

MINUTES
AMHERST SCHOOL BOARD
April 17, 2006
Amherst Middle School First Floor Music Room

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Chairperson Dwight Brew called the board meeting to order at 6:01 p.m. **CALL TO ORDER**

Present:

ATTENDANCE

Amherst School Board: Deborah Cort, Dwight Brew, Nancy Head, Jim O'Mara, and Pam Dudoff

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

Minutes Recorder: Terri Connolly

Dwight Brew invited comments from the public, but none were forthcoming. **PUBLIC TIME**

Gerry St. Amand reported on highlights from Clark and Wilkins Schools and noted the fourth grade students will be presenting a musical program to families and guests on April 18, 2006; families will be surveyed through the *Principal's Newsletter* to get feedback on their current and future needs for after school programming; all parents have been requested to provide information, by April 22, 2006, that could aid with student placement; the Amherst PTA and the Souhegan PTA will be co-sponsoring an Internet Safety Presentation at SCHS on April 19, 2006; NECAP results are in the process of being analyzed by classroom teachers, special subject teachers, specialists, and guidance counselors to address potential areas in need of greater focus and attention; subcommittees connected to the Professional Development Committee will begin meeting in the near future to address potential professional development offerings for 2006-2007 and many staff members have already completed feedback sheets identifying their priorities and targeted needs; Gerry recognized Jim Miners for his diligence and persistence with which he undertakes and pursues tasks and Gerry added Jim's effort is already making a positive difference. **ADMINISTRATORS' REPORTS**

Porter Dodge presented an update on the AMS environmental schools. Porter noted he had met with Howard Colter, Nicole Heimarck, and Susan Ward to discuss the best approach to the boards' request to fully research and report on the value of continuing all three programs currently in place. This evaluation would review the programs overall educational benefits to the curriculum, assessing

the impact on other programs, and fully determine the overall costs in terms of personnel and program. In order to get an unbiased evaluation, it has been determined that there would be a benefit in forming an ad hoc committee, comprised of teachers, parents, board members, administration, and a Ways and Means representative. The committee would focus on the pros and cons of existing trips, compare them against programs provided by other area schools, determine if programs can be effectively brought back into the district at substantial savings, and are three trips in three years a financial burden on families. The committee would be charged with assessing the programs and formulate conclusions with data. The following fundamental questions would be answered by this ad hoc committee:

1. What are other schools in the state doing?
2. What is a reasonable number of trips for one school?
3. Should ASD return to ending the 7th grade environmental school at the end of FY'07 as was slated?
4. Are the trips valuable enough to the curriculum to justify the costs? What is the cost/benefit analysis?
5. Should the district include the costs (full or partial funding) in the budget if the trips are essential to the curriculum?

Porter requested the board submit any additional questions to him and he would add those questions to the list.

Porter also reported PSNH has completed an energy assessment and has suggested an annual projected \$40,000 savings if the custodial staff manually shuts down the water/heating systems daily; this procedure is underway at AMS.

Pam Dudoff noted if the utilities savings is that substantial than she encouraged the other schools in the district to look into similar opportunities for potential savings, to which Susan Ward noted she would ask Jim Miner to look into it.

The board reviewed financial data submitted by the treasurer, including a Reconciliation Report of All Accounts, Treasurer's Cash Journal, Monthly Report of the Treasurer, and a Monthly Reconciliation Report of Combined Accounts. **TREASURER'S REPORT**

Deborah Cort moved to accept the Treasurer's Report, dated March 2006. Pam Dudoff seconded the motion. All board members voted in favor of the motion. The motion passed.

Susan Ward presented a financial report, in a new format, to the board and noted there have been areas identified, based on input and **FINANCIAL REPORT**

discussions with principals and department directors, as challenges for the current year budget. The issues fall into three areas, including SPED, Transportation, and Operations/Maintenance. Year-to-date, the SPED accounts are over budget by \$154,000, however, this does not include pending transfers from the IDEA grant. Even with the grant monies, the end of year projection is still approximately a deficit of \$58,000, which is due to the unanticipated addition of five students from out of district.

Operational energy costs present a budgetary issue, as First Student is currently billing for excess fuel over the contracted rate along with additional mileage; these premiums present a projected \$26,776 expense.

The finance department is closely monitoring accounts that appear to have positive variances in an effort to determine areas for potential budget transfers. The finance department will continue to work with the school administrators regarding these projections.

Susan also noted Food Service continues to show a profit close projection of \$19,000.00; this includes a pending transfer of \$6,223 for a water heater repair at Wilkins. There is also an estimated amount needed to purchase a dishwasher plus an electric heat booster; if these purchases are approved, the food service operation will breakeven at year-end.

Deborah Cort noted the salary of the food service director is not included in the food service budget. Food service is showing a projected profit but this salary accounting issue, which has been raised by Ways and Means, has not been addressed; the matter should be addressed before projects profits are utilized.

Pam Dudoff also noted the Wellness Policy will be addressing nutritional needs in the areas of providing high quality food to students. The policy should be considered relative to the other priorities in equipment purchases and projected end-of-year revenues.

Susan Ward presented several budget transfer requests, which the board reviewed.

Deborah Cort moved to approve budget transfer requests 200627 through 200631. Pam Dudoff seconded the motion.

Jim O'Mara questioned what items will not be purchased in lieu of the transfer amounts from the various budget items, to which Susan reported she did not know. Jim added he would like to have that

information on the requests.

The board discussed the amount of detail needed in terms of which items would not be purchased based upon budget transfers. Howard added some accounts may be general accounts and details of supplies would not be available. Dwight Brew suggested the requests provide detail, if available. The board also discussed changing the process, on the future budget transfer requests, to incorporate more details of items that would not be purchased as a result of a budgetary transfer.

The board voted 4-yes, 1-abstention. The motion passed.

Dwight Brew noted he had spoken with Susan Ward earlier today and it was agreed Jim Miner would be responsible for Expendable Trust Fund agenda items and providing the board with bid packet information and recommendations.

**BUSINESS AND
INSTRUCTION
Expendable Trust
Fund**

Dwight questioned if there would be any hardships in terms of waiting to discuss the Expendable Trust Fund (ETF) items until the next board meeting, to which Deborah Cort noted her only concern may be timing issues, as there are some projects that need to be scheduled. Deborah added Frank Marinace Architects have been contacted regarding the paving project and there are two other projects, on the ETF items list, that need additional bids. Deborah also noted there was an issue regarding a duct sock, in the amount of \$2,822, which had been reviewed as a possible item that does not meet the ETF criteria.

Pam Dudoff questioned if the window shades, which would cost approximately \$2,000, met the ETF criteria, than the ETF could use the money for the shades and the duct sock could be addressed within the operations budget. Susan noted she would discuss this with Jim Miner.

Nancy Head presented a Master Plan update to the board. Frank Marinace Architects (FMA) has presented a price of \$2,475.00 for the assessment of the SAU building in the Master Plan.

Master Plan Update

Nancy also reported a FMA representative has met with staff at the ASD schools. The representative has spent some time looking at the heating and electrical systems, use of space needs, traffic patterns, storage, and the Baboosic Lake property as well. The Master Plan Committee is planning on meeting the week after vacation with FMA

and the new superintendent. Nancy added she would like to receive approval from the board regarding establishing a committee to gather community input on the Master Plan.

The board discussed what the SAU assessment would entail and questioned if it included the Brick School or the future space needs for the SAU. Some board members agreed the assessment should be focused on the facility needs of the SAU staff and what would be an appropriate space in terms location and design. Some board members did not want to focus the assessment on the Brick School. Nancy Head added she would clarify the matter with Frank Marinace in terms of what the price included and to make sure it was on the SAU space needs.

Jim O'Mara added the assessment of the SAU needs is based upon the use of the current Amherst District asset and suggested it may not be the primary responsible of the ASD to undergo the full cost of assessing SAU needs.

Howard added it would be incredibly expensive to bring the Brick School up to standard, and suggested the building may be good for storage. The ASD should have no more responsibility to assess the SAU needs than SCHS or Mont Vernon. Howard added that Mont Vernon could look for space on its campus, and added the goal should be to identify what amount of space is needed for 20 [SAU] people and what they do.

Nancy Head moved to approve an additional \$2,475.00, which is the price of adding the assessment of the Brick School in the Master Plan study; with this addition, all ASD buildings, with the exception of the Bean property, will now be part of the Frank Marinace Architects' assessment. Jim O'Mara seconded the motion. The board voted 4-yes, 1-abestention. The motion passed.

Pam Dudoff noted she was still not clear as to what the board was asking FMA to assess.

Nancy Head moved to form a committee, possibly comprised of staff and community members, to gather community input. Deborah Cort seconded the motion. All board members voted in favor of the motion passed.

Nancy added this would be a short-term committee of 10 community members meeting two or three times. The goal of the committee will be to provide input into the Master Plan goals and to recommend changes or additions to the goals

Pam Dudoff moved to approve the meeting minutes of April 3, 2006. Deborah Cort seconded the motion. The Board approved the minutes as amended:

**APPROVAL OF
APRIL 3, 2006
MINUTES**

Page 1433, under Public Time, 3rd paragraph, 1st line, change “Palio” to “Polio”

Page 1434, 3rd paragraph, change “Disko” to “Disco”

Page 1435, 3rd paragraph, change “Erik” to “Eric”

Page 1435, 4th paragraph, 4th line, change to read: “...by the taxpayers. This years revenue budget to be paid by taxes with the...”

Page 1437, 1st paragraph, 1st line, change to read: “...Cort moved the administration present...”

Page 1437, 1st paragraph, last line, add: Jim O’Mara seconded the motion.

Page 1437, 3rd paragraph, last line, change to read: “...and both candidates will meet on faculty staff parents on Tuesday, ...”

Page 1437, 4th paragraph, 1st line, change to read: “...Frank Marinace, Deborah Cort, Susan...”

Page 1437, 7th paragraph, 3rd line, change to read: “...Pam also expressed interest in a new space for the SAU staff including a recommended location and a design for new construction. Nancy responded that the district does not have...”

Page 1440, 2nd paragraph, last line, change RECC to RSEC
The motion passed.

The board reviewed the proposed school calendar for 2006-2007 Howard Colter and Nicole Heimarck presented points of clarification and highlighted changes for the upcoming school calendar year. The board agreed to have the administration prepare information on the delayed starts.

**School Calendar for
2006-2007**

Nancy Head moved to adopt the 2006-2007 school calendar, as presented by the administration. Jim O’Mara seconded the motion. All board members voted in favor of the motion. The motion passed.

Dwight Brew noted the ASD board had pledged an amount of \$6,800.00, which was a cost of \$4.00 per student, to challenge HB 616. The entity leading the charge to challenge HB 616 is NHCafe. Dwight also noted the pledged funds have been encumbered from last year.

**Request for Payment
from NHCafe**

Pam Dudoff moved to pay the NHCafe invoice. Nancy Head seconded the motion. All board members voted unanimously in favor of the motion. The motion passed.

Pam Dudoff moved to enter into a Non-Public Session, under the provision of RSA 91:A-3,II(a). Deborah Cort seconded the motion. By a roll-call vote, each member of the Board voted in favor: O'Mara-yes; Dudoff-yes; Cort-yes; Brew-yes; Head-yes. The motion passed. The Board went into a Non-Public Session at 7:30 p.m.

**NON-PUBLIC
SESSION**

The Board discussed personnel matters.

Jim O'Mara moved to come out of Non-Public Session and Pam Dudoff seconded. By a roll-call vote, each member of the Board voted in favor: O'Mara-yes; Dudoff-yes; Cort-yes; Brew-yes; Head-yes. The motion passed. The Board came out of Non-Public at 8:25 p.m.

Howard Colter presented a recommendation to offer Gerry St. Amand a contract, starting July 1, 2006 through June 30, 2008 with a salary of \$98,655.00, effective July 1, 2006.

**PERSONNEL
Nominations**

Howard Colter presented a recommendation to offer Porter Dodge a contract, starting July 1, 2006 through June 30, 2008 with a salary of \$94,861.00, effective July 1, 2006.

Howard Colter presented a recommendation to offer Deborah Martel a contract, starting July 1, 2006 through June 30, 2008 with a salary of \$87,713.00, effective July 1, 2006.

Howard Colter presented a recommendation to offer Brenda Martucci a contract, starting July 1, 2006 through June 30, 2007 with a salary of \$77,135.00, effective July 1, 2006.

Pam Dudoff moved, and Deborah Cort seconded, to accept the Superintendent's recommendations. All board members voted in favor of the motion. The motion passed.

Deborah Cort moved to enter into a Non-Public Session, under the provision of RSA 91:A-II. Jim O'Mara seconded the motion. By a roll-call vote, each member of the Board voted in favor: O'Mara-yes; Dudoff-yes; Cort-yes; Brew-yes; Head-yes. The motion passed. The Board went into a Non-Public Session at 8:30 p.m.

**NON-PUBLIC
SESSION**

The Board discussed negotiations.

Jim O'Mara moved to come out of Non-Public Session and Pam Dudoff seconded. By a roll-call vote, each member of the Board

voted in favor: O'Mara-yes; Dudoff-yes; Cort-yes; Brew-yes; Head-yes. The motion passed. The Board came out of Non-Public at 8:35 p.m.

Jim O'Mara moved to authorize the Chair of the ASD school board to sign a modification to the collective bargaining agreement, specifically Article 8, worked out between the ASSA and the superintendent and his staff. Nancy Head seconded the motion. All board members voted in favor of the motion. The motion passed.

Jim O'Mara moved to adjourn the meeting. Deborah Cort seconded the motion. All board members voted unanimously in favor of the motion. The motion passed. The board meeting adjourned at 8:37 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT