

1 **Amherst School Board**
2 **October 14, 2014**

3
4 **ATTENDANCE**

5
6 Amherst School Board

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

8
9 Administrative Team

10 Peter Warburton, Betty Shankel, 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 6:40pm.

16 **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

17 Principals' reports

18 Mr. St. Amand discussed the after school activities and the fourth grade hike. Mr. Wright
19 and the fourth graders hiked Pack Monadnock recently. Mr. St. Amand discussed
20 questions he asked the students about the hikes and the responses he got. The students
21 seemed pleased with the hike. The first session with First Tee Golf just ended and Mr.
22 St. Amand shared responses from the students about their experiences. There was also a
23 writing program for 3rd and 4th graders. Four students participated and the school got
24 great feed back about the program. It will be offered again in the spring. 3D art is
25 currently happening for 4th graders. Both 3D art and First Tee had waiting lists. Families
26 are asking for more offerings for 1st and 2nd graders.

27 Mr. Dodge discussed volleyball and how well the students are playing. He thanked the
28 board for their support for the B teams and adding volleyball. The other programs are
29 doing very well also including: Chess club (15 students), STEAM academy (25 students),
30 Wizards and Warriors for 7th and 8th, Math Meets, Video editing club, Art club (20
31 students), Yearbook (10 students), Not so Secret Service Club (30 students), Student
32 Council (26 students), Intermural Basketball (45 students), Flag football (60 students),
33 Street Hockey (20 students), and Kickball (6 students). There are also many students
34 participating in B sports.

35 Teacher Leader Effectiveness

36 Mr. St. Amand stated that the administration has done 36 informal observations. The
37 administrative team met and discussed formal observations. They preliminarily
38 discussed doing 10 formal observations per week per administrator. He discussed the
39 time it takes for the observation, to reflect, and ask questions about what was seen when

40 in the classroom. They are working on how long an administrator should observe for.
41 With some staff they will have to be creative in order to do observations because they are
42 not in the classroom. He is excited about the tool.

43 Mr. Dodge stated that the long process is paying off. Mr. Dodge stated that 22
44 observations are done. He stated that having Harry Silver in was great and helped the
45 administrators to really access the corner stones and to determine what to focus on during
46 an observation. The feedback from teachers has been good and teachers are thankful for
47 the feedback. This tool is going to be great and the administration needs to get better at
48 using the tool. He excited to have parameters to focus on. There are 25 members on the
49 Teacher Leader Effectiveness committee who put in tons of hours to choose to use
50 Thoughtful Classroom.

51 Mr. Warburton stated that he has asked every district to come up with its own Teacher
52 Leader Effectiveness program. All districts are using Thoughtful Classroom written by
53 Harvey Silva, which offers important feedback for teachers to get better. A district in
54 Syracuse, NY is in year 3 of using this program. The administration and a few teachers
55 will go visit this district soon. He discussed his excitement about this program.

56 Ms. Facey stated that the schools are still in the pilot phase of the informal observations.
57 This is a 3-week test pilot.

58 Mr. Dodge stated that they were trying a model of 5x2x1: 5 observations a day, for 2
59 days per week. This did not work. The goal would be to do as many as possible and that
60 the administration will be looking at something specific. These are just informal and the
61 formal has a set pattern and is much longer process. Every teacher will have 1-3 formal
62 observations in 3 years based on their year of teaching.

63 Mr. Prescott stated that he was glad to hear that the process is working and is on
64 schedule.

65 Ms. Bennett stated that it was fantastic that the 5th grade open house was modeled after
66 the 4th grade transition. She is excited to hear in November about the Technology
67 Integration. This is very important and will be nice to hear what the teachers are doing
68 with it.

69 Mr. Dodge stated that the technology staff put together 15 ideas to help teachers integrate
70 technology in the classroom. Bruce Chakrin has been offering workshops after school for
71 teachers and administration.

72 Ms. Facey stated that she is looking forward to hearing what AMS will be doing with the
73 outdoor space.

74 Mr. Dodge stated that 8 picnic tables have been purchased. The school has lots of
75 pictures and ideas. Jim Miner and others need to have input. He would love to plant trees

76 for the 40th anniversary. There are two outdoor classrooms and he would like to have a
77 grassy area for the classrooms, and a volleyball court too.

78 Ms. Facey stated that she is the PTA liaison and was present for Foundations. She was
79 very impressed by the program and the teachers did a really good job. The school needs
80 more people to get involved in the PTA, Math and Science Night is coming up and also
81 Teacher Appreciation.

82 Environmental School

83 The 8th graders went to Feery Beach for camp and the 6th graders went to Camp Jewel in
84 Connecticut.

85 Grant Dustin and Beth Chestnut, 6th grade Teachers, introduced their students.

86 Conner and Matthew discussed their experience at camp. Matthew discussed the
87 transition time where the students could go back to the cabins, there was a Mini Zoo, a
88 big slide, a Whiffle Ball stadium, and Basketball Courts. Back at the cabins students
89 would take showers, dry off, warm up, relax, write letters, or read letters from their
90 families. Gaga ball was another favorite, this is like dodge ball but you can only throw at
91 people's feet.

92 Conner discussed the Feel Groups. There was a leader and this was fun educational way
93 to learn about nature and what is around you. They did a 4 hour hike, learned to roast
94 marsh mellows and hotdogs on a fire, and learned about different ferns and trees. He also
95 discussed choice classes, which were one or two classes each afternoon. There were a
96 variety of topics including dissection and nature art. At night they did a night experience
97 to learn how animals see in the dark and "Thursday Night Live" where each Feel Group
98 did a skit.

99 Ms. Foulks discussed Mont Vernon 6th graders going to camp with Amherst 6th graders
100 for the second time.

101 Matthew and Conner discussed how it was good to meet the Mont Vernon students and
102 they were in the cabins, feel groups, and had transition time all together.

103 Ms. Chestnut stated that she was extremely impressed with how the students supported
104 each other during the whiffle ball games at transition time.

105 Emit and Carolyn discussed 8th grade camp.

106 Carolyn discussed the Fairy Beach Ecology School as the best experience she has had at
107 AMS. It was nice to learn about the real world as it is. She discussed the salt marsh and
108 how much life lives there and how it depends on the ecosystem to survive. She learned
109 how everything impacts each other in an ecosystem. She also learned about community

110 through family style dinners, dorms, and learning groups. She got to know her peers in a
111 completely different way. It was good to know all of her peers in a different way. She
112 discussed how community is everything and really important.

113 Emit learned a lot about animal adaptations. He learned a lot about how people live their
114 lives and how that impacts the Earth. He is much more conscious of how much he eats
115 and how much food to take. Farmers and scientists work very hard. He discussed the
116 importance of buying organic food. Each meal had a sponsor where they did skits.
117 These were very informational and inspirational. Some of the sponsors included farmers,
118 decomposers, and composters. This was a great program and he hope all 8th grades at
119 AMS get to go to Fairy Beach.

120 Mr. Prescott asked what was the most fun.

121 Emit stated that transition time, which was 30 minutes between each lesson and 1 hour in
122 the day, where students could go to the beach, cabins, or get food.

123 Carolyn stated that the lessons were the most fun. It was great to have a study group and
124 study group leader. She learned so much and they could laugh and have a good time
125 while learning. The whole thing was so much fun. She discussed spiny cups, braiding
126 hair, and the campfire.

127 Mr. Warburton thanked the students for their very thoughtful sharing of their camp
128 experience.

129 Mr. Dustin extended the invitation to the Board to come to camp for a day or for a couple
130 of days.

131 **PUBLIC COMMENT**

132 No public comment.

133 **Introduction of Ways and Means Committee**

134 Nate Jensen introduced the Ways and Means committee to the board including Mark
135 Vincent, Tedd Landon, Donella (Donni) Hodgkins, Fred Iannelli, Gene Kuczewski,
136 Stephanie Grund, and Claire Bryson (Alternate).

137 **Appointment of SAU #39 Budget Advisory Committee member**

138 Ms. Foulks mentioned that Charlene Carper had agreed to be the ASB Community
139 Member for the SAU Budget Committee

140 **CONSENT AGENDA**

141 Mr. Manning pulled the minutes for September 18th.

142 **Ms. Bennett made a motion to accept the consent agenda containing the minutes for**
143 **September 25, 2014, the Treasurer’s reports for August 2014 and September 2014**
144 **and the Budget transfer. Mr. Prescott seconded the motion and the vote was**
145 **unanimous.**

146 Mr. Manning asked to change line 130: move word should to make as a question and not
147 a statement.

148 Ms. Facey asked to change line 61: remove the “how to discuss” period after increases.

149 **Mr. Manning made a motion to accept the September 18th minutes as amended. Ms.**
150 **Facey seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous.**

151 **PRESENTATIONS/REPORTS**

152 FY15 1st Quarter report

153 Ms. Shankel stated that this is only the expenditures side of the budget because the tax
154 rate has not been set yet. For expenditures there have been a number of rebates from
155 LGC and a savings of 7.5% for the health insurance. This is the first time in a long time
156 health insurance has gone down. The LGC premium holidays are divided between the
157 districts and the employees. She stated that Amherst is looking at a \$400,000 projection
158 in savings and some of this is due to salary and personnel changes, but most is the health
159 insurance. She will share the actual number in November.

160 Ms. Facey discussed the meeting last week for the Teacher Leadership Effectiveness and
161 State Standards Implementation committee. She updated the Board on where they are
162 with the implementation of the observation tool and how the committee has broken into
163 smaller groups to look at the other parts of the program. She will be working on the
164 student growth and achievement component and will report back with more information
165 later. For the state standards the SAU coaches went to a four-day meeting to work to best
166 support the teachers. They will work on long-range goals, planning for Smarter Balance
167 Assessment, and looking at where the schools are with the standards. The K-4 Math
168 program is doing really well because they have been using the Math program for last 2
169 years and 5th-8th grade are doing well also.

170 Mr. Manning asked if the Smarter Balance Assessments are in alignment with the Math
171 Program.

172 Ms. Facey stated that K-4th grade is working above the standards and yes the Math
173 Program is aligned with the Smarter Balance Assessment. There is no teaching to the test
174 because the program is aligned. Math coaches are working with a business to learn to
175 better work with the teachers. David Pooke will be at the schools next week and in
176 March to work on the writing standards. Randy Clarke will be working with people in
177 the SAU this week to continue to align and improve the program.

178 Ms. Bennett stated that she is excited that the other work has started for the Teacher
179 Leader Effectiveness Program.

180 Ms. Facey stated that the timeline for the components is to have some decisions by the
181 end of the year, except for the Student and Achievement component because of its
182 complexity. It is complex because the committee needs to investigate all components.
183 They are looking at target growth for a student with in a grade level and in a subject area.

184 Mr. Warburton and the Board discussed Learning Objectives and how those are
185 individualized per teacher or within groups of teachers.

186 Ms. Facey stated that she has been looking at the research. This will be 20% of the
187 teacher evaluation.

188 FY16 Budget Assumptions

189 Ms. Shankel discussed the revenues including Title 1 decreasing, Title 2A decreasing and
190 decreasing in flexibility of how the money is spent, and the IDEA is remaining the same.
191 The State AID will assume the FY15 amount (based on June 30th enrollment numbers).
192 Catastrophic and Medicaid projections will be based on the current year expenditures and
193 paid out at about 75%. The Unreserved Fund Balance will use 1% of the budget and
194 adjust it in December. They will attempt to have savings in FY15 to increase the
195 unreserved fund balance, which is the amount returned to the taxpayers.

196 Ms. Shankel discussed enrollments of 620 students at Clark/Wilkins and 614 students at
197 AMS. She discussed historical staffing and enrollments since FY07, which was the height
198 of enrollments. Every year the Amherst School Board has reduced staffing to match the
199 decreasing enrollment as shown in the presentation. She discussed class size as in the
200 presentation.

201 Ms. Shankel discussed staffing benefits. She discussed historical trends in Health Care,
202 which is over 14% of the budget. The insurance company did not give a guaranteed
203 maximum yet and so will the budget will assume 5%. They will have the guaranteed
204 maximum by next meeting. By April the Health Insurance will have the confirmation of
205 what the actual increase will be. Historically Health insurance has large increases and this
206 year there was a decrease. She discussed how the district has done cost containment for
207 health insurance as shown in the presentation.

208 Mr. Manning asked what percentage of employees are enrolled in the high deductible
209 HSA.

210 Ms. Shankel stated that a very small number of employees have the HAS and Human
211 Resources has numbers on the Compass Program.

212 Mr. Manning asked what the incentive to use the Compass Program is.

213 Ms. Shankel stated that the employees are sent a check if they use the Compass Program
214 to use services at a competitive rate. She explained how the use of the compass program
215 would decrease the health insurance rates. She discussed how employees are educated
216 about these programs.

217 Ms. Shankel discussed NH retirement. The non-certified teacher NH retirement will
218 increase by 11.67% for FY16 and FY17. This cost is 0.7% of the budget. She discussed
219 how in FY07 the state shifted their portion of the 35% of costs to the towns and school
220 districts. The NH retirement for certified staff will increase by 15.67% and is 5.6% of the
221 budget. These costs have had a large impact on the budgets increasing with out the
222 districts having control.

223 Ms. Shankel stated that the AEA is in the 2nd year of a 2-year agreement. The ASSA is
224 currently negotiating an agreement. Any new hire will start at MA Step 5 or \$51,935.
225 She discussed ECI increase of 2.5% and the CPI-U increase of 1.3% and 1.4%, which is
226 very similar to the last few years. The electricity will have a 3% increase and fuel oil will
227 be budgeted at \$3.50/gallon. Natural Gas for FY16 will be budgeted at 0.87/therm. She
228 discussed the savings of using Natural Gas until the last two years because of increasing
229 costs for the Natural Gas, but it is still cheaper than fuel oil.

230 She discussed operations and the projects for FY15 for Clark as in the presentation. She
231 discussed what Clark is looking at in FY16 including the expansion of four classrooms
232 for Kindergarten, repairs, and renovations as in the presentation. She discussed FY15
233 projects completed at Wilkins and the projects for FY16 including septic system
234 inspection and upgrade, tile overlay, restroom renovations, lighting upgrades and more as
235 in the presentation. The schools are in very good condition so there are few large jobs.
236 She discussed projects at AMS from FY15 and projects for FY16 including front grounds
237 design and installation, gym upgrades, sealcoat parking lot, replace the front walk way
238 and energy ways, light upgrades, and more as in the presentation.

239 Mr. Prescott and Mr. Dodge discussed playground options at AMS. The goal would be to
240 have something for the children and will have someone in to get advice for that.

241 Ms. Shankel stated that for transportation there has been a 1-year extension with
242 decreased sized buses, 2 additional buses for athletics, and accommodate hours based
243 calendar. The new RFP opened Oct. 9th and have had a much better response. She got 2
244 bids for Special Education transportation and 1 bid for the regular transportation bid. The
245 competition at the pre-bid meeting helped to get better bids.

246 Ms. Bennett stated that the one-year extension was at a 2.7% increase. What was the
247 increase in costs before?

248 Ms. Shankel stated that the increase was 2.7% and the special education extension was
249 with a zero percent increase. The district always bids out with Milford to keep the prices
250 low.

251 Ms. Shankel stated that the food service is self-supporting and they continue to meet
252 USDA compliance. The food service will not see much of a surplus this year because of
253 the new regulations. The reauthorization of the regulations will be in 2015 and the
254 USDA is getting a lot of heat because many cafeterias cannot break even and comply
255 with the regulations. She is hoping for a reduction of regulations.

256 Ms. Shankel discussed technology initiatives, infrastructure, replacement programs,
257 Smarter Balance Assessment requirements and communication needs as in the
258 presentation. She discussed the initiatives including the implementation of full day
259 kindergarten for all students.

260 Mr. Warburton stated that the Board had discussed full day kindergarten last year. There
261 will be presentations over the next few months to show the the research and benefits of
262 full day kindergarten.

263 Ms. Shankel discussed other initiatives including World Language instruction for
264 elementary students, implementation of teacher leadership effectiveness, college and
265 career standards, STEAM, and the Common Model at AMS.

266 Ms. Shankel explained the Facility Maintenance Trust, which has \$97,203 and the
267 Educating Students with Disabilities Trust, which they will continue to add \$50,000 per
268 year until it reaches \$200,000. In November Draft 1 will be presented, the
269 subcommittees will meet in November and December. January 7th will be the Final
270 Budget, January 14th is the Public Hearing, February 3rd is the Deliberative Session and
271 March 10th is the district vote. The Deliberative is a Tuesday night.

272 Ms. Bennett stated that she likes how there are budget revisions and not multiple drafts.
273 She asked about the expanding to four classrooms for kindergarten.

274 Mr. St. Amand stated that the rooms in the front of building and one in the back are not
275 the right size for Kindergarten. The expectation is that the school will see an increase in
276 students for next year because more students would attend for full day Kindergarten. He
277 also discussed the addition of air conditioning to several of the rooms.

278 The Ways and Means asked if there would be teacher and staffing reductions this year.

279 Ms. Shankel stated that they would need to look at enrollment and staffing based on the
280 expansion of Kindergarten. The decision will be based on enrollment.

281 The Ways and Means committee discussed the student to teacher ratio.

282 Ms. Shankel will get those numbers for the Board and the Ways and Means because it is
283 not comparing apples to apples. Certified staff include people like the nurse, which will
284 not go away even if the enrollment decreases.

285 The Ways and Means asked about the benefits of full day Kindergarten.

286 Mr. Warburton discussed that by law they have to offer Kindergarten, but students do not
287 have to attend. Research shows that there is a benefit to the student through the entire
288 length of their education and it is cost effective also.

289 Ms. Shankel stated that full day Kindergarten can increase home sales.

290 The Board thanked Ms. Shankel for the presentation.

291 Mr. Warburton stated that the new regulations and standards for Nutrition are on the
292 school websites. There is a good FAQs document that the nutrition director has put
293 together. There is also information about the virus coming into NH and FAQs from
294 NHHS. The schools are looking at making Face Book pages for all of the schools to push
295 information to parents more quickly. They are thinking about Twitter also, but this will
296 not start yet.

297 **ACTION ITEM**

298 **Policy KEB**

299 Mr. Warburton stated that SHS and Mont Vernon have approved this policy.

300 The Board discussed the word changes and that the complaints about the superintendent
301 go to the SAU Board.

302 Ms. Foulks explained the new policy KEB and that it involves complaints about school
303 matters, employees, and administration.

304 Mr. Prescott emphasized that there is a proper channel for complaints and grievances
305 starting with the Teacher, Principal, Superintendent, and then the School Board.

306 Mr. Warburton clarified part 4, which explains complaints about the Superintendent.

307 Mr. Manning stated that at the start of the next year the school should have a little
308 campaign, “Its as Easy as 1,2,3,4”. It can go out in a fun way to parents and families.

309 Mr. Warburton stated that the Board should lead by example and promote the proper
310 channels. They have one voice as a board, but individually each member has no decision
311 making power.

312 The Board discussed that they still want people to talk to them, but want the public to
313 know the proper chain of command. This could go in the student handbook as a
314 procedure.

315 **Ms. Bennett made a motion to accept the Policy KEB as written. Mr. Manning**
316 **seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous.**

317 ASB Recreation Department Committee Request

318 Ms. Foulks explained that this committee is being formed to have a discussion about
319 town space and how to use it.

320 The Board discussed the needs of the town and how this committee would be to work
321 together to optimize what the town has. The Board discussed including the clubs that use
322 the space and take on part of what recreation does. The committee will do an inventory
323 first before looking at the needs of the community. There is energy and interest in the
324 community to move forward and want to do it in a mindful way. The clubs are exploring
325 options also and it would be useful to have them be part of the conversation. These clubs
326 are filing some of the recreational needs of the community. There are groups out there
327 that are looking to raise money and it makes sense to have information and data from as
328 many places as possible. This may not happen at the beginning.

329 Ms. Foulks will speak to the other departments and then report back to the Board.

330 Committee Assignments

331 Ms. Shankel would like the committee assignments so the meetings for Board and Ways
332 and Ways and Means can be set-up.

- 333 School Nutrition - Foulks
- 334 Transportation - Facey
- 335 Special Instructional Services - Bennett
- 336 AMS - Manning
- 337 Clark/ Wilkins - Prescott
- 338 Building and Grounds -Bennett
- 339 Curriculum and Professional Development - Facey
- 340 Technology - Prescott
- 341 [OBJ]

342 Ms. Foulks stated that the Board is going to take a recess to look at lighting in the tennis
343 courts AMS to put in an ice rink this winter. The new recreation director has done this in
344 another town and it has worked with great success. The Recreation Department or the
345 Amherst School Board will not fund this project. Some people in town will fund the
346 project. Mr. Miner, the recreation director and the people funding the project will be
347 there.[OBJ]

348
349 The Board took the Recess at 9:05pm.

350 [OBJ][OBJ]

351
352

353