and they have a need for laptop computers for S.P.E.D IEP documents. It is a nice way to use the money.

Dwight said this would be done in 2 parts: The first being a public hearing, and second would be to accept the donation, barring any changes.

Pam Dudoff said she hoped the anonymous donor knows how much we greatly appreciate this generous donation.

Dwight asked the public for more comments but none were forthcoming. Dwight declared this public hearing closed.

Principals' Reports- Dwight Brew asked if there were any board questions regarding the reports from their packets.

Pam Dudoff asked Gerry St Amand if any thoughts were given for grade 3 and 4 testing at the Wilkins School. Her concern was the amount of stress it could place on these young students having multiple assessments in a short period of time. Gerry St Amand answered by saying

**II. PUBLIC HEARING**

they make sure the time frames do not overlap. He said the NECAP is state mandated, so there is a limited window when the test can be administered. Fourth grade NWEA is taken as close to the end of year as possible in order to get valid results.

Gerry St Amand discussed the recent lockdown at the Clark and Wilkins School. Nancy Head asked how these procedures were done without frightening the students. Gerry said the staff members participated in strategies that worked regularly, and that teachers did a commendable job. There were also newsletters and emails informing the parents on the lockdown, as well as procedures that need to be followed. The parents are encouraged to practice this at home.

Gerry said The Wilkins School recently had a fire Drill during a lockdown. He said this is the only time you are supposed to ignore the fire Drill and continue to follow the lockdown procedure. A lockdown is the only procedure to take precedence over anything else. Gerry said it's all about safety.

Board Members Resignation: Pam Dudoff has submitted her resignation effective June 4, 2008. Dwight also accepted the resignation of Kim Humphreys, Kurt Hines, and the retirement of Brenda Martucci. Dwight spoke for the entire school board in thanking all of them for their years of service to Amherst School District.

Process for Replacement of Board Members: Dwight said Amherst school board does have a policy for replacing board members. In accordance with the school board, they request qualified voters interested in this position apply by way of a letter of intent, listing qualifications, background education, and a statement as to why they wish to serve on the school board. Those who are interested should apply before Friday, May 30, 2008. For further questions, Brew said to contact him.

Acknowledgement of service: The school board would like to thank Pam Dudoff for all her progress and success with Amherst School Department. Pam was presented with a resolution signed by board members and the administration. The resolution is in

recognition of service given by Pam for her dedication to the schools. Dwight and the members of the school board thanked Pam and wished her the best of luck.

Nicole Heimarck handed out the 2008 AYP summary reports. Nicole said these results were just publicly released today. She was pleased to report that there were significant gains at all grade levels .(1-8)

### III. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Amherst Middle School achieved AYP in reading in all reporting categories. They increased the index score for reading for The Educational Disabilities Cohort by 11%. Nicole said these were very significant gains and that usually there is only a 3-6% gain.

All schools in SAU 39 made AYP this year. Nicole was pleased that students are making progress.

Dwight Brew asked if the public wants to address the board.

Dwight made a request to have the A.1. Minutes pulled from the Consent Agenda. He said they don't have the amendments that were made to the previous meeting minutes. Dwight said it was important, especially if there are some discrepancies about the actual released minutes.

### IV. CONSENT AGENDA

**A motion was made by Nancy Head and seconded by Peg Bennett to approve the Consent Agenda, minus the minutes. All 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 April 3, 2008, as amended. All members of the board voted in favor of the motion and the motion passed unanimously. (5-0)**

School board members reviewed the corrections and changes to be made to the April 3, 2008 minutes. The sealed minutes were not provided to the board. They would approve the sealed minutes in a non-public section session.

**Nancy Head made a motion and was seconded by Peg Bennett to table that motion until the June 5 meeting. All members of the board voted in favor of the motion and the motion passed unanimously. (5-0)**

## V. PRESENTATIONS/DISCUSSION ITEMS

### Porch Renovations- Historic Commission Plans

Will Ludt the chair of The Amherst Heritage Commission was introduced by Dwight to report on the status of the Brick School Front porch renovation project. Will said he has gone to the Historic District twice in the last two years to get permission to renovate the Brick School porch.

Will said progress has been made to replace the existing front porch. They have raised enough money to begin working on this renovation. Will said they have hired a contractor, John Kendall and look forward to begin work around July 4<sup>th</sup>.

John Kendall, the contractor declared the porch a hazard, and recommended demolishing it, with the exception of the railings. John said the railings were salvageable. There will also be a new Roof, including shingles to replace the old porch roof. Will said there would be a 100% restoration of the porch, however it will look the same.

Will reported that renovation plans for this project are moving forward. So far they have raised between \$33,000 and \$34000 for the Brick School renovations. The renovation project is expected to have about \$6,000 left upon completion. Will said the extra money may be used for banners for the school.

Pam Dudoff asked Will if they typically take the opportunity to add handicap accessibility and does the Historic District waive that. Will said from a preservation aspect it would be put on the side. It is not part of the plan.

Dwight thanked Will for his fundraising efforts and for seeing the project through.

Jim Miner reported on the internal repairs of the SAU brick building. The downstairs needs more renovations than does the upstairs. An open entryway would be established downstairs with a

reception and waiting area. Jim said there would be changes to create a large conference room and an office for the Literacy Coordinator. A new custodial workroom and storage area would also be included. Jim said the downstairs floor would be replaced with carpet, and a new vinyl tile entryway. All areas would be repainted.

Upstairs renovations would include constructing a new S.P.E.D. Director's office and to relocate all S.P.E.D. staff to the north end, and accounting staff to the main office area. Jim said there will also be construction for new Technology, Food Service and B&G offices.

Pam Dudoff was concerned about the S.P.E.D. office on the second floor, especially given the nature of those stairs. Dr. Jennings said the conference room would be accessible to all members of SAU 39. Pam asked if there would be priority for conference and community rooms if there were S.P.E.D. meetings. Dr. Jennings said absolutely.

Dwight told board members that all schools of SAU 39 proportionately contribute \$15,000 in to a fund for repairs.

**Report on Late Start Day Proposal**- Gerry St Amand reported on the proposal for late starts in the Amherst Schools. He gave the board members handouts.

This proposal by Gerry St Amand and Porter Dodge included a proposal to model the current SHS/Mont Vernon late-start schedule for 10 days. Gerry outlined some of the benefits of a late start:

- Improve student achievement by improving teaching quality
- Team (collaborative) learning
- Cross school/district collaboration

One of the main concerns that arose with late start was morning childcare. Parents have not been surveyed on this issue recently. Gerry said Amherst School District recognizes this could be a concern at the elementary level.

Dwight Brew asked how you would evaluate effectiveness of how those two hours would be used. They would translate into positive gains.

Gerry St Amand said Kindergarten could pose a problem with the A.M. class missing more days than the P.M. Kindergarten class .It was recommended to flip the morning and afternoon Kindergarten on late-start days so the time missed would be divided equally between the two programs.

Gerry St Amand said the late start would be similar to a delayed opening. A.M. Kindergarten would not attend at all on a late start. Gerry said P.M. Kindergarten would start at the usual time of 12:15.

One question asked was if the administrators are willing to make a commitment to finding a way to offer childcare without cost (or reasonable cost). It was suggested by Pam Dudoff to put this presentation on line, send it out electronically, or advertise in the papers so parents could offer their feedback.

**Third Quarter Financial Statement-** Elisabeth Shankel reported on FY08 third quarter finances.

Elisabeth said at this time Amherst School District is about \$700,000 below expenditure for the year. She said that this is due mostly to the reduced teachers' salaries, S.P.E.D. (anticipated bus transportation lower than expected and anticipated service that won't be needed), and lower fuel/oil costs(locked in to \$2.19 gal. until June), and lower health/dental costs.

Rob Graybill asked if you would see these types of windfalls in future years, or is this a one time occurrence. Elisabeth said it was very unusual to have such a savings.

**Naming of Bean Fields-** Dwight Brew received a letter from Nancy McMillan, the head of the Rec. Dept. in Amherst. She is currently working with the Amherst Public Library to have an Olympics' Day to celebrate the grand opening of the fields (which were built last year) on August 16<sup>th</sup>. It is their intent to have signs for the fields in anticipation of the grand opening. Nancy said the fields need to be named in order to do that.

## VI. ACTION ITEMS

Classmates of McKayla Geisinger would like to do something in McKayla's remembrance. They want to find an appropriate way to honor McKayla and other student athletes while incorporating this into the grand opening of the fields.

Dr. Jennings said they were in contact with McKayla's family and thought maybe a granite bench or something that would be an appropriate memorial for her. Dr. Jennings said her family may also want to participate in the grand opening of the fields.

Dwight Brew said they need to name the complex (fields) this is so the Rec. Dept. can purchase the signs with the understanding that something will be worked out with the Geisinger family and classmates.

Dwight Brew said we need to give the Rec. Dept. ample time to put the signs in place by August 16<sup>th</sup>.

**A motion was made by Nancy Head and seconded by Pam Dudoff to name the middle school athletic fields the Bean Fields. Added to that motion is the understanding that conversation is ongoing with the Geisinger family and also that other fields may have memorials. All board members voted in favor of the motion and the motion passed unanimously. (5-0)**

**Building Oversight Committee** Board members received handouts from Nancy Head outlining some guidelines for the Building Oversight Committee.

Nancy said the April 15<sup>th</sup> meeting was a good meeting. Nancy updated the board members on the renovations for the Clark, Wilkins, and Amherst Middle Schools. She said they have not yet hired a construction manager

Nancy Head said the renovation project usually takes 25-37 weeks from votes to beginning of construction. The ASD project should be completed in about half the time.

Nancy said they would be lumping packages together and doing this in overlapping phases. Emphasis will be on two things:

- Efficient Cost Control
- Quality Control

Nancy said the timing has to do with the kids in school. Architects have met with Jim Minor and are coordinating this project.

Nancy said they need quick decisions. The board has not yet hired the construction manager because of comprehensive, guaranteed, maximum price (by June 5<sup>th</sup> meeting). Once this is done, the construction manager will be hired. Nancy said there will be a spreadsheet of 40-60 line items. They will all be put out to bid.

**A motion was made by Nancy Head and seconded by Pam Dudoff to authorize the Building Oversight Committee consisting of five members who will be authorized to accept bids and change orders as set forth in the Amherst School Board charge to the Building Oversight Committee dated May 8, 2008. 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 recommend that Jim Jacobs be appointed as the community member to the Building Oversight Committee. All board members voted in favor of the motion and the motion passed unanimously. (5-0)**

**Nancy Head moved that the school board authorize the Building Oversight Committee to accept competitive bids for windows, insulation, sprinkler systems, soils and concrete testing, and contingency items not to exceed \$795,000 before the acceptance of a formal GMP scheduled by the school board. Pam seconded this. All board members voted in favor of the motion and the motion passed unanimously. (5-0)**

**Establishment- Capital Fund Bank Account-** Dwight Brew said the school board wants to establish a new Capital Fund bank account in anticipation of the income from the bond issues. All expenses will be paid out of this account.

**A motion was made by Pam Dudoff and seconded by Nancy Head to Adopt the government banking resolutions as presented in the packet, and to authorize the board chair and board clerk, to attest to that resolution. All board members voted in favor of the motion and the motion passed unanimously. (5-0)**

Dwight Brew asked the Board to approve a bond anticipation note as the Board is not authorized to get a bond until July and they are incurring expenses and will need \$100,000 to pay bills that are owed.

**VOTED:** To authorize the issuance of \$100,00 Bond Anticipation Notes (the “Notes”) of Issuer, which were heretofore authorized by the Issuer on March 11, 2008, such Notes to be dated May 15, 2008.

**VOTED:** To sell said Notes to the purchaser (the “Purchaser”), with the principal amounts, maturities, premium, if any, and interest rates specified on Schedule A, attached hereto and made a part hereof;

VOTED: To issue the Notes in substantially the form set forth in Schedule B, attached hereto and made a part hereof;

VOTED: To authorize the School Board and the Treasurer to sign the Notes or to have said signatures printed in facsimile on the Notes and to have the District seal, if any, affixed thereto;

VOTED; To authorize the Treasurer to deliver the Notes to the Purchaser against payment therefore;

VOTED; To authorize a majority of the School Board and the Treasurer to execute and deliver a Signature and No Litigation Certificate with Receipt, a No Arbitrage and Tax Certificate, a Material Events Disclosure Certificate and IRS Form 8038-G in substantially the form presented to this meeting and such other documents as may be necessary or appropriate To accomplish the sale and delivery of the Notes in accordance with the Foregoing.

VOTED: To authorize the Issuer to act as its own Paying Agent with respect to the notes.

The undersigned further certify that the foregoing resolutions have not been repealed, amended or rescinded

**A motion was made by Peg Bennett and seconded by Nancy Head to authorize incurring expense. All board members voted in favor of the motion and the motion passed unanimously.**

**Policies- 2<sup>ND</sup> Reading** - Pam Dudoff reported on these policies.

Pam Dudoff said all of these policies up to JG had a first reading at the April 3, 2008 meeting. It should be noted above. All of these policies should also have a footer.

Pam said policies JFAA, JEC, JFABD, and JG, NH School Board Association sample policy reviewed, and revised, needs to be deleted. These do not relate to policy.

Pam said recently they reviewed the DFA (Investment) policy at a school board meeting however, we have a current version revise our current policy. The proposed amendment can be done in one meeting.

Pam said EHB (Data Records Retention) had a 1<sup>st</sup> reading November 1, 2007. It is currently on hold because administrators had to review the actual proposal.

Pam said we have a state law to approve the procedure at the time that we approve the policy.

Pam asked if the board was comfortable with these changed policies or does the board want to retain the language as it was. Dwight Brew said the board could adopt the 2<sup>nd</sup> reading and bring amendments back a second time.

**A motion was made by Pam Dudoff and seconded by Peg Bennett to adopt ACE, KED, IKE, JCA, JEC, JFAA, JFABD, JG, EHB, EHB-R. All members voted in favor of the motion, and the motion passed unanimously. (5-0)**

#### **Educational Coaching Model - Plans for Assessment**

#### **VII. DISCUSSION ITEMS**

Nicole Heimarck addressed the board on the Instructional/Content Coaching in our schools. She included handouts with her reporting.

Dr. Mary Jennings said Professional Learning have coaches at Wilkins, Amherst Middle, and Mont Vernon Schools. She said in June there will be presentations on how we are doing in Literacy. Dr. Jennings said we need people to help teach the teacher different ways of teaching.

Coaches vs. Reading Specialists, Gerry St Amand said the coaches lead the teachers. He explained that Reading Specialists also assist in the scheduling of Literacy teachers. They meet with the teacher in SS to instruct children at different reading levels. Gerry said they sit in on meetings. Literacy Coaches are broader on focusing in all contents area. Reading Specialists are not asked to deliver Reading or Literature across the board.

Nicole said ASD is looking to put in a school wide Mathematics Coach. The Coach's focus next year would be AMS grades 5 and 6. The Clark School grades K-1. Nicole said the position will be posted May 18, 2008.

**Calendar Issues-Request for Waiver- Clark-Wilkins fire**

Dr. Mary Jennings had a request for a waiver so the Wilkins School can end the same day as the Clark and Amherst Middle Schools.

Dr. Jennings had written a letter to the Commissioner of Education to request a waiver for the August 30<sup>th</sup> cancellation of school. The Commissioner would like the school board to request waivers. Dr. Jennings said she was coming to the board to see if the board (chair) would be willing to send a letter to the Commissioner.

**Nancy Head made a motion that was seconded by Peg Bennett to have the Chair (Dwight Brew) write a letter to the Commissioner of Education, requesting a waiver for the one fire day for students at Wilkins School. All members voted in favor of the motion and the motion passed unanimously. (5-0)**

**Contingency Planning- 2007-08 Snow Days**

Dr. Mary Jennings addressed the board in asking each of the boards to add minutes to the school day.

Dr. Jennings said SHS is required 175 days of school. If they do not go the 175 days they would have to change graduation day.

Dr. Jennings said she was concerned if we have another flood day or any other reason to close school this would offset graduation set for June 12<sup>th</sup>. Plans have already been made and this would be a problem to have to make up this time.

Pam Dudoff asked about the teachers' contract. Dr. Jennings said there was nothing in the teachers' contract that states how many hours a day teachers work.

**A motion was made by Pam Dudoff and seconded by Rob Graybill to authorize the superintendent, Dr. Mary Jennings to implement extra minutes, should the event present itself. All members voted in favor of the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.(5-0)**

**Policies -1<sup>st</sup> Reading**

Pam Dudoff reported to the board that the instructional policies have been reviewed briefly by Dr. Mary Jennings, and Nicole Heimarck. They have no significant issues, and although we feel comfortable in adopting them, we are also asking the administration to review these more thoroughly over the summer and make any recommendations when they are presented again this fall. This is provisional. The policies should be in place soon.

Dwight Brew said there were not any other topics.

**VIII. OTHER**

Pam Dudoff made a motion. Nancy seconded the motion. All members voted in favor to adjourn. The meeting ended at 9:15.

**IX. ADJOURN**