

Minutes
AMHERST SCHOOL BOARD
Thursday November 1, 2007
Amherst Town Hall Meeting Room

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Dwight Brew called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m.

ATTENDANCE

Present:

Amherst School Board-Dwight Brew, Pam Dudoff, Nancy Head, Jim O'Mara and Peg Bennett

Administrative Team-Nicole Heimark, Betty Shankel, Mary Jennings, Porter Dodge, Gerry St. Amand, Renea Sparks and Meg Trainor

Ways & Means Committee-Debbi Naro, David Citarelli

II. ANNOUNCEMENTS

A. ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT:

In regards to Porter Dodge's report, Pam commented on the Special Education students having difficulty taking some of the NECAP tests due to a lack of proper space to test. The halls are housing furniture and tables that pose a safety threat.

Pam would like Primex to inspect all buildings and playgrounds. Mary explained that there would be no additional costs for the inspections.

Porter explained the portables would be requested for the next school year. There has been the greatest emphasis on reading for the 5th and 6th grade.

Pam commended the teachers at Clark & Wilkins for implementing fire safety regulations by removing all decorations, paper products, student work and paper signs.

Pam asked for a motion to pass Primex inspecting all schools including the buildings and playgrounds. Motion to be an action item.

III. PUBLIC TIME

Dwight asked for comments from the public but none were forthcoming.

IV. CONSENT AGENDA

The August 14, 2007 minutes were pulled from the Consent Agenda.

The Budget Transfer's were pulled from the Consent Agenda.

The September 6, 2007 minutes were pulled from the Consent Agenda.

Moved by Pam Dudoff to adopt B. 1. Treasurer’s Report - September 2007; B. 3. Donations to Student Activity Fund; and B. 4. Student Activity Fund Report and seconded by Nancy Head. The motion passed unanimously. (5-0)

Motion to act on the August 14, 2007 minutes. Motion moved by Jim and seconded by Pam.

September 6, 2007 Minutes

Pam added at the end of the first paragraph of page 6 “related to the Board’s working relationship with the superintendent which is important progress given recent turnover in this position”.

Dwight discussed one set of minutes to include both public and non public minutes.

Moved by Pam to approve September 6, 2007 minutes as amended. Motion was seconded by Nancy. The motion passed unanimously. (5-0)

Budget Transfers

In regards to budget transfer 200806, Jim inquired about stamps used by each district.

Betty explained the meter can be coded to determine which schools used postage.

Jim moved to approve Budget Transfer 200806. Pam seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. (5-0)

Pam moved to approve Budget Transfer 200805. Jim seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. (5-0)

V. PRESENTATIONS

A. ANGEL ITALIAN EXCHANGE PROGRAM

Suzanne Haldane presented Board members with the Amherst Middle School’s cultural exchange hand out. Suzanne explained the students from Amherst Middle School communicate with students from Italy via the Angel website. The Angel website is a closed site and each student is entered individually into the system. This program is teacher monitored. Suzanne asked for student volunteers to participate and two students were chosen from each team. Students communicate at least once a week. There was classroom time allotted for students who were participating in this program. The students were also exposed to the Italian language through the use of the program on Angel and Italian dictionaries.

Three students attended the Board meeting to describe their experiences. The students enjoyed learning about a different culture through direct contact with the Italian students versus a textbook. The students used a food survey to get to know the culture of Italy. Suzanne had a gelato party for the students. In the future, Suzanne said she would like other countries such as France, Mexico and China to participate.

B. FY '09 BUDGET

1. 1ST DRAFT PRESENTATION

Mary passed out the draft budget to Board members. Mary reviewed with Board members the budget process, major assumptions, key budget drivers and budget increase.

Gerry discussed the Clark & Wilkins school budget for the 2009 fiscal year. Gerry explained the current budget, Clark & Wilkins enrollment comparisons, educational programming, additional considerations and staffing comparisons. Gerry summarized the budget as follows:

- overall reduction of 3 para-educators
- purchase of new science textbooks and supporting materials in grades K-4
- introduction of Spanish in grade one with half time teacher
- reduction of 2 classroom teachers
- transition of preschool special education students from out-of-district to Clark School
- development and implementation of preschool program at Clark
- NWEA assessment in reading and mathematics in grade 2, 3 and 4
- automation of libraries at Clark and Wilkins
- implementation of one full-day section of Kindergarten

Porter discussed the Amherst Middle School budget for the 2009 fiscal year. Porter explained the current budget, school budget assumptions, educational programming, additional programming, technology, special education costs, the addition of two portables, repairs to building, maintenance and staffing comparisons. Porter summarized the budget as follows:

- overall increase of 2.59%
- overall decrease of three regular educators
- supports an Academic Dean
- supports interscholastic and co-curricular activities
- addresses space needs and building condition
- addresses normal increases in cost of living, utilities and fixed costs
- provides for continued educational improvements
- supports District and SAU goals
- NWEA assessment for all students in grades 5 through 8 in reading and mathematics

Peg suggested the Board have sub-groups to meet with the Ways and Means Committee. The sub-groups will be divided as follows:

- Jim-maintenance
- Nancy-special education
- Pam-professional development and Clark & Wilkins
- Peg-AMS and transportation
- Dwight-technology and food service

2. POTENTIAL WARRANT ARTICLES

A. MASTER PLAN

The Master Plan wording will be presented at the December 6, 2007 School Board meeting. This will ensure the wording has been reviewed by legal and DRN.

Nancy made a motion to propose wording saying “warrant for consideration to raise determined dollar amount for renovation.” Pam seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. (5-0)

B. FACILITIES EXPENDABLE TRUST

The purpose of this expendable trust is for emergencies and/or catastrophic events.

Jim recommended holding off.

C. TUITION AGREEMENT - MOUNT VERNON

The tuition agreement expires on June 30, 2011.

Pam would like us to have conversation with the Mount Vernon Board to look forward.

Jim would like to know what Mt. Vernon’s visions and goals are going forward.

Dwight suggested representatives from both Boards come up with a proposed agreement and have the attorneys from each District review. Dwight and Pam expressed they would like to be involved.

Mary suggested a joint Board meeting.

Nancy suggested holding off for a year and not having an agreement as a warrant article. It was decided the tuition agreement would not be on the 2008 ballot.

C. MASTER PLAN

1. Funding - Site study of Wilkins - Architectural Services

Nancy solicited four bids for site study of Wilkins. Nancy received three responses with \$11,470 being the lowest and \$19,180 being the highest.

Jim made a motion to accept the lowest bid of \$11,470 from Hayner & Swanson based out of Nashua. Nancy seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. (5-0)

There was a bid submitted from Tibor Farkas, Marinance Architects for pre-vote services.

Pam questioned how much control the Board had to request specific people to represent the firm.

Jim suggested the Board commit to gain the knowledge needed to answer questions from the public.

Nancy moved to hire Tibor Farkas not to exceed \$5,000 for pre-vote services. Jim seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. (5-0)

2. School Board/PTA Open Forum

Nancy stated she is willing to sponsor an informational forum on the warrant article for plans on renovation. Hopefully the Board can use the Clark all-purpose room. There has been a lot of e-mail interest in the community regarding renovations. Nancy will let the Board know when a date has been decided. The tentative time frame will be the week following Thanksgiving.

D. QUARTERLY

This report is for the 1st quarter July 1st-September 30, 2007. Betty explained the revenues from tuition were less than projected. All revenue accounts from the state were as expected. Expenditure benefits were less than expected.

VI. ACTION ITEMS

Pam would like to address the immediate safety needs of all schools including buildings and structures. Pam stated the Board has a responsibility to be prudent and double check to make sure there are no glaring safety issues.

Betty stated it should be possible by the next Board meeting to have all inspections performed by Primex.

A. POLICY 2ND READING; CA-ADMINISTRATION RESPONSIBILITIES

There were no changes from the 1st reading.

Pam made a motion to adopt policy CA-Administration Responsibilities. Jim seconded. The motion passed unanimously. (5-0)

VII. DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. POLICIES -1ST READING

It was the first reading for the following policies:

Health Related Policies

EBBC-Emergency Care and First Aid

IMAH-Health Education-Daily Physical Activity

JLCD-Administering Medication to Students

Administrative Policies

EH-Data Management (Public Sue of School Records)

EHB-Data Records Retention

EHB-R-Local Records Retention Schedule

GBCD-Background Investigation and Criminal Records Check

In regards to policy IMAH, Dwight questioned #5 which states “commit adequate resources that include program funding, personnel, safe equipment and facilities.”

Pam clarified the wording came directly from the Department of Education rules, which carry the weight of law.

Mary explained the state has specific laws regarding physical education. The requirement for 30 to 60 minutes of physical activity each day is in addition to the required physical education program.

In regards to policy EHB, Mary said she would have the human resources person look at the retention schedule. Mary will also look into recommendations versus mandated in regards to the retention schedule.

A motion was made by Nancy and seconded by Peg to adjourn the public meeting and move into non-public session RSA 91-A:3, II. The motion passed unanimously. (5-0) The public meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.