

1 **Amherst School Board**
2 **August 19, 2014**

3
4 **ATTENDANCE**

5
6 **Amherst School Board**

7 Lucienne Foulks, Amy Facey, James Manning, and Paul Prescott

8
9 **Administrative Team**

10 Peter Warburton, Gerry St. Amand, Porter Dodge, and Meg Beauchamp

11
12 **Minute Taker**

13 Beth Penney

14 **CALL TO ORDER**

15 Ms. Foulks called the meeting to order at 6:36pm.

16 **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

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18 **Principals Reports**

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20 Mr. St. Amand discussed the enrollment numbers as follows:

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22 Pre-K enrollment is 29 students.

23 K enrollment is down by 22 students at currently 90 students.

24 1st grade enrollment is 129 students, which is an increase of 10 students.

25 2nd grade enrollment is 121 students, which is an increase of 6 students.

26 3rd grade enrollment is 114 students, which is a decrease of 4 students.

27 4th grade enrollment is 120 students, which is a decrease of 21 students.

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29 Mr. St. Amand discussed the Kindergarten enrollment. All families who registered before
30 the end of the school year have gotten into an AM slot if they needed it. The school did
31 not get the Kindergarten registration that was expected, but there is still two weeks for
32 people to register.

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34 Ms. Foulks asked about class sizes at each grade level.

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36 Mr. St. Amand stated that 1st grade is 18 or 19 students per class. 2nd grade is 20 or
37 21 students per class. 3rd grade has no new 3rd graders and classes are at 19 students per
38 class. 4th grade has 18 to 21 students per class. The current total enrollment for the year is
39 603 students and 624 students were budgeted for. He will update the board again in
40 September. The schools had 3 more students register today they are included in these
41 numbers.

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43 Mr. Dodge stated that total enrollment at AMS is 645 students and the school budgeted
44 for 644 students. The enrollment is as follows:

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142 students in grade 5.
147 students in grade 6, which is an increase of 5 students.
184 students in grade 7, which is a decrease of 13 students.
172 students in grade 8, which is a decrease of 81 students.
There is a total loss of 39 students from last year.

Mr. Warburton stated that there is an enrollment of 174 students in Mont Vernon and three years ago there were 231 students. The numbers may change in Mont Vernon because there were new parents at the principals gathering yesterday.

Patrick Steenhoek video

Ms. Foulks stated that this is the video shown in the spring for the transition from grade 4 to grade 5. The board watched part of the video and they were very impressed.

Mr. Dodge stated that the video will be put on the website. There will be a video club after school at AMS this year and they will work on updating other videos the school uses.

Social Media/Facebook

Mr. Warburton stated that he, Mr. Dodge, and Mr. Charkin will be going to a conference on Sept. 15th to learn more and will come back to the board with information. There will be an informational Facebook page for both schools soon.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No Public Comment.

CONSENT AGENDA

Ms. Facey made a motion to accept the consent agenda containing the minutes for June 19, 2014, Treasurer’s report for June 2014, Retirement letter, Donation to Clark Student Activities Fund- \$2,801.61 from AJWC, Payment procedures, Leave of Absence request and Budget transfers. Mr. Manning seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous.

INFORMATIONAL

Safe routes to school

Ms. Foulks stated that Rick Katzenberg would come to a future meeting to give an update. They are through phase one and working on phase two of this project.

90 Mr. Warburton stated that they would put this on the agenda for September and have
91 Rick come to the meeting.

92

93 **DISCUSSION ITEMS**

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95 Commitments

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97 Ms. Foulks asked if the board wanted to keep their commitments and continue to do
98 them.

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100 Ms. Facey stated that she would like to discuss the commitments and add or change them.

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102 Mr. Manning stated that these commitments were suppose to be short term along with the
103 strategic planning. Maybe the commitments should transition to follow the commitments
104 that come out of the strategic plan. He recommends reaching out to the other boards to
105 continue to work on the strategic plan commitments.

106

107 Ms. Facey stated that the commitments were good because they kept the board members
108 on task and things were not allowed to fall through the cracks.

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110 Mr. Warburton stated that the commitments kept the board on track.

111

112 The board discussed the commitments they currently have and the strategic planning
113 commitments. The current commitments are covered in the strategic plan, so by
114 continuing them they would ensure the strategic plan and the commitments, keep focus,
115 and add energy. The board discussed involving the other boards to give an aligned focus.
116 They discussed how the reports on the commitments should discuss each of the strategic
117 plans. Or each board member should pick a strategic item and just report on the strategic
118 commitment. The board likes the idea of having a level of accountability. There is no
119 concern that the five prior commitments would get lost because they are all covered
120 within the strategic plan.

121

122 Ms. Foulks stated that at the next meeting the board would discuss which strategic
123 initiative each member would like.

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125 Mr. Warburton stated he would put the topic on the SAU board's agenda for September
126 to have the conversation with the SAU board.

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128 Mr. Manning asked about the cameras and phones.

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130 Ms. Foulks stated that the phones are done and training is this week.

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132 Mr. Dodge and Mr. St. Amand discussed that the camera work has started and cameras
133 have been installed.

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136 **ACTION ITEMS**

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138 **STEM Committee**

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140 Mr. St. Amand stated that many of the administration went to the NH Educator's
141 Conference and were interested in the STEAM/ STEM strand. He passed out some of his
142 notes from the presentations. The presenter was the outreach coordinator for the Boston
143 Museum of Science, Yvonne Spicer. NH is the 4th ranked state for STEAM/ STEM. Ms.
144 Spicer is working with many schools in NH and is looking to connect with other districts.
145 She connected with Nicole and looking to work with her. This should not be an add on
146 for elementary teachers because elementary teachers are great integrators. He discussed
147 science and technology fields, the lack of young women in these fields, and why interest
148 diminishes. STEAM/STEM can be tied into existing curriculum and should not be costly.
149 He discussed some of the activities that were shown and how they could be adapted. For
150 example Penn and Teller: groups analyzed 3 pens for differences, deficits and
151 improvements that could be made. He discussed the connection with the Boston Museum
152 of Science (BMOS) and establishing a team to be trained in STEAM/STEM and then the
153 team would be trainers for the district.

154

155 Mr. Warburton stated that the next step is the partnership with BMOS and SERESC.
156 There will be teams chosen for the 2015/16 school year. He is hoping the district will be
157 chosen for that work.

158

159 Mr. Prescott asked if the district can we have Ms. Spicer come to Amherst. He would like
160 to hire her for this district and the SAU.

161

162 Mr. Dodge said that Ms. Spicer was very clear that she wants schools in NH. There are
163 grants and the Boston Museum of Science offers some things.

164

165 Mr. Warburton stated that this is involvement for the whole year and either way the SAU
166 will get Ms. Spicer to come and the BMOS involved.

167

168 Mr. St. Amand guesses that teachers would be very excited about this opportunity.

169

170 Mr. Warburton stated that he would check with Nicole and if they have information
171 before the next meeting he would send it to the board.

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173 Mr. St. Amand stated that at the conference the Commissioner of Education showed a
174 video of examples of exemplary education in NH and all schools in Amherst were in the
175 video.

176

177 Mr. Dodge discussed the video of Patty and Pam and how excited people were.

178

179 The Board discussed school enrollments over the last 40 years and how in the late 90's
180 enrollments had been dropping. There is no answer to why the enrollments are dropping
181 but this is definitely happening in many districts in New England. They also discussed

182 that what the town supports plays a role in if people move here, like not supporting
183 Cemetery fields

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185 Mr. O'Mara stated that in the next 20 years the population in Amherst is only projected to
186 grow by 200 people.

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188 Ms. Foulks discussed housing and the millennium generation who wants an urban setting.
189
190 The Board discussed people having kids later in life has an impact on school enrollment
191 numbers.

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193 **PRESENTATIONS/REPORTS**

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195 Playground Equipment – Jim O'Mara

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197 Mr. O'Mara discuss that Cemetery Fields will be locked and closed on August 31st. The
198 town has yet to find suitable place for the playground equipment. He presented this
199 proposal to the Board of Selectmen, who approved the idea.

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201 The proposal is to put the two bay swing set and tire swing in the corner of Bean Field.
202 He discussed the location and the area of 40 x 85ft and away from the game fields. They
203 would encourage parking at the Recreation Department and walking to the play area. A
204 picnic table or bench would be added.

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206 The Town of Amherst does not own the fields and the schools own the fields. Jim Miner
207 has been involved in the discussion. This area is 3,400 sq. ft. and 6 inches of engineered
208 wood fiber would be added, which does not splinter and is ADA compliant. He
209 discussed the cost of the project and that the Recreation Department would pay for all of
210 it using the revolving fund. The rental of the fields to third parties has put money in the
211 revolving fund. Mr. O'Mara is here to get permission and the Board of Selectman are in
212 support of this move for the equipment.

213
214 Ms. Facey stated that she worries about lacrosse balls and asked if there is any danger
215 that stray balls would be a concern with little kids.

216
217 Mr. O'Mara stated that the edge of area will be 20 ft. away from the field and the
218 apparatus will be in the middle of the 45x85ft. area. He thinks this is far enough away to
219 be safe.

220
221 Mr. Prescott asked where the idea for this location came from and asked about the
222 equipment for AMS.

223
224 Mr. O'Mara stated that the area is small enough, non-invasive, and fits the pieces of
225 equipment. This is not a substitute for future plans.

226

227 Mr. Manning stated that he can not vote till he walks the area because he coaches
228 lacrosse and is fearful of the speed and distance the balls can go.
229 The board took a recess at 7:40pm to do a site visit.
230
231 The meeting began again at 8:03pm.
232
233 Ms. Foulks asked for a motion.
234
235 **Mr. Manning made a motion to allow the Amherst Recreation Department to**
236 **relocate the playground elements from Cemetery Field to Bean Field number 1 in**
237 **the proposed location provided that Primex conducts an assessment and approves**
238 **the location.**
239
240 The board discussed the risk of lacrosse balls during tournaments. They discussed the old
241 back stops from Cemetery Fields could be put in between the equipment and the fields.
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243 **Mr. Prescott seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous.**
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245 Ms. Foulks asked Mr. O'Mara to touch base with the board after the assessment.
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247 Mr. O'Mara stated that he would report back to Mr. Warburton to share at the next
248 meeting.
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250 The board and O'Mara discussed putting a marker for Sarah Jean Roy.
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252 Mr. O'Mara stated that the family wanted the sign back.
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254 **Action Items Continued**
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256 **DOE/MS25**
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258 Ms. Shankel reminded the board that this is the report to close the books for the district
259 and the SAU. This is the same report but for two different departments. These reports
260 help to set the tax rate in the fall. The budget was 24 million, expenditures did not spend
261 \$200,000 and this is under 1% of the budget. The surplus of \$440,000 is from revenue,
262 including Mont Vernon tuition, which was higher than expected and the LGC money.
263 \$639,681 will be given back to the town this year. There were audit adjustments in prior
264 years. The auditors dissolved a fund and adjusted the Mont Vernon revenue that was
265 recorded in Mont Vernon's books for the wrong year. This was discovered before the
266 MS25 was done. After the audit adjustments there will be \$939,000 given back on the
267 taxes. The revenue will not look good at budget time because of the tax increase
268 compared to this year. The cost per student increased a little to \$18,300 at Clark/Wilkins
269 and to \$16,781 at AMS. The Food service surplus will decrease because of new
270 regulations.
271
272 Ms. Foulks asked about Farm to School.

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274 Ms. Shankel stated that they have submitted an application for Farm to School and this
275 applies more to SHS. Danielle is certified to go to farms and determine if they can serve
276 our schools.
277
278 Ms. Foulks asked if the district could withdraw from the government plan for food
279 service to get around the regulations.
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281 Ms. Shankel stated that yes there is that option, but that would be expensive and not in
282 the best interest of the district.
283
284 **Ms. Facey made a motion to allow the Board and the superintendent to sign the**
285 **DOE and MS25 reports. Mr. Prescott seconded the motion and the vote was**
286 **unanimous.**
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288 Ms. Foulks asked about what the new regulations for food service are and how they are
289 impacting the schools.
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291 The board discussed how the schools could be fined directly for violations.
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293 Mr. Warburton stated that he and Danielle have discussed the new regulations in
294 layman's terms. She should talk to the staff and the board members. She will send
295 something home to let parents know more.
296
297 Mr. Dodge stated that the regulations are more about what the adults do because are not
298 modeling good food behavior.
299
300 Ms. Shankel stated that it would make sense to have a presentation at the SAU board
301 meeting. Ms. Shankel will check with Danielle to see what would work best.
302
303 The board discussed that there needs to be information for the board and for parents. A
304 letter from Danielle was in the registration packet.
305
306 Ms. Shankel stated that as the kids get older there is more regulation.
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308 Professional Nominations
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310 Mr. Warburton stated that these nominations are for the Family Consumer Science
311 position, new Media Specialist, and new pre-K coordinator, which is part-time. The
312 district is in good shape financially. The nominations are all wonderful candidates and he
313 would like to nominate all three.
314
315 Mr. Dodge and Mr. St. Amand stated that they are very happy with all three nominations.
316

317 **Mr. Prescott made a motion to accept the professional nominations as presented by**
318 **superintendent and principals. Ms. Facey seconded the motion and the vote was**
319 **unanimous.**
320 **Mr. Manning made a motion to go into NON-PUBLIC SESSION RSA 91-A:3 II. (a)**
321 **(b) (c) at 8:35pm. Mr. Prescott seconded the motion. The roll call was all yes.**
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