

1 Amherst School Board

2 Thursday, October 20th, 2016

3 Meeting Minutes

4 Attendees:

5 Administrative Team: Peter Warburton- Superintendent, Adam Steel- Business Administrator,
6 Gerry St. Amand- Principal Clark/Wilkins School, Porter Dodge-Principal AMS, Bethany
7 Bernasconi- Vice-Principal AMS, Christine Landwehrle- Director of Curriculum & Professional
8 Development, Meg Beauchamp- Director of Student Services, Bruce Chakrin- Director of
9 Technology, Tracey Gagne- 7th Grade Teacher AMS and Jan McGuigan- Washington D.C. Trip
10 Coordinator.

11 Amherst School Board: Amy Facey- Chair, Jim Manning- Vice Chair, Galen Tremblay and
12 Elizabeth Kuzsma.

13 Amherst Ways and Means Committee: Stephanie Grund, Frank Brown, John Glover, Terri
14 Behm, Lucienne Foulks, Amber Swenson and Nancy Wilkes.

15 Minute Taker: Danae Marotta

16 Public: Frank Brown- Chair Streamline Committee, Amherst NH, Dwayne Purvis- Souhegan
17 Cooperative School Board Member, Amherst NH, Steve Coughlan- Souhegan Cooperative
18 School Board Member, Amherst NH, Chris Janson- Past Souhegan Board Member, Streamline
19 Committee Member, Amherst NH, Maggie McCabe- Streamline Committee Member, Amherst
20 NH, Mike Akillian- Streamline Committee Member, Amherst NH, Ava Beaulieu- Streamline
21 Committee Member, Amherst NH, Joel S. Gordon- Amherst NH

22 I. CALL TO ORDER – Chair Amy Facey

23 **Chair Ms. Amy Facey called the meeting to order at 6:02 PM.**

24 Ms. Facey noted that the Principal's Reports have been changed to reflect the work of the
25 Strategic Plan. She then reviewed the reasons for the change and noted that it was originally
26 based around commitments. She then discussed that each of the Board Members each owned a
27 commitment.

28 II. ANNOUNCEMENTS

29 A. Strategic Pillars

30 Ms. Facey then discussed the Strategic Plan Pillars and added that she is on Streamline. She
31 added that Board Members can change the pillar that they had been working on, and is looking
32 for feedback.

33 Ms. Elizabeth Kuzsma noted that she would like to move to the Unite group.

34 Ms. Facey noted that Mr. Paul Prescott, (not in attendance) might be willing to switch to Connect
35 since he is knowledgeable with technology.

36 Discussion ensued over the Strategic Pillars.

37 Ms. Facey thanked the Board.

38 B. Principals' reports

39 Principal Gerry St. Amand noted the new Principal's Report format and that Ms. Christine
40 Landwehrle, Director of Curriculum and Professional Development helped with the change.

41 Mr. Manning commented that he liked the C/W report, and it is what the Board is looking for.
42 He added that it gets right to the Strategic Plan.

43 Ms. Facey noted that she liked the sub categories.

44 Mr. Jim Manning then suggested more of an honest assessment for what is working and not
45 working.

46 Mr. St Amand noted he could change the subcategories.

47 Ms. Facey remarked that it is ok to tell the Board their challenges.

48 Principal St. Amand noted that today (10 20 16) was the PTA Staff Luncheon and wanted to
49 thank and recognize the PTA. He added that it was great for all the Staff. He added that it is
50 something that could be placed in the Connect Pillar.

51 Ms. Facey asked the Board if they had any questions for Principal St. Amand or Principal
52 Dodge.

53 Ms. Kuzsma asked about the enrollment.

54 Mr. St. Amand noted that the enrollment is 679, and that Kindergarten is now up to 128 children.

55 Ms. Facey asked the Board if they had any other questions or comments.

56 Ms. Kuzsma noted that in the past that the two Principal's Reports looked similar due to layout,
57 and is looking for the AMS logo.

58 Principal Dodge noted that he had worked on it on his own, and that Ms. Landwehrle helped
59 with a template. He noted that he can make that change for the Board.

60 Ms. Bethany Bernasconi, Dean of Instruction, AMS, noted that she wanted to give the Board an
61 update on the work with teachers and communication.

62 She then discussed that they are doing real exciting work with performance assessments and the
63 shifts in instruction.

64 She noted that last year they had discussed with the Board about opening the Parent Portal.

65 She then discussed the various ways of communicating with parents and making the classroom
66 more transparent.

67 She then talked about the best practices, and that a group of teachers developed a list. She noted
68 that they have been vetted out over the course of the year and that it is going in the staff
69 handbook.

70 She then noted that one of the best, most responsive ways of communication is via email. She
71 then discussed several reasons and methods for notification to keep the lines of communication
72 open, and making sure that everyone is working together.

73 She noted that they want to support the learner and keep the parents involved. She discussed the
74 importance of supporting kids, strengthening connections and to support teachers to develop Best
75 practices.

76 Mr. Dodge noted that if he receives an email they he immediately lets that teacher know.

77 The Board thanked Ms. Bernasconi.

78 C. Superintendent's Report

79 □ SAU 39 Digital Magazine

80 (See VII. Informational)

81 D. Committee Reports

82 III. PUBLIC COMMENT

83 Ms. Facey noted that there are two public comments in the agenda due to the public asking for
84 them. She then added that all the boards have changed.

85 Ms. Maggie McCabe, Amherst NH, asked when will the competencies change and what grade.

86 Principal Dodge replied, 8th grade.

87 Ms. McCabe then asked what if kids are falling through the cracks and suggested to maintain
88 annual testing.

89 Ms. Landwehrle discussed the PACE system and that students are still being assessed annually.
90 She added that students are monitored all through the year and that it is comprehensive.

91 She reminded Ms. McCabe that they also do the NEWA K-10, more than once a year and it is a
92 nationwide test to monitor progress in real time, fall to winter. She added that they can look at
93 the complete picture.

94 Mr. Manning asked about statistical power.

95 Ms. Landwehrle discussed a home grown assessment.

96 Ms. Landwehrle noted that she can bring an example from SHS on competencies.

97 Ms. Kuzsma asked about the list of testing and when they are happening. She added that they are
98 still testing just a different way of doing it.

99 The Board thanked Ms. Landwehrle.

100 Mr. Joel Gordon, Amherst NH, noted that he wanted to discuss the out the appearance of the
101 Upper Wilkins Field and the chain link fence.

102 He noted that the town is planning on replacing it. He then advocated for a post and rail fence
103 due to the school being located in the historic district. He added that it would give a better
104 appearance.

105 He then gave the Board a handout showing the fence.

106 He added that he has talked to the town and their main issue is maintenance. He then proposed a
107 post and rail fence or as small as possible chain link.

108 Ms. Facey asked the Board if they had any questions.

109 Mr. Manning agreed that the fence looks horrible and that they were going to put boulders, but
110 they did not have enough.

111 Mr. Gordon remarked that it will look like a construction area, and that the boulders would look
112 better in groupings.

113 Discussion ensued.

114 Ms. Facey noted that Mr. Craig Fraley, Amherst Recreation Department Director, was scheduled
115 to be here tonight but unfortunately he could not make it.

116 Mr. Gordon noted that he already talked with Mr. Fraley.

117 Ms. Facey noted that they do have an arrangement and with the town and that she has to look
118 more into it.

119 Ms. Facey asked Mr. Steel if he could talk to Mr. Fraley about this issue.

120 Mr. Steel replied, yes.

121 IV. CONSENT AGENDA

122 A. Minutes

123 1. September 15, 2016

124 2. September 22, 2016

125 B. Treasurer's Report

126 1. August 2016

127 2. September 2016

128 C. Budget Transfer

129 Chair Amy Facey noted that she wanted to pull the September 15th 2016 Minutes from the
130 Consent Agenda.

131 **Ms. Galen Tremblay made a Motion to accept the Consent Agenda items A. Minutes 2.**
132 **September 22nd 2016, B. Treasurer's Report 1. August 2016, 2. September 2016 and C.**
133 **Budget Transfer. Ms. Elizabeth Kuzsma seconded the Motion. The vote was unanimous,**
134 **Motion passed.**

135 **Ms. Elizabeth Kuzsma made a Motion to accept the A. Minutes 1. September 15th 2016**
136 **Minutes as written. Ms. Galen Tremblay seconded the Motion. 3 in favor, Motion passed.**
137 **Mr. Jim Manning abstained.**

138 V. PRESENTATIONS/REPORTS

139 A. SAU 39 Strategic Plan

140 Streamline Committee Presentation

141 Ms. Facey noted that Mr. Frank Brown, Chair of the Streamline Committee will give an update
142 on district consolidation.

143 Mr. Brown added that he welcomes feedback and the Board can see the data. He then
144 commented that he is looking for positive and negative comments and that they are facing
145 serious issues.

146 He first discussed the members of the Streamline Committee.

147 He then discussed the Purpose of the Presentation covering the following issues: 1. why are we
148 looking at streamlining 2. Review the configuration identified for consideration 3. Outline the
149 calendar to go forward to a vote in March '17 and 4. Seek your comments, questions, concerns.

150 He then discussed the Environment, discussing that school population is slowly decreasing here
151 and across NH. He added that these challenges will continue to increase over time.

152 He then reviewed the 5 Year Population Changes from 11-12 to 15-16. He added that they are on
153 the State website. He noted the reduction ratio of 1 instructional resource for every 5 students

154 He then reviewed the SAU Population Past and Future Based on Current Enrollment in the
155 Schools.

156 Superintendent Warburton noted that this was a previous slide.

157 Mr. Brown added that he forgot the Kindergarten slide.

158 He then discussed the correct figures and added that it unfortunately does not change the story
159 and they will be down over 400 students in 5 years.

160 Mr. Brown noted that you can see that things flatten out and the decrease is going to accelerate.

161 He then discussed the Enrollment Impact in 2018- 2019 and 2021- 2022.

162 He then discussed the Status and Recommendations. He noted that given the significant benefits
163 associated with both the future student educational experience as well as the Administration and
164 Management of the resources within the SAU, the Committee continues to review the SAU
165 moving to a single school district organization model.

166 He then noted that they looked at other schools and how they implemented consolidation.

167 Mr. Brown then discussed the Financial Impact in the short term with modest savings (300K –
168 600K) and then the longer term (300K – 1 M).

169 He then discussed a more effective educational environment.

170 He then reviewed the overall calendar leading to a new district. He added that there are 3 public
171 forums, he noted that it will come back to the Board and if you do nothing that it is still a
172 decision.

173 He added that it might take a year or longer with how it is going to work.

174 He then discussed the communication plan outline: by audience, by channel.

175 He then reviewed how the new consolidated district gets approved.

176 Mr. Brown then reviewed the structure of the consolidated district’s school board and how it is
177 elected. He added if there are other ideas that they would be happy to hear them.

178 He then discussed what would happen to the assets and liabilities of the consolidating districts.
179 He added that some things are real simple.

180 He then discussed what would happen to the current teachers and contracts. He noted that it is
181 most likely that a union will move to petition to represent all teachers in the consolidated district.
182 At this point all teachers will revert back to the terms of their previous contract until a
183 representation vote is taken and a union election is approved or not.

184 He added that this is straight forward but will take some time.

185 He then discussed the feedback from the Souhegan Board. He added that there were mixed
186 reactions. He noted that some of the Board Members thought that it was moving too fast, that
187 they were losing part of the culture, and that the benefits do not appear to be specific. He noted
188 that they had asked what other districts have been consolidated.

189 He then asked for Board feedback. He noted that he would be more than happy to answer any
190 questions.

191 He then discussed the feedback from the Mont Vernon School District.

192 He noted that the session was lively, open and challenging. He added that they do a lot of town
193 functions and they had valid concerns. He then added that the Board was worried if the Village
194 School were to be closed.

195 He then discussed the difficult issues to address, local town-non-school considerations, voting
196 representation, and interest/ age group representation of the school board.

197 He then concluded his presentation with a summary of their findings.

198 Ms. Facey asked the Board if they had any questions or comments.

199 Ms. Lucienne Foulks asked about the percentage of the union vote.

200 Ms. Kuzsma asked about the teachers that would be affected.

201 She then noted her concerns about projected enrollment and that it is her belief that the bars are
202 not accurate. She added that it appears drastically lower.

203 Mr. Brown then explained the graph, he added that if it was confusing he will remove it.

204 Discussion ensued.

205 Ms. Terri Behm, ASD Ways and Means Committee Member, noted that she has immediate
206 concerns.

207 Mr. Manning then discussed that he believes that the committee needs to give more tangible
208 example with trade off examples. He then noted to look at the census data. He added that they
209 need to be well articulated with what they will lose. He added that if they can show what they
210 can lose, then people will feel more comfortable with changes.

211 Mr. Manning remarked that they are not making this decision for cost savings, he added that
212 there are administrative issues.

213 He added that the changes would make for better education.

214 Ms. Behm noted that the numbers are not enough.

215 Ms. Kuzsma commented on the enrollment numbers of this year's K- 4. She then discussed the
216 potential academic benefits and is unsure if that the consolidation will pass voting. She added
217 that there are other things that they can look at for example, consolidating differently, and having
218 two districts instead of one.

219 Mr. Brown replied that there would be a bigger increase in cost.

220 Ms. Kuzsma noted that there are a lot of unanswered questions and is greatly concerned on
221 voting on something that they do not know about.

222 Mr. Brown noted that he agrees with Ms. Kuzsma. He added that is why they are here. He
223 reminded the Board to please ask him questions and tell him their concerns.

224 Superintendent Warburton then commented that RSA 195 is about Cooperative School Districts
225 and for the Board to read that for more information.

226 He added that the Streamline Committee has worked for the past 8 months and that is the
227 Board's decision to add it as a Warrant Article. He reminded the Board and public that they are
228 seeking input.

229 He then remarked that he started 6 years ago and realizes that the enrollment is decreasing. He
230 added that it is a serious issue that he is concerned about. He noted that there are many factors to
231 look at.

232 He added that the upcoming Public Forums will give more information and that there is a real
233 and present issue to look at seriously.

234 He concluded that Mr. Frank Brown has lead this group with high integrity.

235 Mr. Brown then asked for feedback and if there was a need to talk one on one he will be happy to
236 do so.

237 Chair Amy Facey thanked Mr. Brown and the Streamline Committee for all of their hard work
238 and research. She added that it is one of the pillars and to not ignore the future. She added to
239 think about the potential benefits. She added that they will be in listening mode and want to hear
240 people's comments.

241 B. Introduction of the ASD Ways & Means Committee

242 Ms. Stephanie Grund introduced members of the Amherst Ways and Means Committee.

243 The Board thanked the Committee for all of their efforts.

244 C. Budget Assumptions

245 Mr. Adam Steel, Business Administrator, discussed the FY 18 Budget Assumptions. He noted
246 that he will explain how the budget is created with the broadest overview.

247 He then noted that it begins with who they are and how it translates into the student experience.
248 He then discussed the staffing requirements, the fixed costs, discretionary items, and ending with
249 the proposed budget.

250 He began by discussing that the ASD is a community of learners, that they are leading the
251 adoption of 21st century instruction, working to increase the value proposition for stakeholders
252 and maintain good partners of community, recreation and neighbors.

253 He then discussed the Clark/Wilkins School noting that there were 12 portables down to 4
254 classrooms, in the 5th year of preschool and first year of full day kindergarten, have a growing
255 need for social-emotional curriculum, have growing identifications in autism and added that the
256 PD center will need to be relocated.

257 He then discussed Amherst Middle School Life skills program growing, that they are moving to
258 a PACE tier 1 school, have special education resource requirements trending higher and Non IEP
259 mental health issues rising.

260 He then reviewed the following topics of: Student to Teacher Ratio Targets, Content Delivery,
261 Technology Strategy, Special education program design, and Professional development
262 requirements for staff.

263 Mr. Steel then covered the enrollment with the staffing considerations of C/W and AMS.

264 Principal Dodge noted that they budgeted for 591for AMS.

265 Mr. Steel noted that they are not looking at a reduction in staff.

266 Mr. Steel then covered the Fixed Costs. He noted that he has no control over these issues. He
267 reviewed the NHRS rate increase, the HealthTrust GMR increase of 16.7%, flat utility
268 projection, (noting the volatility of oil prices), out of district (still working on), transportation
269 contract increase, and the overtime/over contract allowance increase.

270 He added that the real cost for running the school is more than what they have been paying, he
271 added that they now have a time card system.

272 He then discussed the discretionary budgets, with a target of 0% growth.

273 He then discussed the facilities at C/W and AMS.

274 He then reviewed the present realities.

275 Mr. Steel then concluded his presentation with the next steps in timeline format.

276 He asked the Board if there were any questions.

277 Chair Amy Facey then asked the Board if there were any questions.

278 The Board thanked Mr. Steel.

279 VI. DISCUSSION ITEMS

280 A. Academic Recognition at Amherst Middle School

281 Principal Dodge then handed out to the Board information about the AMS Academic Award
282 Recognition.

283 He first discussed the history of the recognition and traditions that followed. He then covered a
284 number of topics such as academic plaques and the AMS Parent Partnership Team as well as the
285 new induction of the National Junior Honor Society.

286 He then discussed the well-publicized emails he had sent to parents noting the switch to the
287 NJHS.

288 Ms. Kuzsma asked a question about the emails.

289 The Board thanked Principal Dodge.

290 VII. INFORMATIONAL

291 A. Strategic Plan

292 Chair Amy Facey stated that Superintendent Warburton wanted to give the Board a brief update
293 on the Strategic Plan.

294 Superintendent Warburton began his discussion by stating that there are about 15,000 residents
295 in both towns and that there are people that they are not reaching because they are so busy. He
296 then noted that they are in the process of developing a digital magazine, in the same format as
297 the SHS Claw (<http://shsclaw.sprise.com/>).

298 He added that students will be involved and that this digital magazine will include the great
299 things that are going on in our schools, stories with interviews of people in our town that have a
300 lot to offer, and special visits. He added that they can include student written articles, videos and
301 other important information.

302 He then discussed the Stanford Univ. website and how clear and robust it is. He then then
303 remarked the SAU does not tell their story. He then noted their fact section is a great resource for
304 important information. He added that this fact section would be great example for the SAU as
305 well, and to include such information such as, cost per pupil, enrollment data, staffing info, and
306 other additional information.

307 He then noted that he will be reaching out to the citizens and asking for their input.

308 He then remarked about the possibility of an app. He noted that people are looking at their
309 devices and want to drive people to that media. He then discussed what you will see in the digital
310 magazine such as, history, leaders over time, different kinds of assessment data, staff info,
311 enrollment numbers, accomplishments of the Districts, number of citizens, the Strategic Plan,
312 consolidation news, ongoing surveys, videos of kids, meetings (short clips), pictures, mission,
313 core values, and more.

314 He added that they will use the same format as SHS's Claw (<http://shsclaw.sprise.com/>) and will
315 be completed on or before December 15th.

316 He added that if you have information to add to the digital magazine do not hesitate to contact
317 him.

318 Ms. Facey thanked Superintendent Warburton.

319 Ms. Facey then turned the discussion to the Dashboard.

320 She added that they have been discussing the Dashboard at the 4 Chairs meeting and that it is a
321 larger discussion.

322 She noted that the Board should think about it and discuss.

323 Mr. Manning then commented that he had looked at MV's metrics and that they have good data.
324 He then discussed the Strategic Plan.

325 Ms. Facey then suggested that they plan a workshop day to do some thinking, involving the
326 Administration, Staff etc.

327 Mr. Warburton then noted that the 4 School Board Chairs have a meeting with the
328 Administration and to start there.

329 Discussion ensued over the workshop.

330 Ms. Facey noted that they will come up with a time to meet.

331 Mr. Manning asked if it makes sense to appoint someone as the Strategic Plan Chair. He added
332 that it might be time to consider this and look back at the mission and vision.

333 Discussion ensued.

334 Superintendent Warburton then discussed the various pillars and the current work that they are
335 doing. He noted that there are a lot of people that are working and are school officials. He added
336 that they are initiative laden.

337 He then discussed that there are a lot of competing factors to consider.

338 The Board thanked Mr. Warburton.

339 B. Parent Portal

340 Chair Amy Facey noted that this has been moved to the Principals Report.

341 C. Trip to Washington, D.C. Proposal

342 Ms. Jan McGuigan and Ms. Tracey Gagne discussed the proposed AMS field trip to Washington,
343 D.C. She then discussed that it is an extracurricular trip.

344 Mr. Warburton noted that it is over vacation time.

345 Ms. Facey remarked then it doesn't require Board approval due to policy.

346 Ms. McGuigan noted that she would like the Board to know about the trip.

347 Ms. Kuzsma noted that she went on the trip in the past. She then added that she remembered
348 issues followed by disciplinary action.

349 Ms. Facey noted that Mr. Prescott, (not in attendance) asked if students don't go, are they
350 missing classroom curriculum.

351 They both answered, no.

352 The Board thanked Ms. Gagne and Ms. McGuigan.

353 VIII. PUBLIC COMMENT

354 Mr. John Glover, ASD Ways and Means Committee Member noted that he would like to get
355 things on the record.

356 He then discussed his support of the consolidation and asked the Board what is the value of
357 having 3 or 4 school districts. He then added that he does not understand why they cannot share
358 resources in the first place.

359 He then discussed the FY 18 Budget and wants the fixed costs to be highlighted. He noted that
360 the Ways and Means Committee reviews the discretionary spending.

361 Mr. Steel replied that he can highlight those fixed costs.

362 Mr. Glover then commented on Mr. Purvis's remarks about academic recognition.

363 He then discussed the Dashboard and that it can be difficult to control the information in so
364 many outlets.

365 Superintendent Warburton noted that they are looking at that right now, and having data in one
366 place. He added that he made a good point and thanked him for his input.

367 Mr. Glover then commented that should there be complications with the Washington D.C. trip,
368 that it is likely that the Board would face litigation.

369 Mr. Dwayne Purvis, Souhegan Cooperative School Board Member, Amherst NH, commented in
370 regards to the length of public comment time.

371 Ms. Facey noted that it is up to the Board's discretion.

372 Mr. Purvis commented that he does not understand why straight A students do not get recognized
373 and that it is unfortunate.

374 He then discussed that kind of accomplishment deserves recognition. He then questioned if the
375 school can service the gifted students.

376 Mr. Manning noted that he wants Mr. Purvis to think about the students that do not get straight
377 A's do go on to do great things. He added that there are there are other ways to measure
378 excellence other than grades.

379 Ms. Facey then noted that they are looking at multiple measures and that no one is discounting
380 academic excellence.

381 Ms. McCabe, commented about competency based education and removing grades. She then
382 gave an example of testing.

383 Mr. Warburton then discussed the NJHS and what they look at in that program. He then
384 discussed that PACE assessments are not the only assessments that they give the students.

385 Ms. McCabe added that it was her belief that they are only going to PACE.

386 Superintendent Warburton then discussed competency based education.

387 Superintendent Warburton noted that Mr. Bruce Chakrin, Director of Technology, is in
388 attendance and thanked him for his work.

389 IX. ACTION ITEM

390 A. Literacy Curriculum

391 Ms. Amy Facey then discussed that Ms. Landwehrle is here to discuss the Curriculum K-8 and
392 noted that it is up for a vote.

393 Ms. Landwehrle first discussed the recent summer Literacy Institute.

394 She then discussed the SAU 39 Literacy Curriculum document. She added that it is collective
395 and can be refined.

396 She finalized by stating that she needed the Board's approval.

397 **Mr. Jim Manning made a Motion to accept the SAU 39 Literacy Curriculum K-8. Ms.**
398 **Galen Tremblay seconded the Motion. The vote was unanimous, Motion passed.**

399 Superintendent Warburton remarked that new curriculum comes to the Board.

400 XI. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

401 Chair Amy Facey noted the following Future Agenda Items:

- 402 • Math Curriculum
- 403 • Dashboard
- 404 • Fence at Upper Wilkins

405 XII. REVIEW OF MEETING/ADJOURN

406 **Mr. Jim Manning made a Motion to adjourn the Meeting at 9:45 PM. Ms. Elizabeth**
407 **Kuzsma seconded the Motion. The vote was unanimous, Motion passed.**

408