

**MINUTES**  
**AMHERST SCHOOL BOARD**  
**June 5, 2006**  
**Amherst Middle School First Floor Music Room**

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Chairperson Dwight Brew called the board meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. **CALL TO ORDER**

Present:

**ATTENDANCE**

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

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

Minutes Recorder: Terri Connolly

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

**REPORTS**  
**Administration**

Gerry St. Amand reported on highlights from Clark and Wilkins Schools and noted seven of the fourth grade classes have successfully completed hikes up North Pack Monadnock; Gerry recognized Mr. April for this valuable learning and fitness experience and thanked the many chaperones for their efforts. Gerry reported Field Day will be held on June 7, 2006 at Wilkins School and is scheduled for June 9, 2006 at Clark School; Gerry recognized Linda Narducci and David April and extended special thanks to the volunteers who support students and adults in this activity. Gerry reported all classroom teachers would be hosting a one-hour "Meet and Greet" session during the month of August for incoming students and their families. Sixty-eight surveys have been returned regarding before and after school care needs; the results of the surveys are being tabulated and will be used in making recommendations for future programming. Gerry also reported staff members will be completing professional development paperwork detailing the June 21<sup>st</sup> and June 22<sup>nd</sup> work days; a variety of activities are being planned and individuals have the opportunity to submit individualized plans for administrative approval. The Fourth Grade Fond Farewell is scheduled for June 20, 2006. Connie Hebert, Guiding Reading Expert, will complete her final two-day visit to Clark and Wilkins on June 5, 2006 and June 6, 2006.

Porter Dodge reported on highlights from the Amherst Middle School and noted there is continued focus on transitional activities. Approximately thirty students and their parents from the Mont Vernon Village School attended an informational session on June 1, 2006; Mont Vernon students will have two more opportunities to visit AMS, as they will be attending Greek Week activities on June 15, 2006 and Step Up Day on June 20, 2006. Porter reported the seventh and eighth grade bands concerts are scheduled for June 6, 2006 and eighth grade Academic Awards Night is scheduled for June 7, 2006. The seventh and eighth grade chorus will perform at the high school on June 8, 2006 and the eighth grade graduation celebration is scheduled for June 19, 2006. The eighth grade Sixties Unit was held the last week of May; Porter extended many thanks to the parent volunteers for their work on the barbeque and to the PTA for sponsoring the music. Project Safeguard was held at Rivier College on May 26, 2006 and May 27, 2006 and the feedback from parents and students was tremendous; Porter issued special thanks to the health teachers, Licia Hazzard and Gail Hepworth, and to Deb Tumas, Maggie Kim, and Tom Knapp, AMS guidance counselors, for the immense amount of planning and work that went into this event. Porter also noted the fifth grade class spent June 1, 2006 at Canobie Lake Park.

Kathy Skoglund reported the Amherst and SCHS student tuition policy states parents and the sending districts are responsible for SPED costs of tuition students. However, Kathy has recently learned that upon review of tuition policies, the Boston Civil Rights Office, agrees parents of non-resident students are responsible for tuition, but the district may not require the parents to pay SPED costs; the sending district will be contacted, but may not be obligated to pay the SPED costs either. Kathy noted that, to date, there are minimal special educational needs among tuition students, but the tuition policy will be discussed at the next SAU-wide board meeting.

Susan Ward apologized that the board packets did not get mailed out and will address the matter at the SAU. **Treasurer's Report**

Susan reported on FY'06 end-of-year projections and noted the SAU has monitored expenditures and revenues. The SAU conservatively projects a year-end expenditure balance of \$140,000.00 and a conservative projection of year-end revenues of \$170,000.00; Susan added the combined estimated surplus for FY'06 is approximately \$310,000.00, but may be closer to \$340,000 to \$350,000.00.

Jim O'Mara thanked Susan and her staff for the accurate allocation of accounts and questioned if there were any items the district could review for purchase based upon the year-end projections, to which Porter noted wireless carts are still needed at AMS. The board agreed the administration would submit a prioritized list of items, with justification, for the board to review; Jim added the list should include items that have come up and not just items that were cut from the original budget.

Dwight Brew noted the June 19, 2006 board meeting, which is the night of the Eighth Grade Graduation, would start at 5:00 p.m.

Nicole Heimarck distributed the Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) Report for AMS and Wilkins School, and noted the marks met AYP status. Based on the demographics of AMS and Wilkins, the schools were assessed for three groups: White, non-Hispanic and Educational Disability. Wilkins met AYP status in mathematics, but did not do so in Educational Disability for the reading component. **AYP Report**

At AMS, all demographic groups met reading requirements, but the Educational Disability group did not meet the index target of 77.0 for mathematics; this group did meet requirements under Safe Harbor. Nicole noted the deadline to appeal is June 15, 2006 and will keep the board posted on whether the district should appeal or not.

There was a discussion as to the testing measures, procedures, and outcomes, and ramifications if a district did not meet target marks. Jim O'Mara questioned if the district would be looking at a policy once results are known, in terms of evaluating and digesting data, as a resource to develop community-wide academic and curriculum guidelines, to which Nicole reported there should be a conversation at the SAU level regarding that matter and there would be benefits of uniformity in disseminating and understanding the data. With regard to ramifications, Nicole noted if a district missed AYP targets for two consecutive years in a content area, there would be a 'Need of Improvement' status. Nicole added there are discussions within the educational community, that as targets get more challenging each year, district schools may find themselves not meeting AYP and in that 'Need of Improvement' status.

Jim O'Mara suggested expanding upon the letter that was sent home to AMS parents and submitting it as a letter to the Editor, so parents are informed, to which Dwight Brew agreed and added the ASD has some areas for improvement, but the community should know that these areas are being reviewed and addressed. Nancy Head noted the community should also be aware the ASD schools are

among the highest performing schools in the State.

Kristin Desborough added the community is talking about the AYP report and is unsure as to what the results mean, and, in particular, what does it mean for the students. There are questions, such as does the district lose funding? Is the district on a blacklist somewhere? Kristin added the community should be informed.

Nancy Head presented a Master Plan Update to the board. Nancy reported John Schwope has joined the Master Plan Committee as a Mont Vernon non-voting member. Nancy reported the committee has asked for a more comprehensive analysis and presented a list of items, equating to approximately \$25,000.00, which is necessary to gather the additional information and analysis. Nancy requested the board approve the costs of a Baboosic Lake Road Appraisal and a Baboosic Lake Road Site and Wetland Mitigation Analysis. **Master Plan Update**

Nancy noted the committee has received two quotes for the land appraisal and moved the board approve the quote from F & M Appraisal Group, in the amount of \$1000, to appraise the Baboosic Lake Road land. Jim O'Mara seconded for purposes of discussion.

Pam Dudoff noted one quote looked more in-depth and questioned if the quoted items were comparative, to which Nancy added the higher price quote was more in-depth, which is something that is not needed; the architects need a market value appraisal only and the architectural firm will do the more in-depth study.

Jim O'Mara questioned if a soil analysis will be done before the appraisal, as that will effect the market value, to which Nancy noted she would look into that matter. The board voted in favor of the motion. The motion passed.

Nancy Head recommended the board approve a Site and Wetland Mitigation Analysis of the Baboosic Lake Road property at a cost of \$1,000.00. Pam Dudoff seconded the motion.

Nancy reported Meridian would be subcontracted through the architectural firm. The items approved tonight (appraisal and site and wetland mitigation analysis) will be taken off the \$25,000 list of additional items. Nancy added there is some wetland information on record and Meridian was involved in that analysis; the wetland analysis would be more expensive if Meridian had not been previously used to do the work. The analysis is an update of information, which is necessary as federal regulations have changed; the original study was completed five years ago.

The board voted unanimously in favor of the motion. The motion passed.

Jim O'Mara noted the list of items, for \$25,000 listed items, is approximately 50% of the original award and requested there be a fair amount of justification for an amount that is 50% of the original bid. Nancy reported it was the Master Plan Committee that requested a more comprehensive plan. Dwight Brew added none of the original architects listed any of the additional items in the bids.

**ACTION ITEMS**  
**Approval of Brick School Lease**

Jim O'Mara moved to approve renewal of the Brick School lease between the Amherst School District and SAU, and the ASD Chair sign the lease on behalf of the Amherst School District. Deborah Cort seconded the motion. All board members voted in favor the motion. The motion passed.

**Signing of the CBA with the ASSA**

Howard Colter requested board signature on the revised Amherst Support Staff Association (ASSA) collective bargaining agreement (CBA), to which Jim noted he has not seen the portion that has been revised and would like to see an electronic copy. Howard added he would send the CBA to Jim and added there is an urgency in issuing a notice to employees.

Jim O'Mara moved to authorize the Superintendent to issue employment notices to members of the ASSA, consistent with the new agreement. The board will sign the agreement at the next meeting, having had the opportunity to review it. Deborah Cort seconded the motion.

Howard added the ASSA and ASD have both voted to ratify the revisions and the agreement has been signed by the ASSA. Tom Flagart and Kathy Skoglund have reviewed the revisions, but ASD board members have not and noted the copies for signature are reflective of the changes to the contract and do not identify all aspects of the contract.

Pam Dudoff noted she is comfortable with having Jim O'Mara review the revisions to the contract, to which other board members concurred.

**APPROVAL OF PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES OF MAY 15, 2006 MEETING**

Deborah Cort moved to accept the public meeting minutes of the May 15, 2006. Pam Dudoff seconded the motion. The minutes were approved without amendment. The motion passed.

Deborah Cort moved to accept the minutes of May 15, 2006. Nancy Head seconded the motion.

Page 1459, 1<sup>st</sup> line, change “6:11 p.m.” to “6:03 p.m.”

Page 1460, 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph, 1<sup>st</sup> line, change “Pam Dudoff” to “Deborah Cort”

Page 1460, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> paragraphs, change “Egenhardt” to “Egenton”

Page 1462, last paragraph, change 7<sup>th</sup> line, change “five” to “eight”

**APPROVAL OF  
MEETING  
MINUTES OF MAY  
15, 2005**

The board discussed when the regular meeting started and when the public meeting ended.

Howard Colter added his recollection of notes concerning the meeting is as follows: “The meeting of May 15, 2006 was called to order by Dwight Brew, at 6:03 p.m. Jim Miner, Director of Building and Grounds, presented information pertaining to proposed improvements at Wilkins Elementary School. A chart was exhibited that outlined a new plan for parking, in addition to repaving the driveway and parking spaces, and improvements to drainage. The anticipated total cost for this work is \$173,000. The school board then moved to a public hearing. It was also noted the public hearing resulted in no questions or changes to the proposed plan.

Pam Dudoff moved the board reconsider approving the regular meeting minutes of May 15, 2006. Deborah Cort seconded the motion. All board members voted in favor of the motion. The motion passed.

Jim O’Mara moved to table the May 15, 2006 regular board meeting minutes. Pam Dudoff seconded the motion. All board members voted in favor of the motion. The motion passed.

Pam Dudoff moved to approve the meeting minutes of May 24, 2006 and Deborah Cort seconded the motion. The board voted to approve the minutes as amended:

Page 1467, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> paragraphs, change “May 21<sup>st</sup> and May 22<sup>nd</sup>” to “June 21<sup>st</sup> and June 22<sup>nd</sup>”

Page 1469, 2<sup>nd</sup> sentence, change to: “In light of Step Up day, the substitutes pool, and ending the year on a positive note, Deborah noted she supported a waiver.”

The motion passed.

**APPROVAL OF  
MEETING  
MINUTES OF MAY  
24, 2006**

Howard Colter distributed copies of the two-day waiver, as received from the Department of Education, for the May 15<sup>th</sup> and

Jim O'Mara moved to enter into a Non-Public Session, under the provision of RSA 91:A-3,II(a). Pam Dudoff 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, and Head-yes. The motion passed. The Board went into a Non-Public Session at 7:43 p.m.

**NON-PUBLIC  
SESSION**

The Board discussed personnel matters.

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; Cort-yes; Brew-yes, and Head-yes. The motion passed. The Board came out of Non-Public at 7:51 p.m.

Superintendent Howard Colter nominated Karen Murphy for the position of Library Assistant II, effective August 28, 2006 to June 30, 2007, at the Amherst Middle School.

**PERSONNEL**

Pam Dudoff moved to approve the Superintendent's nomination and recommendation for the Library Assistant II position at AMS. Deborah Cort seconded the motion. All board members voted in favor of the motion. The motion passed.

Superintendent Howard Colter recommended the board approve the slate of ASSA nominations and personnel salary, for FY 2006-2007, as reflective of a new collective bargaining agreement that has been ratified.

Jim O'Mara moved to approve the Superintendent's nomination recommendation and noted the slate included all support staff, union and non-union, as of this moment. Pam Dudoff seconded the motion. All board members voted in favor of the motion. The motion passed.

The board briefly discussed future agenda items and board member representation at end-of-year events. Jim O'Mara suggested developing a mini-schedule for board members so the ASD board is represented at all the district events.

**OTHER**

Deborah Cort moved and Pam Dudoff seconded to adjourn the meeting. All board members voted in favor and the meeting adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

**ADJOURNMENT**