

MINUTES
AMHERST SCHOOL BOARD
February 20, 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, Pam Dudoff, and Jim O'Mara (arrived at 6:27 p.m.)

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

Ways & Means: Lynn Doherty and CJ Butler

Minutes Recorder: Terri Connolly

Dr. Mark Joyce and Dennis Pope, of the New Hampshire School Administrator Association, presented enrollment assessment results for the Amherst School District. Dr. Joyce reviewed town population trends and its relevance to student population. The latest data (2005) reported 21.7% of the population were students. There was also a review of various demographic data, including population, births, and building permits. There were other characteristics of the town discussed with the town administrator, including the development of 55-and over housing units. Based upon these data, the trend projects modest growth in population, which may not correspond to a modest growth of school-aged children; in fact, there is an estimated 105 decrease in the K-12 student population over a projected 10-year period.

**NHSAA Demographic
and K-12 Student
Enrollment
Assessment**

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

PUBLIC TIME

Pam Dudoff moved to approve the Treasurer's Report, dated January 2006. Nancy Head seconded the motion.

REPORTS
Treasurer's Report

Pam Dudoff questioned if the \$6,000 generated in interest per month in the SWEEP account could be used to offset budget deficit line items, to which Dwight Brew noted the DRA has suggested this is not unanticipated income because there is an expectation of earning interest so it must be given back to the voters.

All board members voted in favor of the motion. The motion

passed.

Jan Bunker reported Jay Dinkle, Vice President of Ocean's Bank, has recommended a switch from the CD-account to a mid-term deposit account; this financial vehicle will yield the same amount of interest with the same terms, but there are no limitations as to amounts deposited or deducted at any given time.

Dwight Brew questioned if the auditors could review the recommendation, to which Susan noted she would contact Melanson Heath regarding the recommendation. Jan noted she would wait until there is feedback from the auditors regarding this matter.

Dwight Brew moved the ASD change from the CD account to the recommended municipalities mid-term deposit account and to authorize the Board Chair and Vice-Chair sign the appropriate forms, pending the approval from the auditors review. Pam Dudoff seconded the motion. All board members voted in favor of the motion. The motion passed.

Gerry St. Amand reported on highlights from Clark and Wilkins Schools and recognized all of the students and staff members who aided with a smooth dismissal process on February 17, 2006. Gerry also reported Clark and Wilkins students and staff members are celebrating "Read Around the World" week in conjunction with the Winter Olympics; the annual Invention Convention, with over one hundred student participants, will take place on February 21, 2006 at Wilkins School; Gerry recognized Mrs. McIntyre, the event coordinator and facilitator, and student participants and their families for all their efforts in putting this event together; Dr. Connie Hebert, Literacy Specialist, spent February 15th at the Wilkins School and February 16th at the Clark School modeling guided reading lessons and reading groups for staff members; Dr. Hebert will return to Clark and Wilkins Schools in May. Gerry noted these workshops and sessions have been possible through an IDEA grant and thanked Nicole Heimarck and Kathy Skoglund for their instrumental role in writing and acquiring grant funds. Gerry also noted donations will be collected next month for SHARE.

Building Principals

Deborah Cort recognized the Clark and Wilkins staff for their effort on Friday, February 17th and noted how well this group works together and thanked them for their efforts.

Porter Dodge reported on highlights from the Amherst Middle School and noted the 7th Grade Environmental School was held at Pinkham Notch last Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday. The students

had an excellent experience. Porter thanked Jim O'Mara for chaperoning the event. The remaining two teams will travel to Pinkham Notch in March.

Finalists for the Wells Public Speaking Competition will compete on Wednesday, February 23, 2006 in the SHS Auditorium; the Amherst Theater Club will present *Bye Bye Birdie* on March 16th through the 18th. The new 5th grade teacher, Michelle Emmond, and volunteer parent Meg Petersen have dedicated many hours again this year to our annual production; the 8th grade mock trial competition finished last week and the district competition team has been chosen to represent AMS later in March. Porter recognized eighth grade Social Studies teachers, Charetta Mutarelli, Richard Vassar and Paul Tumas for their job working with students on difficult and complex court bases; the guidance counselors have started the transition process to accept students from the Wilkins and Mount Vernon Village Schools as well as the send off of students to SHS next year. Porter recognized the Amherst PTA for the donated funds for student transportation and thanked them for the continued support of ASD schools.

Pam Dudoff questioned the sustainability of the PTA grant and if this amount should be budgeted during the next budget cycle, to which Porter noted this is the second year the PTA has funded this effort. The cost is approximately \$1,100.00. Jim O'Mara requested the Superintendent contact the Mont Vernon school district about a 50/50 split to cover the transportation costs of this program.

Nancy Head presented a master plan update and noted Judy Hall, the representative from Frank Marianne Associates, recently toured the district schools to verify plans and reconcile plan updates. Judy will be providing a rough timeline on the project.

Master Plan Update

Susan Ward presented an update of the monthly financials and noted there has been an extensive review of the deficit accounts, as well as an analysis of projected line item savings. This process has allowed the SAU to determine a more accurate assessment of expenditures. Susan thanked Lisa Ambrosio, Ernie Kilman, Kathy Skoglund, Gerry St. Amand, and Porter Dodge for their efforts in reviewing the budgetary line items.

**Budget Status Update
FY'06**

Susan noted Special Education costs have stabilized, which will allow some SPED monies to be allocated to various deficit accounts.

Pam Dudoff thanked Susan and her staff, as well as Kathy Skoglund and the building principals for their efforts.

The board reviewed the budget transfers and asked a variety of clarifying questions regarding the budget transfers requests. Jim O'Mara noted the review and associated questions should be recognized as points of clarification and explanation, and not justification.

There was also a discussion regarding combining the Clark and Wilkins budgets in the future, to which both Susan Ward and Gerry St. Amand supported.

Jim O'Mara reviewed Budget Transfer No. 200621 and noted he was not comfortable in using prospective revenue funds, designated for field trips, to offset the increase costs of bus fuel and transportation. Jim noted he would like to see the transfer funds come from somewhere else and added the process used for this particular budget transfer was convoluted. Jim noted he would support the request if there was a commitment to replenish the field trip line item.

Pam Dudoff moved to approve Budget Transfer Requests 200610 through 200623, with the understanding there will be an effort at the end of the year, if the amount is available, to replenish the Field Trip line item, 10.2725.579. Dwight Brew seconded the motion. All board members voted in favor of the motion. The motion passed.

Deborah Cort thanked Susan, the administration, board, and Ways and Means for the immense effort that went into the public hearing and deliberative session presentations.

Nancy Head moved to approve the minutes of the January 23, 2006 meeting. Dwight Brew seconded the motion. The minutes were approved as amended:

Page 1409, 1st paragraph, change "share" to "shape"

Jim O'Mara and Pam Dudoff abstained. The motion passed.

Approval of January 23, 2006 Minutes

Jim O'Mara moved to approve the minutes of the February 8, 2006 meeting. Pam Dudoff seconded the motion. The minutes were accepted without amendment. The motion passed.

Approval of February 8, 2006 Minutes

Howard Colter noted the ASD Board had agreed to add the Speech Language Specialist position to the AEA bargaining agreement, and to negotiating terms and conditions for that position. Howard reported he and Pam Dudoff met with bargaining unit and Phil Pratt and came to an agreement that needs to be supported by both the AEA and ASD.

Modification of Certified Bargaining Unit

Pam Dudoff moved the new Speech Language Specialist position, in the AEA, be treated like the majority of positions in that agreement. Nancy Head seconded the motion.

The board voted 3-2, the motion passed.

Dwight Brew noted he preferred to have the agreement reviewed by an attorney and have an outline of the specifics to the agreement.

Jim O'Mara added he believed this would have been a good opportunity to review articles within the agreement, as it is a managerial tool.

Jim O'Mara moved, Pam Dudoff seconded, to go into non-public session under the provisions of RSA 91-A:3,II(a). By a roll call vote, all members voted in favor: O'Mara-yes, Dudoff-yes, Cort-yes, Brew-yes, and Head-yes. The board went into non-public session at 8:31 p.m.

**NON-PUBLIC
SESSION**

The Board discussed personnel matters in non-public session.

Dwight Brew moved, Pam Dudoff seconded, to come out of non-public session. By a roll call vote, all members voted in favor: O'Mara-yes, Dudoff-yes, Cort-yes, Brew-yes, and Head-yes. The board came out of non-public session at 8:34 p.m.

Howard Colter recommended the board approve the nomination of Joanne Griffin as a long-term substitute for the period of May 1, 2006 to the end of the school year at the Amherst Middle School.

**PERSONNEL
Nomination**

Jim O'Mara moved to accept the Superintendent's recommendation to approve the nomination of Joanne Griffin as a long-term substitute, for Grade 7, from May 1, 2006 to the end of the school year at the Amherst Middle School. Pam Dudoff seconded the motion. All board members voted in favor of the motion. The motion passed.

Howard Colter recommended the board approve the nomination of Debra Husbands as a long-term substitute for the period of March 13, 2006 to May 12, 2006 at the Amherst Middle School.

Jim O'Mara moved to accept the Superintendent's recommendation to approve the nomination of Debra Husbands as a long-term substitute, for Grade 5, from March 13, 2006 to May 12, 2006 at the Amherst Middle School. Pam Dudoff seconded the motion. All board members voted in favor of the motion. The

motion passed.

Deborah Cort volunteered to attend and judge the Wells Speaking Competition. **OTHER**

It was noted Nancy Head and Deborah Cort represent ASD on the Transportation Committee to review the bus contract. Susan reported there was an opportunity to extend the bus contract for another 3 years. Susan briefly reviewed some specifics of the contract and asked if the board was comfortable with the extension or should ASD go out to bid.

The board presented their feedback to Susan regarding the matter. Jim O'Mara suggested formulating a letter of interest and putting together specifications based upon those responding to the letter of interest. Jim questioned if the ASD warrants its own fleet, to which Howard Colter noted the matter is worth a review, but added the board and district are working on a variety of other matters right now. Howard suggested any process be discussed with Souhegan, as it will impact them as well.

Dwight Brew noted he was comfortable with whatever the Committee comes back with if the process supports open market bidding and the results are reflective of a good competitive process. Dwight added he would like to have the apportionment of the transportation formula reviewed, to which Howard noted SHS wants a review as well. The matter will be discussed at a SAU-board meeting.

Pam Dudoff questioned if there could be accommodations for late start dates with other districts.

The board agreed the following items should be added for future agenda items: audit report, approval of support staff (if necessary), and televised board meetings. **FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

Jim O'Mara also requested there be a process of notifying the board of significant events so cards could be sent.

Dwight Brew moved and Nancy Head seconded to adjourn the meeting. All board members voted in favor and the meeting adjourned at 9:03 p.m. **ADJOURNMENT**