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2 Amherst School Board Public Hearing  
3 Wednesday, January 13, 2016  
4 Souhegan High School Theater  
5

6 Attendees:

7 Administrative Team: Peter Warburton- Superintendent, Betty Shankel – Business  
8 Administrator, Gerry St. Amand- Principal Clark/Wilkins School, Porter Dodge-Principal AMS,  
9 Christine Landwehrle- Director of Curriculum & Professional Development, Meg Beauchamp-  
10 Director of Student Services AMS, Bruce Chakrin- Director of Technology, Stan St. Onge-  
11 Theater Director , Jim Miner- Director of Buildings and Grounds, John Robichaud- Director of  
12 Facilities SHS, Brad Freeman –Teacher AMS.

13 Amherst School Board: Lucienne Foulks- Chair, Amy Facey, Peg Bennett – Secretary, Jim  
14 Manning, and Paul Prescott

15 Minute Taker: Danae Marotta

16 Public: Paul Mancini, Maggie McCabe, Dan Sullivan and Jessica Stiem

17 I. Call to Order – Chair Lucienne Foulks

18 **Ms. Lucienne Foulks called the Public Hearing to order at 7: 17 PM**

19 Ms. Lucienne Foulks introduced herself as the Chair of the Amherst School Board and the other  
20 Board Members.

21 She then introduced Superintendent Warburton.

22 Mr. Warburton then introduced Administration and Staff.

23 Ms. Lucienne Foulks then introduced the Chair of the Ways and Means Committee Ms.  
24 Stephanie Grund.

25 Ms. Grund then introduced the Members of the Ways and Means Committee, Ms. Donni  
26 Hodgkins, Ms. Colleen Lynch, Mr. Gene Kuczewski, Mr. Frank Brown, and Mr. John Glover  
27 (absent).

28 Ms. Lucienne Foulks thanked the Ways and Means Committee and noted that they really  
29 scrutinized the Budget and appreciate their time and dedication.

30 II. Public Hearing

31 Ms. Lucienne Foulks discussed that last year’s Operating Budget got voted down and the  
32 Warrant Article for Full Day Kindergarten was defeated.

33 She added that they heard from the taxpayers that they needed to reduce costs while maintaining  
34 and continuing to improve high quality education.

35 She mentioned that they are here to present the FY'17 Operating Budget.

36 She discussed that they will not be adding a Warrant Article for the Teachers' Contract this year.

37 She noted that the Board began negotiations back in September. It was with the hope that they  
38 can come to an agreement. She noted that they reviewed the retirement benefits in their current  
39 state and noted that it is not sustainable or reflective of the economic climate of the taxpayers she  
40 added that they underwent 4 months of negotiations with no counter by the Union.

41 She noted that this is not something that the Board wanted.

42 She added that they value and support their teachers with the great work that they do. She hopes  
43 that next September that they can come to a better outcome for everyone.

44 Ms. Lucienne Foulks discussed that they have incorporated The National Junior Honor Society at  
45 AMS.

46 She noted that it is a nationally recognized program that not only celebrates student success but  
47 other accomplishments.

48 She discussed the new Innovation and Design Lab at AMS.

49 Ms. Foulks noted that they have been working with the Amherst Recreation Department is  
50 pleased that with their help they are bringing a Community Maker Space to AMS.

51 She noted that they were excited to bring Ms. Bethany Bernasconi on as Vice Principal of AMS.

52 She added that they approved the resurfacing of the Davis Lane Tennis Courts and with the AMS  
53 tennis courts are two new community ice rinks for use in the winter.

54 She noted that they are happy to remove one portable from behind Wilkins, leaving only two  
55 portables in the District.

56 She noted that finally they have resolved a long standing legal matter. She noted that the Board  
57 has accepted a gift of land from Citibank. She added that it will be for a community recreation  
58 space for the Amherst Recreation Department. .

59 Ms. Foulks discussed the FY' 17 Initiatives.

60 She noted that there are major curriculum and instructional initiatives such as the SAU 39  
61 Strategic Plan, ongoing implementation of Common Core standards, implementation of full-day  
62 kindergarten, exploration and implementation of STEM based programming and ongoing  
63 implementation of their Teacher Leader Effectiveness System.

64 She then discussed the new Science Standards which focus on critical thinking.

65 She added that this past spring students have taken the Smarter Balanced Assessment for  
66 Common Core standards. She noted that it had a computer adaptive part and performance task  
67 section. She noted that although they were above average they recognize that they will still have  
68 work to do.

69 She then noted that they did a focused analysis of the Math Program and hired EDvisualize.  
70 They then presented their findings at the November Board meeting. They noted that the Math  
71 Program is being implemented well.

72 Ms. Foulks added that full day kindergarten remains a priority and they understood that requiring  
73 additional spending is too great for taxpayers. She added that the Administration and Board have  
74 reprioritized things and there is no needed additional spending.

75 She then discussed the re-prioritization decisions.

76 She remarked that Full day kindergarten is necessary element for achieving student success and  
77 added that it is solely a curriculum decision.

78 With the deep commitment, the Board invited Spark NH to the November Board meeting to  
79 discuss the importance of early childhood education.

80 She noted that they will be joining approximately 104 other NH districts are offering full day  
81 kindergarten. She added that full day K will also be aligned to Common Core standards which  
82 they have to meet. She added that there will 990 instructional hours versus the current 440  
83 instructional hours.

84 The fourth initiative involves STEM based programming. She noted that at AMS they rotate with  
85 experiential hands on learning.

86 She then discussed Teacher Leader effectiveness and noted that they have budgeted for software  
87 from Tripod for students to give feedback. She added that it will help with deep feedback form  
88 students and best practices.

89 Ms. Foulks noted that this year they are operating with a Default Budget. She added the Board  
90 wants to take a preventative approach to building and maintenance.

91 She then discussed the Budget Summary.

92 Ms. Amy Facey discussed balancing enrollments and staffing.

93 She discussed that they have been making changes in response to declining enrollment over the  
94 past 8 years. She noted that while the total number of students have declined, the needs have  
95 changed. She added that in FY' 17 they will introduce full-day kindergarten. She noted that with  
96 this implementation there is no need to increase in staff.

97 She then discussed Class Size/ Student Load. She discussed that it is important to note that they  
98 are above the State Average for class size in some classes.

99 Ms. Facey then discussed the Enrollment and Staffing Trends.

100 She then discussed the SAU Apportionment Formula.

101 She noted that State law requires that the total amount of the SAU Budget will be apportioned  
102 among the Amherst School District, the Mont Vernon School District and the Souhegan School  
103 District based on attendance the pervious school year and the equalized valuation of each district.

104 Ms. Facey then discussed the SAU Budget.

105 She noted that the functions performed by SAU 39 are those that are more efficient to  
106 consolidate and those that facilitate a more cohesive K-12 education.

107 She added that the FY'17 SAU Budget is \$2,155,580. This is a decrease over FY'16 of \$57,881  
108 or 2.61%.

109 She noted that the major Budget drivers are the reduction of staff, 1.5% pay increases, 5% Health  
110 Care Premium increase and Software enhancements to create efficiencies.

111 Mr. Paul Prescott discussed the FY' 17 Revenue.

112 He noted that as required by RSA 32:5 III, the Amherst School District Budget is a "gross"  
113 budget.

114 He added that all expenditures are listed in the expense budget.

115 All income is listed as revenue.

116 Expenditures minus income equals the amount to be raised by local property taxes.

117 Mr. Prescott then explained the FY'17 Revenue Estimate Calculation.

118 He then explained the Estimated Revenue Changes from FY'16 to FY'17. He noted that the  
119 Total Tax Impact will be an increase of \$0.26 (per \$1,000).

120 He then introduced Mr. Jim Manning.

121 Mr. Jim Manning thanked all community members that came out for tonight's meeting.

122 He then discussed and defined the Default Budget.

123 He noted that the Default Budget is calculated under the provisions of RSA 40:13, IX (b):

124 "Default Budget" as used in this subdivision means the amount of the same appropriations as  
125 contained in the operating budget authorized for the previous year, reduced and increased, as the  
126 case may be, by debt service, contracts, and other obligations previously incurred or mandated  
127 by law, and reduced by one-time expenditures contained in the operating budget. For the  
128 purposes of this paragraph, one-time expenditures shall be appropriations not likely to recur in  
129 the succeeding budget, as determined by the governing body, unless the provisions of RSA  
130 40:14-b are adopted, of the local political subdivision.

131 Mr. Manning then discussed the Default Budget calculations and analysis.

132 He then noted what would be at risk should the proposed Operating Budget get defeated.

133 His examples of items that could be at risk are, co-curricular enrichment and athletic programs,  
134 technology (equipment, software, supplements and licensing and laptops and some other smaller  
135 tech items, bandwidth for BYOD), STEM, fiction and non-fiction Common Core novels, salary  
136 and benefits for support for full day kindergarten, restroom renovations and other items.

137 Mr. Manning noted that if the budget does not pass they will have to make difficult decisions.

138 He noted that at the very top of the list is Full day kindergarten. He added that is not a decision  
139 they have taken lightly and they have done massive research on the topic of early childhood  
140 education.

141 Mr. Manning noted that the Default Budget of \$24,172,572 is \$424,808 less than the proposed  
142 Budget of \$24,597,380.

143 He added that should the proposed Budget be defeated at the polls, the Default Budget will be  
144 implemented.

145 Ms. Stephanie Grund, Chair of the Ways and Means Committee thanked the Members of the  
146 Administration and School Board for answering questions.

147 She stated that the Ways and Means Committee is pleased to support the FY'17 Budget by 6-0.  
148 She added that the Budget is well justified. She noted that they should provide full day  
149 kindergarten due to Common Core Standards. She added that the voters should be involved.

150 Mr. Jim Manning thanked Ms. Stephanie Grund and the Members of the Ways and Means  
151 Committee.

152 Ms. Peg Bennett discussed Warrant Article #13.

153 She discussed that it was related to raising and appropriating up to \$50,000 from the  
154 Undesignated Fund Balance (surplus) if available on June 30, 2016 to be added to the ASD fund  
155 for educating students with disabilities, previously established in March 2014. She noted that the  
156 current balance is \$100,000.

157 She also added that the cost of \$50,000 would be an estimated FY' 2017 Tax Rate Impact of  
158 \$0.03. The estimated FY'17 Tax Increase on a \$330,000 home would be \$9.90.

159 **Ms. Stephanie Grund stated that The Ways and Means Committee unanimously supports**  
160 **the warrant article #13.**

161 Ms. Bennett then discussed Warrant Article #14. To transact any other business that may legally  
162 come before the meeting.

163 **Ms. Stephanie Grund stated that The Ways and Means Committee unanimously support**  
164 **Warrant Article #14**

165 Ms. Peg Bennett noted that they are committed to the SAU 39 Strategic Plan.

166 She welcomed the public at the regular Board Meetings and encourage all to be involved.

167 Mr. Paul Mancini of Amherst asked a question about Special Education funding.

168 Mr. Mancini asked a question about where the data comes from that supports full day  
169 kindergarten.

170 Ms. Lucienne Foulks discussed several things that are available on the website [www.sau39.org](http://www.sau39.org)  
171 homepage. She noted that there are notes from the Public Forum as well as SAU's video On  
172 Demand Library.

173 Superintendent Warburton noted that tonight's Public Hearing is being Live Streamed on the  
174 [www.sau39.org](http://www.sau39.org) website.

175 He noted that they have to show it in public by law. He added that all the Board Meetings are  
176 live streamed and wanted to thank the Boards and audience for watching.

177 Ms. Joy Mancini of Amherst asked a question about how much the FY' 17 Budget could have  
178 been reduced if full day kindergarten was not in there.

179 Ms. Lucienne Foulks noted that when they make decisions they are mindful of the taxpayers and  
180 want to give students the best opportunity for education. She noted that they have to weigh both  
181 sides.

182 Ms. Lucienne Foulks noted that \$576,000 is the amount needed for full day kindergarten that is  
183 in the FY' 17 Budget.

184 Ms. Facey added that the amount can be found in the Public Forums.

185 Mr. Paul Prescott mentioned that the Public is not voting on full day kindergarten but the  
186 Operating Budget.

187 He noted that if the Operating Budget does not pass then they are not necessarily eliminating full  
188 day kindergarten but other items. He added they have to make sure that all students, even  
189 kindergarteners, get everything they need to succeed.

190 He reemphasized that is what the Public is voting on.

191 Ms. Lucienne Foulks noted that if you have not attended a Public Forum it would be beneficial to  
192 do so.

193 Ms. Maggie McCabe of Amherst noted that she is in favor of full day kindergarten and asked a  
194 question related to the percentage of students that go to another kindergarten experience. She  
195 also wanted to know what would happen to Staff.

196 Mr. Gerry St. Amand noted that he believes that at least 50% on any given day are going to a  
197 program, not a full day kindergarten program, but might be comparable. He believes roughly  
198 20%.

199 He noted that 1<sup>st</sup> grade is the grade that receives the highest percentage of intervention, in the  
200 beginning of the year, and you need to keep that in mind. He emphasized that most children do  
201 need a full day experience.

202 Mr. Dan Sullivan of Amherst added that students might be going to a program but it might not be  
203 aligned to what 1<sup>st</sup> grade looks for.

204 Mr. Gerry St. Amand noted that they cannot say what they are doing for programming because  
205 he does not have that information.

206 Mr. Jim Manning remarked that times have changed. He noted that Kindergarten today is more  
207 of a 1<sup>st</sup> grade experience.

208 Ms. Jessica Stiem of Amherst wanted to discuss the student survey Tripod. She asked if it is  
209 anonymous, what are the questions and what the intention is.

210 Ms. Christine Landwehrle discussed that Tripod is totally anonymous in different areas and it is  
211 non-judgmental. She then gave an example of a question. She noted that it is being piloted this  
212 year and at this point is being used for Professional Development for reflection and goal setting.

213 She added that if anyone had any questions they can email her and she would be happy to answer  
214 them.

215 Ms. Lisa Eastland of Amherst asked if Tripod is State Mandated for teacher evaluations.

216 Ms. Landwehrle replied, that the State of NH has outlaid a model system and it is something that  
217 they feel really strongly about.

218 Mr. Dan Sullivan of Amherst asked if it will be done every year.

219 Ms. Landwehrle replied that there are 28 teachers in the pilot and they do not know the exact  
220 plan yet and it will depend on the results.

221 Ms. Lucienne Foulks thanked the Community for attending and asking great questions.

222 She added that the Deliberative Hearing is set for Tuesday, February 2<sup>nd</sup> at 7pm, here in the SHS  
223 Theater.

224 III. Close Public Hearing

225 **Chair Ms. Lucienne Foulks closed the Public Hearing at 8:30pm**

226 Lucienne re-convened the meeting in the SHS Main Office Conference Room at 8:58pm  
227

228 Paul made a motion to place Article 12 on the warrant as presented at the Public Hearing.  
229 Jim seconded. Passed unanimously.

230

231 Amy made a motion to recommend the passage of Article 12. Paul seconded. Passed  
232 unanimously.

233

234 Jim made a motion to place article 13 on the warrant as presented at the public hearing.  
235 Amy seconded. Passed unanimously.

236

237 Paul made a motion to recommend the passage article 13. Amy seconded. Passed unanimously.

238

239 Paul made a motion to appoint Plodznik and Sanderson as the Amherst School District audit  
240 firm. Amy seconded. Passed unanimously.

241 The Board discussed the 2016 voter guide. In the past we have mailed the voters' guides to  
242 Amherst residents prior to the March election. This year we are looking to insert it in the  
243 Amherst Citizen newspaper at a reduced cost. The board is in favor of doing the insert if it is  
244 more economical.

245  
246 Amy made a motion to place an article on the warrant to establish a planning committee to study  
247 a cooperative school district. Jim seconded. Passed unanimously.

248  
249 Jim made a motion to recommend the passage of the planning committee article. Paul seconded.  
250 All in favor.

251  
252 Jim made a motion to approve retirement for 4 people under article 14.4 of the CBA as presented  
253 in writing by the Superintendent. Amy seconded. Passed unanimously.

254  
255 Amy made a motion to approve 3 retirements from the ASSA with all benefits as provided for  
256 under the ASSA CBA as presented in writing by the Superintendent. Jim seconded. Passed  
257 unanimously.

258  
259 Motion to adjourn at 10:02 pm by Paul Prescott. Amy seconded. Passed unanimously.