

1 **Amherst School Board Public Hearing**

2 February 19th, 2015

3 **ATTENDANCE**

4
5 Amherst School Board

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

7
8 Administrative Team

9 Peter Warburton, Gerry St. Amand, and Pam Groves

10
11 Minute Taker

12 Beth Penney

13 **CALL TO ORDER**

14 Ms. Foulks called the meeting to order at 6:30pm.

15 **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

16 Principals' reports

17 Ms. Facey stated that she has questions for Mr. Dodge but she will wait till next month.
18 She asked the principals to think about how it can be ensured that I39 is being used
19 consistently and if it could be an artifact used for Thoughtful Classroom.

20 Mr. St. Amand stated that questions have come up and a conversation is happening at the
21 building level. He can bring information from the teachers and feedback from families
22 about I39.

23 Ms. Facey asked how I39 going for teachers, if they need support, and if it easy to keep
24 I39 up to date.

25 Ms. Foulks stated that in strategic planning they hope to use more capabilities of I39.

26 Ms. Facey stated at the next Teacher Leadership Committee meeting they will be
27 discussing incorporating I39 as an artifact.

28 Mr. Warburton discussed an example in 4th grade of how I39 is being used and they will
29 have something for next meeting to show the Board.

30 Mr. Manning asked about the administrative package and what capabilities does it have
31 to show what percentage of teachers access I39 regularly.

32 Mr. St. Amand stated that no they do not easily have access to that, but have asked for
33 that capability. Administration can see teacher's pages but would have to go to every
34 teacher's page to determine when it was last updated.

35 Mr. Prescott discussed the development of I39 to meet this need specifically and how

36 challenging it is.

37 Mr. Manning asked if the schools are invested in this tool is this a function we want.

38 Mr. St. Amand stated that the staff knows that administration can access their pages. The
39 teachers concern is how often are parents and kids using I39. Teachers are still sending
40 weekly email with a link for the I39 page. Teachers can access which kids have accessed
41 I39 and when. Teachers are required to post homework on I39 and some have gone above
42 and beyond that. The schools are still wrestling with I39 as a tool, because they are still
43 getting emails from parents asking what the homework is.

44 Mr. Warburton stated they would give the Board a mini presentation about I39 with Mr.
45 Charkin and some teachers

46 Mr. Prescott stated that at AMS it is a requirement that AMS teachers put homework on
47 I39 and they have discussed before about how to ensure this and have accountability.
48 The Board should discuss I39 next month.

49 Michelle Emmond stated that if you are teaching Math there is a daily input for
50 homework, but Language Arts may only meet a few days per week. The daily use may
51 not happen by certain teachers but consistently updating does.

52 Ms. Bennett stated that some boards members should participate in the Eagle Block on
53 the 12th and 13th.

54 Ms. Facey and Ms. Bennett stated that they are planning on going.

55 Mr. Prescott stated that the AMS cheerleaders won the state championship. They did
56 extremely well and were a lot of fun to watch.

57 Ms. Facey discussed other students who received awards for Art.

58 Pam Groves stated that five students received the Gold Key Award and one student got a
59 Honorable Mention. She read the names of the students and what the awards were for.
60 All of the artwork is in the foyer at AMS.

61 Cam, 8th grade student, discussed his award-winning picture of the Grand Tetons,
62 Wyoming.

63 The Board and Cam discussed how the picture was taken and Cam's artistic eye. Cam
64 also used Photoshop after taking the picture on his Dad's iPhone.

65 Student presentations

66 Michelle Emmond stated that this was an exciting year for the 6th grade. They are not
67 doing the Wells Speaking Contest during the school day any longer and it is now an after
68 school program. In place of the Wells Speaking Contest, there is a large poetry unit. All
69 students recited poems out loud and every teacher also recited poetry. All three 6th grade

70 teams are represented tonight.

71 Four students recited their poems to the Board.

72 The Board discussed how impressed they were by the students and their recital of the
73 poems.

74 Ms. Bennett asked about the email from Rachel at the Currier and asked if they were the
75 same kids who won the awards.

76 The Board discussed the hard and impressive work of the kids.

77 **PUBLIC COMMENT**

78 No public present.

79 **CONSENT AGENDA**

80 Ms. Bennett pulled the budget transfer for the Math program evaluation.

81 Ms. Bennett asked if the Board felt they have had enough time to discuss this and if there
82 were questions.

83 Ms. Facey stated that she had a conversation with Ms. Landwehrle today about it. Her
84 understanding is that while NWEA is not Common Core aligned and breaks out into the
85 different strands, they will be able to map the results to those components in the Common
86 Core so that the evaluation will make sense. They feel they will be able to do a good job
87 by breaking the data into strands. She discussed the end of the year test done for the last
88 three years and that the data cannot be used because the data is not statistically valued.
89 Ms. Landwehrle and Ms. Heimarck could do the end of the year analysis with support so
90 the school could see how students have done over past three years K-8.

91 Ms. Bennett asked how we could analyze the data but the others cannot.

92 Ms. Facey stated that they could but won't because there was not a stability test. She
93 cannot explain the reasoning well.

94 The Board and Mr. Warburton discussed if they can wait on this transfer and asked if the
95 company doing the Math Program Evaluation are the people the SAU want to do this
96 work. They determined that yes they are very competent and flexible.

97 Mr. Warburton discussed how he feels strongly that this evaluation will help get the
98 information the Board needs and be flexible enough to answer the Board's questions.

99 Ms. Facey discussed whether NWEA would be able to test the Math Program and it will
100 be able to be used.

101 Mr. Warburton discussed the presentation about NWEA reporting at the Mont Vernon
102 meeting and how incredible the information available is.

103 Ms. Bennett stated that the Mont Vernon Board was impressed by the new capabilities in
104 the NWEA reporting.

105 Ms. Facey stated that the district would have to wait three years to do an evaluation using
106 the SBAC results.

107 Mr. Manning asked if NWEA and SBAC are aligned.

108 Ms. Facey and Mr. Manning discussed how the tests are not aligned, but that the strands
109 in NWEA can be used to evaluate the Math Program.

110 The Board and Mr. Warburton discussed the group hired to do the evaluation of the Math
111 Program.

112 Ms. Bennett thought the cost was \$15,000, but the transfer is only for \$12,000.

113 Ms. Foulks stated that \$15,000 was a maximum cost.

114 **Mr. Prescott made a motion to accept the Consent Agenda containing the Minutes**
115 **for January 6, 2015 and January 14, 2015, Treasurer's report for December 2014,**
116 **Donation to Food Service - \$500 from LaBelle Winery, Donation to Student**
117 **Activities- \$200 from Peter F. Wells & Sally W. Crawford, Resignation letter,**
118 **Budget transfers 2015-07 and 2015-08 – Math Program evaluation. Mr. Manning**
119 **seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous.**

120 **PRESENTATIONS/REPORTS**

121 Finance manual

122 Ms. Foulks stated that they would table this till March because they were unsure if the
123 meeting tonight would be on TV.

124 **DISCUSSION ITEMS**

125 Review of Deliberative Session

126 Mr. Prescott stated that the deliberative went better than the Public Hearing. The meeting
127 the Board had in between to review was important to make the changes made in the
128 presentation. He stated that the meeting in between was very helpful when presenting the
129 revenue. The whole thing went smoother, but there are questions and issues to address
130 with the administration like the cost per pupil. He would like to know how the state
131 determines the cost per pupil and internally what makes the cost per pupil. He would like
132 a presentation at a meeting and then put the information on the SAU website. This will

133 send a clearer message. He was glad to see so many people at the deliberative and that
134 they had an involved conversation and debate for Full Day Kindergarten. There was very
135 positive comments made and support of full day Kindergarten, but it was also good to
136 hear other viewpoints as well.

137 Ms. Bennett asked if the cost per pupil is on the agenda for March.

138 Ms. Foulks stated that she would add it to the agenda.

139 Mr. Manning stated the deliberative session on a whole went great. The amount of time
140 from the Public Hearing to the Deliberative Session there was a great amount of
141 information, data, and numbers presented. The Board has to address some things to
142 know if they are valid or not. The Board made the message clear and the case for full day
143 Kindergarten. Everyone did a great job and he thanked Ms. Foulks and Mr. Warburton.

144 Ms. Bennett stated that it was great to meet after the Public Hearing because the Board to
145 answer the public's questions to strengthened the presentation.

146 Mr. Warburton stated that the dedication and effort of the Board was impressive. He also
147 thanked Ms. Shankel for her hard work.

148 Mr. Manning stated that because of SB2 they have to do a deliberative. There were still
149 only 42 people. He wondered how to go beyond to make the budget presentation get out
150 the word. He wondered if the Board should be using other venues for the presentation and
151 using videos.

152 Ms. Bennett stated that they could take the presentation and give it to groups in town or a
153 portion of the presentation.

154 Mr. Warburton discussed the benefits of live streaming and that presentation would be
155 available. If the Board presented in smaller settings the Board and Administration could
156 answer questions.

157 Mr. Prescott stated that he likes the idea of pre recording videos.

158 Mr. Brew stated that the Selectman reached out to other clubs in town with a one-page
159 handout and answered questions. This has worked well.

160 Ms. Facey stated that it is important to get information out there and the Board always
161 welcomes feedback. Getting feedback from more people would be important as well.

162 Mr. Warburton stated that the SAU would soon be putting times and dates out for
163 Strategic Planning meetings. He asked Board members to come if they can to some of
164 the meetings. Mr. Warburton stated that he is presenting to the staff first and he presented
165 to the Mont Vernon staff yesterday. He has already gotten some feedback. He will bring
166 the feedback from all of the meetings to the Board.

167 Mr. Warburton and the Board discussed Strategic Planning next steps and involving the

168 community.

169 **ACTION ITEM**

170 2015-16/2016-17 School Year District Calendars

171 Ms. Foulks stated that this has been postponed after the SAU meeting because there are a
172 few small things that need to be changed.

173 Mr. Warburton stated that they are going with a 2-year calendar and the calendar needs
174 small changes. The calendar will be in the packet next month.

175 Mr. Manning stated that this year kids have a much longer summer. He wondered if
176 there is a plan at a SAU level to access how a longer summer is affecting academic
177 performance and parents and the community. This year the summer is June 15th –
178 September 7th.

179 Mr. Warburton stated that the administration is in the beginning phases of discussing that.
180 It is data that the SAU wants.

181 Ms. Foulks stated that this is the first year and first experience. People are wondering
182 how it will be and that is to be expected the first time.

183 Mr. Manning stated that this is his critique of schools. Schools in general do not adopt
184 modern management practices to be come more efficient. When they initiate a new
185 thing, schools need to access if it works or does not work. He would like to access or
186 measure the impact of the change in the calendar for the students, community, and
187 academics.

188 Ms. Foulks and Mr. Warburton agreed.

189 Ms. Foulks stated that this change was after a tremendous amount of work, research, and
190 feedback before the calendar change was taken to all of the collective bargaining
191 agreements. This took years to make this change.

192 Ms. Bennett stated that they also have a late labor day the next two years so the summers
193 will feel especially long.

194 Mr. Warburton discussed the importance to access the change. He discussed that the
195 calendar was on the agenda when he was hired. He discussed what other schools are
196 doing, opportunities for kids, how to collect feedback, and evaluating the new calendar.

197 Ms. Bennett stated that she discussed worry over what kids are going to lose over the
198 summer so it is worth some discussion.

199 Addendum to the Recreation Lease

200 Ms. Foulks stated that the Amherst School District owns property on Baboosic Lake

201 Road. There is a lease agreement for all of the properties the town owns and this is an
202 addendum to the agreement to add this property. This addendum would allow the
203 property to be leased to the town.

204 Ms. Facey asked why the district is doing this.

205 Ms. Foulks stated that the property is currently not being used and it maybe a opportunity
206 for recreation to happen on that property and help to determine what could be done with
207 the property.

208 Ms. Bennett stated that improvements could not be made to the property by the town
209 unless the property is part of the agreement.

210 Ms. Foulks stated that there is an extensive trail network in town and this may allow for
211 opportunity to connect to that network.

212 Mr. Manning stated that the town gets use of the land, because the Board is not going to
213 build school on it.

214 **Ms. Facey made a motion to accept the addendum and add the property to the lease**
215 **agreement. Mr. Manning seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous.**

216 The Board discussed the great work of the new Recreation Director.

217 **Mr. Prescott made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:28pm. Ms. Facey seconded**
218 **the motion and the vote was unanimous.**