

1 Amherst School Board
2 Thursday, October 15th, 2015
3 Meeting Minutes
4

5 Attendees:

6 Administrative Team: Peter Warburton- Superintendent, Betty Shankel – Business
7 Administrator, Gerry St. Amand- Principal Clark/Wilkins School, Porter Dodge-Principal AMS,
8 Bethany Bernasconi - Assistant Principal, Christine Landwehrle- Director of Curriculum &
9 Professional Development, Meg Beauchamp- Director of Student Services AMS, Brad Freeman-
10 Teacher AMS

11 Amherst School Board: Lucienne Foulks- Chair, Amy Facey- Vice President, Peg Bennett –
12 Secretary, Jim Manning, and Paul Prescott (arrived at 7:17pm)

13 Minute Taker: Danae Marotta

14 Public: Mike Akillian, Margaret McCabe, and Frank Brown

15 I. CALL TO ORDER – Chair Lucienne Foulks

16 **Ms. Lucienne Foulks called the meeting to order at 6:02pm**

17 II. ANNOUNCEMENTS

18 A. Principals' reports-

19 Ms. Lucienne Foulks asked the Board if they have any questions or comments about the two
20 Principal's Reports.

21 Mr. Porter Dodge discussed the update with the Parent Portal for parents to check their child's
22 grades. He stated that he is working with Mr. Bruce Chakrin, Ms. Christine Landwehrle, and
23 AMS administrators to find an online grading program that offers a parent portal while also
24 being able to function with the existing course management system.

25 He stated that they are committed to getting a portal and want to find a beneficial one. He added
26 that one of the big problems in the past is that the data has to be hand loaded and that is where
27 the errors happen.

28 Ms. Lucienne Foulks made a comment about the I39 Learning Management System and that the
29 team of teachers she met with last night were helpful with describing formatting.

30 The Board thanked Mr. Porter Dodge.

31 Ms. Peg Bennett made a comment about her enthusiasm about the implementation of an AMS
32 Chapter of Jr. National Honor Society.

40
41 Mr. Porter Dodge discussed being chartered by the Jr. National Honor Society and stated that
42 they have received all the materials from them to begin their own AMS Chapter. He stated that
43 they are looking at inducting in January 16' and that is the goal. He stated that he is uncertain
44 about the following year but it will probably be in January as well. He discussed that there is not
45 an application process and the student will have to fill out a form highlighting their
46 accomplishments in academics, service, leadership, character and citizenship.

47
48 Ms. Peg Bennett had a question about enrollment for Mr. St. Armand.

49
50 Mrs. Armand stated that they had two additional third graders and next week three additional
51 kindergarteners. He stated that they have had two move outs since school has started. He
52 discussed that in regards to enrollment they are where they are projected and they have had a
53 large number of kindergarteners.

54
55 Mr. Gerry St. Armand stated that they want to remain at 20 or close kindergarteners per class. He
56 stated that he prefers the number to be smaller.

57
58 He also stated that the amount of representation for Open House for Clark-Wilkins (two
59 buildings, in two nights) was at 100% participation and that the teachers knew ahead of time
60 which families would not be attending. He stated that this strong showing reflects the high level
61 of commitment to education that Amherst families display annually.

62
63 Ms. Lucienne Foulks thanked Mr. Armand for his report.

64
65 Ms. Foulks then asked the Board members for clarification on who was working on which Pillar
66 of the Strategic Plan.

67
68 Advance- Mr. Jim Manning
69 Connect- Ms. Lucienne Foulks
70 Streamline- Ms. Amy Facey
71 Invest- Ms. Peg Bennett
72 Unite- Mr. Paul Prescott

73
74 Ms. Lucienne Foulks stated that at each meeting the Board members will speak to any new
75 progress that has occurred.

76
77
78 III. PUBLIC COMMENT

79
80 Ms. Margret McCabe discussed her previous concerns with cost per pupil, budget costs and
81 rising school costs.

82
83 She stated that she is looking for enrollment projections and that it is a critical piece. Ms. Betty
84 Shankel stated that she has projections for three years.

85

86 Ms. McCabe discussed the Amherst staffing levels, student enrollment numbers and cost per
87 pupil.

88
89 She discussed the summary of salary range ranking by degree and step. She stated that she is
90 concerned that 75% of the budget is salary and benefits.

91
92 Ms. McCabe discussed the issue of raises for teachers and a 5% increase per year is not feasible
93 in the long term.

94
95 She also stated that it is her belief that this is a system that encourages people not to retire. She
96 also was concerned with the amount of sick leave teachers received and compared Bedford and
97 Hollis to Amherst. She also discussed retirement compensation and that the ASD bonus amount
98 is larger than Bedford and Hollis. She added that she is concerned that the Union is pushing for
99 greater compensation.

100
101 She thanked the Board for their time.

102
103 The Board thanked Ms. McCabe

104
105 Mr. Frank Brown thanked the Board for their time. He stated that he is representing the Working
106 for Great Schools group and wanted to reiterate the three goals they have for the ASD.

107
108 1. By February 2016, Amherst schools (ASD and SHS) have established multi-year goals for
109 academic outcomes.

110
111 He added that the goals are specific, measurable, challenging, and achievable. Additionally he
112 stated that progress is being tracked using quantitative measures that allow for comparisons with
113 other similar communities.

114
115 2. By FY19, the Amherst school system (elementary, middle, and high school) is rated as one of
116 the top two school systems in NH.

117
118 He stated that the ratings are based on municipal comparisons of widely-accepted quantitative
119 and qualitative information used by nationally-recognized authorities.

120
121 3. By FY19, Amherst elementary and middle school costs (on a CPP basis) are equal to those of
122 comparable, high-achieving communities, and the Souhegan High School CPP is no more than
123 10% over comparable, high-achieving communities.

124
125 He stated that the attainment of this goal will be reflected in the proposed budget of March 2018
126 and that significant progress in cost reduction is evident in the intervening years

127
128 Mr. Frank Brown asked the Board about Smarter Balanced testing results.

129
130 Ms. Lucienne Foulks stated that the preliminary results will be later in the meeting and that Ms.
131 Christine Landwehrle will discuss them.

132
133 Mr. Mike Akillian wanted to express appreciation to the Board for returning \$900k back to the
134 Town. He added that though this return Amherst taxpayers should see the savings in their tax
135 bill.

136
137
138 IV. CONSENT AGENDA

139
140 **Ms. Peg Bennett made a motion to accept consent agenda items A. minutes from September**
141 **17th 2015, B. Budget transfer, C. Audit Engagement Letter authorization and D.**
142 **Unanticipated revenue from the donation to student activity fund- Wilkins DI Group in the**
143 **amount of \$50.00, Ms. Lucienne Foulks seconded the motion, the vote was unanimous,**
144 **motion passed. Mr. Jim Manning abstained**

145
146 V. PRESENTATIONS/REPORTS

147
148 A. FY16' 1st Quarter report

149
150 Ms. Betty Shankel discussed the quarterly financial report and that the tax rate is being set at this
151 time. She stated that as of September 30th that they are looking at their personnel. She added that
152 at this point in time there is approximately half an million dollars in savings and they are serious-
153 minded in saving money. She further explained that they are looking at cost saving initiatives
154 that businesses are using for their health insurance and they are trying to make a difference.

155
156 B. FY17' Budget

157
158 Ms. Shankel discussed bringing information to the Board and wants to make sure they are on the
159 right track financially. She stated that this is the first step in the budget process.

160
161 She included that next month they will be introducing the first draft of the FY 17' Budget.

162
163 She discussed the Revenues and stated that the Title grants are increasing. She stated that the
164 IDEA grant is flat with the knowledge that they have at the moment and she will know for sure if
165 it will change next June.

166
167 Ms. Shankel then discussed the State Aid and will assume the FY 16' amount of \$2,103,517.

168
169 She stated that Catastrophic Aid is given to the District when there is a student that needs special
170 assistance. She discussed the Catastrophic Aid and that the projection will be based on current
171 year expenditures. She stated that Cat Aid will be paid out at approximately 75% this year. She
172 stated that the lowest she has seen the percentage is 63%.

173
174 She then discussed the Unassigned Fund Balance and how they might estimate that at a little
175 higher than 1%. She discussed that it will be adjusted by December Quarterly Projection. Ms.
176 Shankel then stated how she would like to attempt to create savings during FY 16' to increase
177 UFB.

178
179 Ms. Shankel then discussed how the enrollment numbers at Clark-Wilkins and AMS are tied to
180 supplies, materials, educational initiatives and staffing. She stated that the Clark-Wilkins FY 16'
181 budget enrollment number is 620 the actual number is 624. She discussed the FY 17' enrollment
182 number is 637. She then stated that the FY 16' budget enrollment number at AMS is 614, the FY
183 16' actual number is 624. The FY 17 AMS budget number is 591.

184
185 She discussed the Historical Staffing and Enrollments and stated the Ways and Means
186 Committee has been very helpful.

187
188 Ms. Shankel then discussed the recommended class size/ student load and stated that she wants
189 respect the enrollment, the taxpayer and the student.

190
191 She continued with discussing staffing considerations and how they need enough administration
192 to fill student needs, instructional services, facility management, support staff, IT support and
193 teachers.

194
195 She discussed staffing benefits and that they have to look closely at the cost of their benefits. She
196 stated that they will assume a 5% increase for FY 17'. Ms. Shankel then stated that there will be
197 no dental insurance increase. She then stated that the NH Retirement for non-certified staff for
198 FY 17' will remain at the 11.17% rate. The NH Retirement for certified staff will remain at the
199 FY 16 amount of 15.67% rate.

200
201 Ms. Shankel then went on to discuss health insurance cost containment and stated that it is the
202 biggest employee cost that they have. She discussed how they have made reductions by
203 eliminating the JY Plan, reduced the Rx and dental benefit and shifted portion of Premium
204 Sharing to employees. She discussed being a part of the pilot of the Smart Shopper plan and that
205 employees can go on the HealthTrust website and find the lowest cost for things such as lab
206 work. She stated that they also introduced the high deductible/ HSA Plan and has implemented a
207 wellness program.

208
209 She discussed the historical cost of health insurance premiums and that the last couple of years
210 the rates have gone down.

211
212 She discussed the employer NHRS contributions increase of 103%, and that it is based on the
213 average annual salary.

214
215 Ms. Shankel then discussed the staffing contracts for FY 16', new hires/ reductions and
216 retirements.

217
218 Curriculum highlights

219
220 Ms. Christine Landwehrle discussed the implementation of world language instruction for all
221 students and the ongoing implementation of teacher leader effectiveness. She discussed piloting
222 student surveys, from Tripod, to be used for professional development. She stated that it is just a
223 field test and it is a budget item. She then discussed the ongoing implementation of college and

224 career readiness standards. She stated that the District has a STEM focus and that the work is
225 continuing.

226
227 Mr. Gerry St. Armand then discussed the time line for full day kindergarten. He stated that last
228 year the Clark-Wilkins Study Groups reviewed full-day Kindergarten research and exemplary
229 programs within the State and across the Country. He then stated that due to this research and the
230 looking at the results of a community survey the ASB presented a Warrant Article for full-day
231 Kindergarten to the community. He stated that they reduced the amount needed from \$720,000
232 to \$632,000 and that the cost of building renovations was removed. He discussed that they are
233 committed to full-day Kindergarten, and that Mont Vernon has already implemented full day
234 Kindergarten. He indicated that even though the MVVS is on a default budget they still made
235 full-day Kindergarten occur.

236
237 Ms. Betty Shankel discussed the technology highlights in the four sections Mobility, Resources,
238 Infrastructure, and Operations. She also clarified the acronym BYOD as Bring Your Own
239 Device.

240
241 She discussed operations and stated that they look at the ECI (Employment Compensation Index)
242 and there is a 3.0% annual increase. She further explained that they also keep in to consideration
243 the CPI-U (Consumer Price Index- Urban) and that is a .1% annual decrease and a 1.7% annual
244 increase less food and energy.

245
246 She added that in FY 16' electricity will see a 3% decrease, fuel decrease to \$1.96 a gallon, and
247 natural gas decrease.

248
249 Ms. Shankel discussed the projects that were completed in FY 16' for the Clark School which
250 included, repairing/repainting the original entryway, repainting the exterior trim, starting the
251 lighting upgrade program, replacing the catch basin, completing the new PD Center and finishing
252 the security upgrades.

253
254 She discussed the Wilkins projects completed for FY 16', which included the full septic system
255 inspected and upgraded, the Stage Projection Screen replaced, replacement of the Boiler Room
256 double doors and starting the lighting upgrade program among other items.

257
258 She also discussed the Wilkins FY 17' budget items as overlaying all VCT Tile in the Main
259 Hallways, renovating 4th Grade Boys and Girls Restrooms and refurbishing the Exterior Storage
260 Building among other items.

261
262 She then included the AMS projects completed for FY 16' which included a Gym upgrade of
263 refinishing/restripping the floor, adding a new divider curtain, and new center court volleyball.
264 She also described several other projects completed at AMS.

265
266 Ms. Shankel then discussed AMS FY 17' budget items as the design and installation of the front
267 grounds (playground, traffic islands, and trees), sealcoating the parking lot, and continue with the
268 window and screens replacement. There were also other AMS FY 17' budget items she
269 discussed.

270
271 She then discussed Transportation and that in FY 17' the District will be in the 2nd year in a 5
272 year contract with Butler Bussing. She stated that it is a 2.6% increase. She included that Food
273 Service is working to become self-supporting again, will continue with the new USDA
274 compliance, and replacement of the 40 year-old dishwasher.
275
276 Ms. Peg Bennett asked Ms. Shankel a question about the 2.6% increase in transportation.
277
278 Ms. Shankel discussed the Expendable Trusts/CRF's. She stated that with educating students
279 with disabilities that there is a fund already of \$100,055. She stated that the goal is having \$200k
280 and that each year they have been putting in \$50k.
281
282 She concluded with the Amherst Budget Timeline and stated that the first draft of the Budget
283 will be presented on November 19th. She stated that she would like to get the Board members'
284 sub-committee choices because the meetings will be starting soon.
285
286 Ms. Peg Bennett asked Ms. Shankel to explain how they build the first draft of the Budget.
287
288 Ms. Shankel replied that they put together these assumed costs, look at enrollment and use zero
289 based budgeting for each teacher and staff. She discussed that they figure out what they need in
290 each area to fill the needs of their students and that is why the enrollment number is so
291 important.
292
293 Ms. Peg Bennett discussed how she appreciates the zero based budgeting.
294
295 The Board thanked Ms. Shankel.
296
297 1. Introduction of Ways & Means Committee-
298
299 Mr. Nate Jensen stated that he is Moderator of the ASD Ways and Means Committee and is
300 looking for two more members. He asked the Board if they could recommend two people.
301
302 Ms. Peg Bennett asked Mr. Jensen if they try to have 7 members on the Committee.
303
304 Mr. Jensen replied, yes, they do try to keep 7 members on the Committee.
305
306 The Board thanked Mr. Jensen.
307
308 3. Appointment of SAU #39 Budget Advisory Committee
309
310 Ms. Foulks stated that they have asked Mr. Peter Maresco if he would be on the SAU Budget
311 Advisory Committee.
312
313 The Board appointed Mr. Pete Maresco to the SAU Budget Advisory Committee
314
315 VI. DISCUSSION ITEMS

316
317
318
319
320
321
322
323
324
325
326
327
328
329
330
331
332
333
334
335
336
337
338
339
340
341
342
343
344
345
346
347
348
349
350
351
352
353
354
355
356
357
358
359
360
361

VII. INFORMATIONAL

A. In-service and Literacy Institute-

Ms. Christine Landwehrle stated that they met back in June for 4 days with a group of teachers to participate in a Literacy Institute centered on creating a curriculum framework that were units of study. She stated that with this framework teachers could create their lesson plans. She stated that there was a strong representation from all grade levels. She also added that the three districts, MV, ASD, and SCSD worked collaboratively. She stated that they looked at units of study, and they had choice in their topics. She discussed that teachers were looking forward to the new school year.

She discussed the first in-service day and that those who attended the Literacy Institute were helpful.

She stated that the second in-service day primarily focused on assessments.

Mr. Armand stated that he worked with the third grade Depth of Knowledge and teachers are gaining great comfort.

Mr. Porter Dodge discussed Depth of Knowledge and stated that he is glad to be working with Ms. Christina Brown from the Center for Collaborative Education.

B. SBAC – Smarter Balance update on preliminary results

Ms. Christine Landwehrle explained that they used to utilize the NECAP Assessment, which is an assessment from the State. She stated that it was used to determine accountability for students and schools and aimed to show whether students have reached certain benchmarks. She added that each grade level has their own set benchmarks.

She then discussed that the NECAP Assessment no longer being used due to not being aligned to new standards.

She then discussed the Smarter Balanced Assessment as the new test that will replace the NECAP Assessment.

She stated that last year is the first year for the Smarter Balanced Assessment. She discussed that the Smarter Balanced is more rigorous than NECAP. She also added that the Smarter Balanced Assessment has true performance assessment, is computer adaptive and has a performance task.

She discussed that the Smarter Balanced Assessment was given to students last spring. She added that there was a 6 week window from March to May and although they have received preliminary results that data is subject to change. She stated that she cannot share those results yet due to the Department of Education reviewing rosters.

362 Mr. Peter Warburton defined the acronym DOK as Depth of Knowledge.

363

364

365 Mr. Frank Brown asked Ms. Landwehrle if the Smarter Balanced Results are published.

366

367 Ms. Landwehrle replied, yes, they will available to the public November 12th.

368

369 The Board thanked Ms. Landwehrle

370

371 VIII. ACTION ITEM

372

373 Ms. Lucienne Foulks stated that the Board has to make a decision on Ms. Danielle Service's
374 sabbatical request.

375

376 **Ms. Amy Facey made a motion to accept Ms. Danielle Service's sabbatical proposal**
377 **request, Ms. Peg Bennett seconded the motion, the vote was unanimous, motion passed.**

378

379 Ms. Amy Facey stated that her sabbatical proposal was very specific.

380

381 Ms. Betty Shankel discussed the Addendum to the lease agreement between the Amherst School
382 District, the Souhegan Cooperative School District and the Town of Amherst

383

384 She discussed that the Town of Amherst will reimburse the SCSD for field maintenance in the
385 amount equal to 85% of the monies The Town collects from user fees and revenues from rental
386 of all SCSD Facilities. This money will be paid by The Town to the SCSD on a seasonal basis.
387 She stated that this will commence on July, 1, 2016.

388

389 **Ms. Peg Bennett made a motion to accept the Addendum to the lease agreement between**
390 **the Amherst school district and the Souhegan Cooperative School District and the Town of**
391 **Amherst, Ms. Amy Facey seconded the motion, the vote was unanimous, the motion passed.**

392

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

394

395 **Mr. Paul Prescott made a motion to enter into non-public session RSA 91-A: 3 II (d) and**
396 **(e), Ms. Amy Facey seconded the motion, the vote was unanimous, motion passed.**

397

398 Ms. Lucienne Foulks called a Roll Call of the Board, Prescott-Yes, Bennett- Yes, Facey-Yes,
399 Manning- Yes.