

MINUTES
AMHERST SCHOOL BOARD
January 9, 2006
Amherst Middle School First Floor Music Room

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Chairperson Deborah Cort called the Board meeting to order at 6:04 p.m.

CALL TO ORDER

Present:

ATTENDANCE

Amherst School Board: Deborah Cort, Dwight Brew, Nancy Head, Jim O'Mara, and Pam Dudoff (left at 9:40 p.m.)

Administrative Team: Howard Colter, Porter Dodge, Deborah Martel, Susan Ward, Gerry St. Amand, and Kathy Skoglund

Ways & Means: CJ Butler, Lynne Doherty, Davin Desborough, and Bill Overholt

Minutes Recorder: Terri Connolly (left at 9:00 p.m.)

Deborah Cort invited comments from the public, but none were forthcoming.

PUBLIC TIME

Porter Dodge reported on highlights at the Amherst Middle School and noted the Administration had revisited the quotes for upgrading the heating system. Based upon this further review, it has been verified that Viking (the lowest bidder) will provide AMS with the best service. Porter also reported Congressman Charlie Bass will be visiting the school on January 20, 2006 to kick-off the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation's Promise to Remember Me campaign. Porter also suggested a communication be sent to the community regarding the reduction of adequacy aid for education, as he has received a number of comments and questions regarding the latest tax bills. Deborah noted Pam Dudoff and Phyllis Thomas were addressing that matter and would be publishing some written materials. Pam reported that Phyllis had found that *The Cabinet* was covering this story and would be writing a community-wide article. Deborah added the issue would be a good item to address at the public hearing.

REPORTS
Building Principals

Gerry St. Amand reported on highlights from the Clark and Wilson Schools and expressed thanks to all the custodial staff at Wilkins School, which included Charlie Moore, Bob Goulet, Larry Turke, and Mike McGuire, as they helped address the major malfunction of the heating system on January 8, 2006; Jerry also expressed thanks to Kathy Johnson and Susan Ward who notified

99% of the families that they needed to tune in their radios and televisions in the event that school needed to be delayed or cancelled because of the heating system problem. Gerry noted the SAU-wide Professional Development Committee will meet on January 10, 2006 to finalize plans for the January 17, 2006 curriculum day, and the Amherst Police Department will be scheduling visitations to all grade levels at both schools to address topics relative to general safety and bullying.

Howard Colter commended the custodians, Kathy Johnson, Susan Ward and Gerry St. Amand for their efforts in address the heating system. There will be an assessment in terms of whether to replace the heating system. Pam Dudoff suggested the Board send a thank you note to those employees for their extra effort.

Jim O'Mara reported the Recreation Committee meeting scheduled for January 2006 has been cancelled and will be rescheduled. The town of Amherst is still working on the details to establish compliance measures necessary to track revenues with the car rental agency and how to best allocate those funds for field maintenance.

**Recreation
Committee Report**

Howard Colter reported he had received a proposal from the Turnstone Corporation in its assessment of the list of priority items and issues at the Brick School. The Board reviewed the list and corresponding project costs, which included Front Entrance (\$36,000.00), Copula and Front Gale End (\$60,300.00), Rear Gable End and Soffits (\$24,200.00), Roof (\$38,900.00), and Masonry (\$29,500.00). The Board discussed the maintenance items, to which Dwight Brew noted the Amherst School District (ASD) needs to figure out what to do with the building with regard to whether or not the SAU will stay in the building or should the town of Amherst take the building back. Howard reported the SAU office should be relocated due to handicap inaccessibility, inefficient communication layout among the floors, and excessive maintenance costs.

**BUSINESS &
INSTRUCTION
Maintenance Update
and Project List for
the Brick School**

There was additional discussion regarding the Amherst Historical Society's commitment to fund some repairs, to which Deborah added the ASD wanted to know if the porch was a priority and according to the Turnstone Corporation report, it is. Deborah added she would discuss this matter with Will Ludt, of the Amherst Historical Society, to see if funds can be raised for this item. The Board also discussed the possibility of establishing a warrant article to sell the Brick School, to which Deborah noted there should be an analysis done of

the interior and a plan to address the exterior items. It was agreed Howard will put together the prioritized list of interior items and contact Will Ludt concerning the matter.

Susan Ward noted in her review of rental space last year, the cost would be approximately \$100,000.00 per year for a 10,000 square feet facility.

Dwight Brew reported that, in light of the Superintendent search, **Master Plan** he would like to have the Board approve Nancy Head as the new Master Plan Committee Chair and he would continue on as a committee member.

Jim O'Mara moved to accept the resignation of Dwight Brew as the Chair of the Master Plan Committee, but to remain an active member of the committee. Dwight Brew seconded the motion. All board members voted in favor of the motion. The motion passed.

Dwight Brew moved Nancy Head be Chair of the Master Plan Committee. Pam Dudoff seconded the motion. All board members voted in favor of the motion. The motion passed.

Nancy Head reported the ASD had received a contract from Frank Mariance, the architectural firm, which will be signed to continue the Master Plan process.

The Board reviewed the FY'07 revised budget, which Deborah **FY'07 Revised Budget** noted had been modified per the requests of the last meeting. Susan Ward and Kathy Skoglund addressed line items for clarification purposes.

There was a question regarding the environmental camp stipends in that, for gross budgeting purposes, line item #4 should be increased \$18,000 (total for the line item should be \$36,000) with \$18,000 in the revenue line item #23.

CJ Butler questioned what the Other line item (in Revenues) entailed, to which Susan reported that line item included maintenance fees received for the Brick School and interscholastic fees. It was agreed the line item should be itemized.

Dwight Brew moved the Amherst School Board present this budget, as amended on January 9, 2005, in the amount of \$21,206,982.00, at the Public Hearing of January 16, 2005. Nancy Head seconded the motion.

Jim O'Mara noted the percentage increase should be changed to reflect the amendments discussed, which would be a change of 5.1% to 5.2% (5.176%).

All board members voted on the motion. The motion passed.

Susan Ward presented a default budget and highlighted the key points of consideration include: contractual obligations are in place for the Amherst Education Association and those obligations contribute to the increases in the default over the FY'06 budget; projections of increased energy costs have not been incorporated into the default budget at this time; anticipated increases in student transportation have been incorporated; increases in medical and dental premiums by the School District are viewed as obligations and contribute to the increase in the default over the FY'06 budget; increased costs for the portable classroom leases at each building are not incorporated into the default budget; the FY'07 default budget reflects a 3.37% increase over the FY'06 budget. Susan also noted there would be an increase of \$18,000 per the amendments for the environmental camp as discussed earlier.

Default Budget

Pam Dudoff moved the ASD present the default budget, as amended in the amount of \$21,067,441.00, at the Public Hearing of January 16, 2005. Jim O'Mara seconded the motion. All board members voted in favor of the motion. The motion passed.

The Board agreed the articles to be presented at the Public Hearing would be the Expendable Trust Fund and ASSA (should the Board agree to support the tentative agreement reached today).

Warrant Articles

The Board reviewed the ETF account and allocations. The Board discussed achieving a balance of \$300,000 out of surplus and through taxation. There was additional discussion regarding raising split funds between surplus and taxation.

Pam Dudoff moved to present the warrant article for the Expendable Trust Fund that would authorize \$15,000 of surplus, if the monies exist from the current year, and \$15,000 from taxation. Nancy Head seconded the motion. All board members voted in favor of the motion. The motion passed.

Susan Ward noted the SAU had been in receipt of the petition warrant article regarding the SAU budget, to which Dwight noted that matter will be addressed on Monday night at the public hearing.

Dwight Brew moved the Board oppose the petition article, which

requests the SAU budget be voted on separately, as the SAU budget is included in the ASD budget. Pam Dudoff seconded the motion.

It was noted the voters of ASD overwhelmingly rejected the petition article last year.

The motion passed.

Pam Dudoff moved to accept the minutes of January 3, 2006 and Dwight Brew seconded. The minutes were accepted as amended: Page 1394, under Attendance, add Pam before Dudoff Page 1396, 3rd paragraph, 1st line, change to read: "...pointed out that the Brick School repairs should be budgeted..." The motion passed.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF JANUARY 3, 2006

Nancy Head moved, Pam Dudoff seconded, to go into non-public session under the provisions of RSA 91-A:3,II(e). By a roll call vote, all members voted in favor: Nancy Head-yes, Dwight Brew-yes, Deborah Cort-yes, Pam Dudoff-yes, and Jim O'Mara-yes. The Board went into non-public session at 7:45 p.m.

NON-PUBLIC SESSION

The Board discussed negotiations.

Nancy Head moved, Dwight Brew seconded, to come out of non-public. By a roll call vote, all members voted in favor: Nancy Head-yes, Dwight Brew-yes, Deborah Cort-yes, Pam Dudoff-yes, and Jim O'Mara-yes. The Board came out of non-public session at 9:00 p.m.

Nancy Head moved, Pam Dudoff seconded, to go into non-public session under the provisions of RSA 91-A:3,II(b). By a roll call vote, all members voted in favor: Nancy Head-yes, Dwight Brew-yes, Deborah Cort-yes, Pam Dudoff-yes, and Jim O'Mara-yes. The Board went into non-public session at 9:00 p.m.

NON-PUBLIC SESSION

The Board discussed personnel matters.

Jim O'Mara moved, Nancy Head seconded, to come out of non-public. By a roll call vote, all members voted in favor: Nancy Head-yes, Dwight Brew-yes, Deborah Cort-yes, Pam Dudoff-yes, and Jim O'Mara-yes. The Board came out of non-public session at 9:20 p.m.

Jim O'Mara moved to support the superintendent's recommendation to eliminate the full time SPED paraprofessional position at Wilkins; Pam Dudoff seconded the motion. All board members voted unanimously in favor of the motion. The motion passed.

PERSONNEL

Dwight Brew moved to support the superintendent's offer for employment to Deborah Diamantopoulos as a half time paraprofessional at Wilkins and to Jane Lundwall as a half time paraprofessional at Wilkins. Pam Dudoff seconded the motion. All board members voted in favor of the motion. The motion passed.

Pam Dudoff moved, Jim O'Mara seconded, to go into non-public session under the provisions of RSA 91-A:3,II(e). By a roll call vote, all members voted in favor: Nancy Head-yes, Dwight Brew-yes, Deborah Cort-yes, Pam Dudoff-yes, and Jim O'Mara-yes. The Board went into non-public session at 9:21 p.m.

**NON-PUBLIC
SESSION**

The Board discussed a litigation matter.

Pam Dudoff moved, Nancy Head seconded, to come out of non-public. By a roll call vote, all members voted in favor: Nancy Head-yes, Dwight Brew-yes, Deborah Cort-yes, Pam Dudoff-yes, and Jim O'Mara-yes. The Board came out of non-public session at 9:38 p.m.

Jim O'Mara moved to authorize Nancy Head to prepare a document on behalf of the Board in response to a petition warrant article for dissemination at the Public Hearing and any other forums as deemed appropriate. Dwight Brew seconded the motion. All board members voted in favor of the motion. The motion passed.

OTHER

Jim O'Mara moved to authorize Nancy Head, as the new Master Plan Committee Chair, to sign the agreement for architectural services with Frank Marance on behalf of the Amherst School Board. Dwight Brew seconded the motion. All board members voted in favor of the motion. The motion passed.

Jim O'Mara moved to adjourn. Nancy Head seconded the motion. All board members voted in favor of the motion. The motion passed. The meeting adjourned at 9:50 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT