

MINUTES
AMHERST SCHOOL BOARD
May 1, 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 May edition of the *Principal's Newsletter* will include an after school child care needs survey for parents to complete; during the week of May 8th, parents will be visiting library classes as part of the National Library Week Open House; fourth grade students and parents will attend a Transition Information Session at the Amherst Middle School on May 11, 2006; the two first grade classes at Wilkins will present their spring music program to families and guests on May 18, 2006; Clark School first graders will present their music programs on May 19, 2006; fourth grade classes, under the direction of Mr. April, will complete their annual hikes between May 22nd and June 2, 2006; The Clark/Wilkins Annual Writing Festival will showcase the writings of students and staff members during the week of May 22, 2006; another looping program will be offered to one of the first grade classes at Clark School, as all students will remain together when they transition into next year while only their teacher will change; interviews for the reading specialist vacancy will take place during the week of May 1, 2006. **ADMINISTRATORS' REPORTS**

Porter Dodge presented an update for AMS and recognized Susan Nichols and Larry Ballard for their tremendous efforts during the recent theater performance; the Science Fair was held on the Thursday before vacation and was a great success and Porter recognized Linda Farrington, Jackie Malloy and Sam Giarrusso for their work and leadership regarding this event; on Friday, April 21, 2006, AMS celebrated Earth Day and Porter recognized Amanda

Rogers for spearheading this event; the AMS Destination Imagination team qualified for the national competition, which will be held this spring in Knoxville, TN. Fundraising efforts are underway to raise approximately \$9,500 to finance this trip; the fifth and sixth grade students will be presenting their spring concert next Wednesday, May 10, 2006; approximately 50 people attended the Internet Safety presentation at SCHS; the Youth Risk Behavior Survey Parent Forum will be held on May 9, 2006 at 6:30 p.m. at SCHS. The PTSA parent/community forum will be addressing the results from the risk assessment survey from last year; the End-of-Eighth Grade Celebration will be held on Monday, June 19, 2006 at AMS. The last day of school for AMS students will be June 20, 2006.

Susan Ward reported an email had been submitted throughout ASD that Lisa Ambrosio or Susan Ward would review purchasing requisitions prior to purchases. SPED, portables, and energy costs are the three primary contributing factors for the estimated higher expenses in the budget. Susan noted she would have more details regarding end-of-year projections and added the request for requisition review has been received with the utmost of cooperation.

**FINANCIAL
REPORT**

Nancy Head reported there was no update on the Master Plan; the committee is scheduled to meet on Wednesday, May 10, 2006.

**MASTER PLAN
UPDATE**

Jim Miner presented a list of Brick School maintenance projects which include partitions, repainting the interior, lighting changes, completion of the playground/picnic area, installation of heat pipe insulation, installation of a backflow preventer on the main waterline, and replacing the east side entryway porch roof. Jim noted the cost of the lighting change is approximately \$3,000, but there should be a \$1,000 rebate from PSNH and energy savings will be realized. Jim also noted a Lowes grant, in the amount of \$1,000, will benefit the playground/picnic area and the Historical Society has donated two benches. The total estimated amount of these repairs is \$17,450.00.

**BRICK SCHOOL
REPAIR AND
MAINTENANCE
PROJECTS**

Jim added \$15,000 would be used from the Brick School repair fund, with the remaining amount coming from the FY'07 budget. It was also noted that Jim Miner would be the interface with Will Ludt regarding any Historical Society requests and concerns.

There was a discussion with regard to when to conduct a public meeting to approve expending monies from the Expendable Trust Fund (ETF) and to receive the Lowes donation, to which Susan Ward reported she thought the district had received approval, from a warrant years ago, to accept donations and gifts on behalf of the district.

Susan added a public notice would be placed in the *Nashua Telegraph* for the public hearing.

Jim Miner reviewed the Gym Duct Sock work at Wilkins and noted the ETF Committee recommendation is to approve \$2,282 for Granite State Plumbing to purchase and install a 24" diameter by 90" long DuraTex fabric duct for heat and air circulation in the gymnasium. This project is being recommended for funding through the FY'06 operating budget.

Jim also covered the AMS indoor air quality ventilator repair matter and noted the ETF Committee recommendation is to go with the lowest, qualified bidder, Select Energy at a total estimated project cost of \$25,711.00.

Deborah Cort moved to hold a public hearing for the indoor air quality ventilator repair and to expend money from the Expendable Trust Fund for this work. Nancy Head seconded the motion. All board members voted in favor of the motion. The motion passed.

Jim Miner noted he was concerned about the timeliness of receiving approval and scheduling the drainage and paving work for Wilkins; the project cost is estimated to be approximately \$125,000 to \$150,000.00. Jim O'Mara suggested the public notice include both the air quality/ventilation repair and paving items, to which Deborah requested Susan Ward look into the RSA regarding the flexibility of allowing both items to be placed on the public hearing notice.

Deborah Cort moved the board review bids, prior to the public hearing meeting, pending review of the public notice to include the ventilator repair at AMS and paving and drainage at Wilkins. Jim O'Mara seconded the motion. All board members voted in favor of the motion. The motion passed.

The ETF Committee will schedule a meeting for next Monday night, May 8, 2006. Susan Ward will put a public hearing notice in the *Nashua Telegraph* to meet posting requirements.

The board submitted questions to Porter Dodge for the Environmental Camp Study Ad-hoc Committee.

- What is the recommendation of the Superintendent and the Administrators?

**BUSINESS &
INSTRUCTION
Approval of
Expendable Trust
Fund Project and
Consideration of
Recommendations**

**DISCUSSION
School Board
Questions for
Environmental Camp
Study**

- At one point, the 7th grade teachers had expressed a number of concerns regarding this camp. Based at least in part upon these concerns, the 7th grade camp was selected for replacement by a more local program with the possible addition of one or more day trips focused on a different subject area. What has changed that would justify making a different decision now?
- Why are all of the camps focused on the same subject area and would there be a benefit in having different subject areas involved?
- What cost increases have occurred for each camp over the past several years and what are the total costs of each camp?
- How many absences have there been at AMS the two weeks following the return from each camp as compared to the two weeks preceding the camp?
- What cost effective alternatives have been explored and what are the pros and cons of these alternatives?
- Is this the very best use of the number of school days taken up by these camps? What are their reasons for not participating?
- What are the numbers of children that did not participate in each camp over the last three years?
- What is the total cost of running each camp, and what is the cost breakdown?
- What is the parents' cost for each student who attends?
- What is the cost to the district for each camp (mileage, additional aid time, sub time, ...)?
- How do the numbers of overnight camps we offer compare with those offered by other school districts?
- Could these camps be offered locally?
- Are children getting all required hours for special programs?
- Are IEPs met while students are away?
- What factors were used to determine the 7th grade camp would be the one to be eliminated?
- How many days in total during AMS years would a child be at camp if he or she attended each one? What is average for total grades 6-8 for state?
- How many substitutes, on average, are required to fill in for teachers, aides, and nurses away at camps?
- How do non-science teachers feel, confidentially, about the time lost for the camps? Has there been any attempt to find out how the curriculum in other subjects is affected by the children's absence?
- Is there an attempt to get confidential feedback immediately after each camp—on parent's feelings about costs, benefits, etc.?

- What is the specific goal of each camp? How else could these goals be met? What are the comparative costs?
- If you were to choose any two of the camps to keep, what would they be?
- What is the cost of each camp to parents? How much would parents of four children pay in total if all of their children went to all of the camps?
- What is the total cost of each camp to the school system?
- How does this average out per child? What is the total child/school cost per child per camp? (Can be a range) What scholarships available? Amounts and process involved?
- Has there been any attempt to reach out to those people who feel it is a financial strain for their family but do not feel they should be scholarship applicants?
- How are camps integrated into the curriculum: Pre-camp preparation; post camp summaries, individual projects, etc. What is the specific curriculum content covered; how is success measured; how else could it be covered, and what are the specific benefits of camp over the alternatives? How is the curriculum content covered for those who don't go to camp?
- Are there goals for socialization and personal growth? How are they measured?
- Are the socialization benefits equal for each camp?
- Are there any negative social or growth aspects? How would you know?

The board agreed the ad-hoc committee would present recommendations to the administrative team and the administrators would present to the board.

Jim O'Mara noted the review was not a personnel assessment of the 7th grade teachers and their commitment to this program and the board is very appreciative of the AMS staff and their commitment. The environmental camp issue is not about people or performance.

Howard Colter directed the board to submit late start questions to **Late Start Schedule** Nicole Heimarck, to which the board presented the following questions regarding late starts:

- What is the recommendation of the Superintendent and the Administrators?
- To what extent would teachers across districts work on K-12 curriculum alignment and transition issues during the late start mornings?

- How much savings would be gained by avoiding the duplicate bus runs on these days?
- Would childcare be available at the elementary schools for students who need it?
- What is the defined purpose of late starts? Are two hours once a month going to provide the time necessary to meet this purpose?
- How will parents be informed?
- How will students or working parents who do not have a flexible schedule be accommodated?
- Originally late starts were set up as an opportunity for teachers to meet across the district by building; has this changed? How do you accommodate the different start times between buildings? What about transportation time for teachers?
- How do late starts directly impact student learning? Is this the only method of addressing this need? Could there be others?
- What are some specific examples of work that has been done in Mont Vernon and SCHS during late starts in terms of how was the time used and what was the outcome?
- How are the hours lost in the teaching time recouped?
- Late starts would mean students would have less classroom time. How can we be sure that late starts will result in an overall increase in student learning?
- Professional development is important. Before we reduce student class time, are we sure that existing, non-instructional time is being used optimally?
- Are there changes to the CBA that would be required or desired if late starts were implemented?
- What impact would late starts have on the amount of outside professional development required?
- Would we have a program at each school to accept students that needed to be dropped off at the normal start time?
- Analysis of current programs currently available and analysis about attendance?
- What would the goals of having the extra time be?
- How would the goals differ from the goals of the two present curriculum days?
- How would these goals be achieved? (Process)
- How would they be evaluated? How would they be reported to the school board?
- Who would oversee the process, be responsible for the goals being met?
- How would you overcome the problem of different starting times?

- How would you prove that the late start/early dismissal was worth the time missed in the classroom by the pupils? How much would that total time be? How would you make it up?
- What are your suggestions for taking care of children of working parents?
- Could the goals be achieved in any other manner? What would you suggest?

Howard noted the board presented great questions, but expressed concern too much time would be needed to address all of these questions in depth. Howard also noted some of these questions may not have an answer and the board may want to consider putting off late starts for another year, to which Deborah Cort added parents would need to know before the end of the school year in order for the late start program to be successful, and she would not be comfortable supporting late starts without these questions being addressed or having more information.

Nancy Head and Pam Dudoff both noted they would like to have the administration present a recommendation, to which Howard noted he and Nicole would review the questions and put the item and recommendation on a future agenda.

Jim O'Mara moved to approve the meeting minutes of April 17, 2006. Deborah Cort seconded the motion. The Board approved the minutes as amended:

Page 1446, 2nd paragraph, 3rd line, change to read: "Some board members agreed..."

Page 1446, 2nd paragraph, 5th line, change to read: "Some board members did not want..."

Page 1446, 5th paragraph, 3rd line, change to read: "...all ASD building, with the exception of the Bean property, will be..."

The motion passed.

**APPROVAL OF
APRIL 17, 2006
MINUTES**

Pam Dudoff moved to enter into a Non-Public Session, under the provision of RSA 91:A-3,II(b). Nancy Head seconded the motion. By a roll-call vote, each member of the Board voted in favor: O'Mara-yes; Dudoff-yes; Brew-yes; Head-yes; Cort-yes. The motion passed. The Board went into a Non-Public Session at 7:44p.m.

**NON-PUBLIC
SESSION**

The Board discussed a personnel matter.

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

7:49 p.m.

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Howard Colter recommended the board approve and grant a temporary, part-time leave of absence request from Allison Burnette for the remainder of the school year.

PERSONNEL
LOA Request

Pam Dudoff moved, and Nancy Head seconded, to accept the Superintendent's recommendation. All board members voted in favor of the motion. The motion passed.

It was noted the agendas and board packet materials had not been mailed prior to the board meeting, to which Susan Ward noted she would check into the matter.

OTHER

Jim O'Mara moved to adjourn the meeting. Pam Dudoff seconded the motion. All board members voted unanimously in favor of the motion. The motion passed. The board meeting adjourned at 8:52 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT