

1 Amherst School Board
2 Thursday, September 17, 2015
3 Meeting Minutes

4 Attendees:

5 Administrative Team: Peter Warburton- Superintendent, Betty Shankel – Business
6 Administrator, Gerry St. Amand- Principal Clark/Wilkins School, Porter Dodge-Principal AMS,
7 Bethany Bernasconi - Assistant Principal AMS, Brad Freeman- Teacher AMS Danielle
8 Service- Teacher AMS, Steve Opre- Teacher AMS

9 Amherst School Board: Lucienne Foulks- Chair, Amy Facey- Vice President (arrived at 6:52),
10 Peg Bennett – Secretary, Paul Prescott

11 Minute Taker: Danae Marotta

12 Public: Mike Akillian- 10 Old Mont Vernon Road, Amherst NH

13 I. CALL TO ORDER

14 **Ms. Lucienne Foulks called the meeting to order at 6:05pm**

15 Ms. Peg Bennett asked for clarification on the Maker Space.

16 Mr. Porter Dodge discussed Maker Space as a movement and an opportunity for the community
17 and students to collaborate and to use the facility and tools within AMS. He then introduced Mr.
18 Brad Freeman to elaborate further on the Maker Space.

19 Mr. Brad Freeman also discussed the Maker Space, where people gather to build things. He
20 added that parents would be working with students, and building things such as robots, or fixing
21 things.

22 The Board thanked Mr. Brad Freeman

23 Ms. Lucienne Foulks also thanked Mr. Brad Freeman for streaming the Amherst School Board
24 meeting and that it is an improvement. She also stated that getting the meetings available and
25 accessible to the public is a priority.

26 Mr. Peter Warburton asked Mr. Freeman if there is a schedule on how to watch the meetings on
27 the SAU website.

28 Mr. Freeman stated yes, it is accessible for the public to view from anywhere. Discussion
29 continued.

30 Mr. Peter Warburton thanked Mr. Freeman.

31 Ms. Peg Bennett asked Mr. Gerry St. Armand what is the projected enrollment for the
32 Clark/Wilkins school.

33 Mr. Gerry St. Armand stated that 620 is the projected number.

34 II. ANNOUNCEMENTS

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36 A. Principals' reports

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38 Ms. Lucienne Foulks asked the Board if they had any more questions on the Principals Reports.

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40 There were no other questions.

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42 Mr. Porter Dodge then discussed that Ms. Patty Wons left to take a Principals position in
43 Windham, NH. He then introduced Ms. Bethany Bernasconi is the new AMS Vice- Principal.

44 Mr. Porter Dodge then discussed her education and qualifications.

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46 Ms. Lucienne Foulks welcomed Ms. Bethany Bernasconi.

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48 Ms. Bethany Bernasconi stated that great things are happening in the classrooms. She also stated
49 that the AMS is moving forward and welcomed Mr. Steve Opre into a new position as a teacher
50 in the innovation lab. She discussed that he has a background in engineering and has taught
51 math.

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53 Mr. Steve Opre stated that he is a teacher in the innovation lab. He stated that he has 140
54 students, comprised of 5-8th graders. He then discussed his metal designs, and his usage of CAD.
55 Discussion continued.

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57 Mr. Steve Opre stated that he has projects for his students to work on beginning with learning
58 about electric. He was more specific and would like to teach the students how to build a circuit.
59 He stated that is low voltage 9v so it is safe for students to practice on. He discussed that he has
60 some other projects that are inexpensive and fun for the students.

61

62 Ms. Bethany Bernasconi stated that this is great experience for students to have access to now
63 and not in the future. She stated that it draws excitement from the students and are opening doors
64 for students that might not have the opportunity.

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66 Ms. Lucienne Foulks stated that this is great for the younger students to have this opportunity.

67

68 Mr. Steve Opre then discussed the project he has for the 7th and 8th graders. He described putting
69 LED lights in a hat and backpack and feels that the kids will really enjoy it. He is excited about
70 his new position and looks forward to teaching kids about design and collaboration.

71

72 Mr. Steve Opre stated that next year that he would like to build a trebuchet, on a smaller scale,
73 teach the kids about water, wind and solar power. He also discussed having the students direct

74 themselves to fix real world issues. He discussed that he has a short amount of time to work with
75 the students as a group and wants to do as much as he can.

76
77 Mr. Paul Prescott stated that the Board has talked in the past about finding teachers that are
78 inspire kids to learn and that it is happening with Mr. Steve Opre.

79
80 Mr. Steve Opre asked the Board if he and some students can come in December and present the
81 Board with their projects. He added that he would like to be on the agenda.

82
83 Ms. Lucienne Foulks stated that would be great and the Board would be happy to see their
84 projects.

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86 The Board and Mr. Peter Warburton thanked Mr. Steve Opre

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88 B. Committee reports

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91 III. PUBLIC COMMENT

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93 None

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95 IV. CONSENT AGENDA

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97 **Mr. Paul Prescott made a motion to accept consent agenda items A. minutes from June**
98 **18th, 2015 and B. August 2015 Treasurer's Report, Ms. Peg Bennett seconded, the motion**
99 **passed.**

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101 Ms. Peg Bennett stated that she had taken the minutes at the last meeting.

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104 V. PRESENTATIONS/REPORTS

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106 A. Citizens Group

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108 Mr. Mike Akillian discussed his involvement in the group Working for Great Schools, and
109 thanked the Board for their time at the August 27th School Board Meeting.

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111 He discussed the Working for Great Schools' website www.greatschools4us.org

112
113 Mr. Akillian discussed how the Working for Great School's concerns fall into two categories.
114 The effectiveness of education and using the taxpayers' money more efficiently.

115
116 Mr. Akillian discussed the importance of enhancing STEM (science, technology, engineering
117 and math) outcomes for Amherst students.

118
119 He then detailed his chart showing average NECAP scores in Amherst and surrounding towns,
120 Bedford, Hollis, Merrimack, and Milford and the State of NH. He stated that there is a decline

121 throughout the K-12 cycle. He then asked the Board what set of goals do they have in mind, and
122 that he is looking for quantifiable metrics for the next five years.

123
124 He then discussed the Citizen Groups' role in the Cost per Pupil discussion. He stated that the
125 trends show that the tax dollar amount is going up. He discussed his total 5 year Cost per Pupil
126 spending by schools of surrounding towns.

127
128 He then discussed that he has looked that the staffing and the collective bargaining agreements.
129 Mr. Akillian then stated that the Amherst elementary and middle schools appear to be staffed at
130 somewhat comparable levels to other comparable schools.

131
132 Mr. Akillian then stated that he has specific cost related questions to the Board beginning with
133 collective bargaining agreements and their impact on overall spending. He then asked the Board
134 what spending targets they are planning for the future.

135
136 Mr. Paul Prescott thanked Mr. Akillian for the great presentation and his effort.

137
138 Mr. Paul Prescott stated that he was interested in the trends that were presented and is looking
139 forward to this presentation in the budget season. He stated that this informs the public and helps
140 the public make informed decisions during voting season. He also stated that the Amherst school
141 budget has decreased and yet still delivers great education.

142
143 Mr. Akillian stated his concern with doing things the same way. He would like the Board to help
144 them understand activities such as Maker Space at AMS. His interim goal is to be more like
145 Bedford and Hollis with higher outcomes for lower dollars. He adds that he cannot see why
146 Amherst schools cannot be number one or two in the State in five years or four years. He would
147 like to find new ways of addressing these issues.

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149 Ms. Lucienne Foulks stated that there are always new ways of doing things and that the Board
150 has developed a Strategic Goal. She stated that she sees a place for Mr. Mike Akillian and his
151 committee, and their voice. She also stated that Amherst is a well-educated citizen group and
152 would like to tap into that resource. Ms. Foulks also stated that she would like to know that
153 everyone is being heard.

154
155 Ms. Lucienne Foulks stated that she is looking forward to the Citizen Group's help and
156 collaboration. She stated that she will respectfully disagree with his findings.

157
158 She also stated that Ms. Christine Landwehrle the Director of Curriculum and Professional
159 Development will be here to give a presentation about the Literacy Institute but she is not at
160 tonight's meeting.

161
162 Mr. Peter Warburton stated that Strategic Plan will be mailed to the residents of Mont Vernon
163 and Amherst on September the 28th and they will receive the information on the 29th or the 30th.
164 He stated that it will be good to have public input.

165

166 Mr. Akillian stated that he would like to support the operating plan for FY' 17. He then stated
167 that there is room for the Citizen Group to learn about the Board spending.

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169 Ms. Lucienne Foulks stated that she thinks it's essential that the Board articulate their spending
170 and does not like the negative business as usual approach.

171
172 The Board and Mr. Peter Warburton thanked Mr. Mike Akillian.

173
174 Ms. Peg Bennett stated that this isn't the first time community members have been involved.
175 And there has been a lot of community involvement in the past.

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177 VI. DISCUSSION ITEMS

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179 A. Sabbatical request

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181 Ms. Danielle Service would like to request a sabbatical from the Board to begin January 2016
182 and attend SNHU's Low Residency Program in Fiction and Non-fiction. She stated that her
183 focus is Teacher Lore and Common Core. She stated her end result is writing a book.

184
185 Mr. Peter Warburton stated that this is the first time the Board has seen a request of this type and
186 that the Board has until January to make a decision. He stated that he and the Board would like to
187 review the request and to add Ms. Service's sabbatical proposal to the October 2015 ASB
188 agenda.

189
190 Ms. Service stated that she would like one year time. She also discussed that low residency
191 required.

192
193 Ms. Lucienne Foulks stated that the Board will read her proposal and have her come back in
194 October for more questions and discussion.

195
196 Ms. Peg Bennett asked Ms. Service what would happen if the Board didn't approve her request.

197
198 Mr. Service stated that she will still continue with the program and write her book.

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200 VII. INFORMATIONAL

201 B. Full Day Kindergarten

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203 Mr. Gerry St. Armand discussed the Full Day Kindergarten Regular Budget Proposal for the FY
204 16'- 17' School Year. He stated that they are committed to bringing forward this proposal and
205 that it is a priority.

206
207 He discussed the need to implement full day kindergarten, how the budget will be impacted with
208 the implementation of full day kindergarten, and what curriculum work has already been
209 completed. He is optimistic that any additional professional development will be grant funded.
210 He then stated that Full Day Kindergarten should be made available to all students not just a
211 select few.

212
213 Mr. St Armand then discussed the SAU 39 Early Childhood Program Vision Statement and the 5
214 bulleted areas of learning that they are working on (1. approaches to learning-promoting student
215 engagement, motivation and participation, 2. social emotional development- fostering student
216 self-direction and self-regulation, 3. health, wellness and physical development, 4.creative arts,
217 expression and play based learning- explore and discover, and 5.literacy, mathematics and
218 scientific thinking experiences- an integrated, inquiry based, multi- disciplinary approach)
219
220 He also stated that STEM has a connection at the early stages but in play.
221
222 He stated that he is optimistic and committed to full-day Kindergarten. He also stated that there
223 are many Amherst families that support this as well.
224
225 Mr. Paul Prescott then asked Mr. St. Armand if it would be feasible to set quantifiable goals and
226 if not right away when would you be able to set those goals so the Board can see if those goals if
227 the full day kindergarten is molding students in the direction they want them to go.
228
229 Mr. St Armand stated, yes, there can be quantifiable goals. He then described that the number of
230 students needing tier two interventions in reading and math in first grade would decrease and that
231 overall scores increase.
232
233 Mr. Paul Prescott then asked Mr. St Armand if he would explain the different interventions that
234 are offered.
235
236 Mr. St Armand then reminded the public about the three different tier interventions. He stated
237 that tier one intervention is something that all students receive that from a regular teacher, tier
238 two involves instruction from a secondary person or a regular education teacher for an extended
239 period of time for more instruction, and tier three is for students with more significant learning
240 deficits, they might need a different structure than tier one or tier two. He then stated that tiered
241 intervention is always assessed periodically.
242
243 Mr. Gerry St. Armand stated that Ms. Christine Landwehrle is a great help as well as the many
244 teachers.
245
246 The Board thanked Mr. Gerry St. Armand for his presentation.
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248 Mr. Paul Prescott stated that this fits into the SAU Strategic Plan. Discussion continued.
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250 Ms. Lucienne Foulks stated that she is excited to bring Full- Day Kindergarten to our kids.
251
252 Mr. Gerry St. Armand stated that out of the 31 new first graders this year and that 17 of them
253 were Amherst residents did not go to kindergarten. Discussion continued. He added that some
254 students might have gone to other schools.
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256 Mr. Peter Warburton thanked Mr. St. Armand and remarked that his presentation was very
257 thorough.

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IX. NON-PUBLIC SESSION RSA 91-A:3 II. (a) (b) (c)

Ms. Lucienne Foulks made a motion to enter into Non-Public Session RSA 91-A:3 II a, b, c, and d. Ms. Peg Bennett, seconded, the motion passed.

The board discussed an environmental inspection of the Baboosic Lake Road property.

Paul made a motion to allow Lucienne to sign request for EBI to conduct Phase I environmental site assessment. Amy seconded the motion. All in favor by roll call vote.

The board came out of non-public session at 8:30 p.m.

Amy made a motion to seal the minutes from the non-public session. Paul seconded the motion. All in favor by roll call vote.

Meeting was suspended.

Re-entered public session at 9:12.

Lucienne made a motion to go into non-public session at 9:13 p.m. under RSA 91-A:3 II a, b, c,. Amy seconded the motion. All in favor by roll call vote.

The board discussed a personnel matter.

The board came out of non-public session at 9:50pm.

Paul Prescott made a motion to decline a staff request for reinstatement following a resignation letter. Amy seconded the motion. All in favor by roll call vote.

Peg Bennett made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:55 p.m. Amy Facey seconded the motion, the vote was unanimous.