

AMHERST SCHOOL BOARD

April 2, 2009

Approved 5/7/09

ORGANIZATONAL MEETING

Dr. Jennings opened the meeting at 6:09 and introduced new member Peter Maresco.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Present

Amherst School Board: Dwight Brew, Peg Bennett, Peter Maresco, and Nancy Head.

Administrative Team: Gerry St. Amand, Dr. Mary Jennings, Porter Dodge, and Nicole Heimarck.

Minutes Recorder: Heather Loewy Nichols

ATTENDANCE

A. Chairman

Dr. Jennings called for nominations for Chairman of the Board.

Mr. Brew nominated Nancy Head for Chairman. Mr. Maresco seconded the nomination.

**II. ELECTION OF
SCHOOL BOARD
OFFICERS**

A MOTION was made by Mr. Brew and SECONDED by Ms. Bennett to unanimously elect Ms. Head as Chairman of the Board.

Voting: 4 ayes; motion carried unanimously.

Dr. Jennings declared Ms. Head to be the new Chairman of the Board.

B. Vice Chair

Chairman Head called from nominations for Vice Chair.

Mr. Brew nominated Peg Bennett and Mr. Maresco seconded the nomination.

Voting: 4 ayes; motion carried unanimously.

C. Secretary

Mr. Brew stated that Mr. Graybill is absent this meeting so he would like table the secretary nomination until Mr. Graybill is present.

Ms. Head thanked Mr. Brew for leading so well for the past few years.

After discussion, the Board decided to table committee assignments until all the Board Members were present and Mr. Maresco had time to review the necessary

**III. COMMITTEE
ASSIGNMENTS**

committee assignments.

A MOTION was made by Ms. Bennett and SECONDED by Mr. Maresco to adjourn the organizational meeting.

Voting: 4 ayes; motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Head declared the organizational meeting to be closed at 6:19 p.m.

REGULAR MEETING

Chairman Head called the regular meeting to order at 6:20 p.m.

Chairman Head called for public comment and heard none.

A. Principal's Report

Chairman Head explained that the principals' reports were in the Board's packets and asked if there were any questions or additions but heard none.

In response to a question from Chairman Head, the Board asked that the MS-22 and the minutes of March 24, 2009.

A MOTION was made by Mr. Brew and SECONDED by Mr. Maresco to accept the consent agenda as follows:

A. Minutes

1. March 5, 2009

B. Treasurer's Report

1. February 2009

C. Transfer

D. FY10 MS-22

E. Retirements

Voting: 4 ayes; motion carried unanimously.

A MOTION was made by Ms. Bennett and SECONDED by Mr. Maresco to approve the minutes of March 24, 2009 as amended.

Voting: 4 ayes; motion carried unanimously.

In response to a question from Ms. Bennett, Ms. Shankel explained that the MS-22 is part of a packet that gets sent to the Department of Revenue as a report of the appropriations actually approved by the voters. She explained that at this time all the other approved warrant articles get added into the budget.

In response to a question from Ms. Bennett, Ms. Shankel explained that the state

I. CALL TO ORDER

II. PUBLIC TIME

III. ANNOUNCEMENTS

IV. CONSENT AGENDA

checks very closely to make sure that everything aligns between the minutes, the voting and the MS-22 and then they give the district approval to spend the allocated monies.

A MOTION was made by Mr. Brew and SECONDED by Ms. Bennett for the Board to authorize the School District Clerk and the Superintendent to sign the MS-22.

Voting: 4 ayes; motion carried unanimously.

A MOTION was made by Mr. Brew and SECONDED Mr. Maresco to reconsider the Consent Agenda.

Voting: 4 ayes; motion carried unanimously.

The Board asked that the March 5, 2009 minutes be removed from the Consent Agenda.

A MOTION was made by Mr. Brew and SECONDED by Mr. Maresco to approve the Consent Agenda not including the minutes of March 5, 2009.

Voting: 4 ayes; motion carried unanimously.

A MOTION was made by Mr. Brew and SECONDED by Mr. Maresco to approve the minutes of March 5, 2009 as amended.

Voting: 4 ayes; motion carried unanimously.

A. Flexible Grouping- AMS Mathematics

Mr. Dodge noted that Grant Dustin was unavailable this evening as his child was sick and introduced 6th grade teachers Liz Manolis and Linda Filed and Math Coach Donna Hamel.

Ms. Manolis explained that the children are pre-assessed, placed in groups, then individualized instruction is created for them based on their needs, and then they are post tested. The teachers went on to explained how individualized instruction occurs in each of the classrooms.

Ms. Field stated that she finds the flexible grouping to be a very positive experience as it gives her the ability to move children based on their needs and gives her the opportunity to have a group that is in the same range which allows for more children to be less bored. She further explained that it also allows for more comfort within the group of students because they are not intimidated by other students and it allows her to place bright students who would rather have a slower pace in an appropriate group.

Ms. Hamel explained that she works with the 5/6 and 7/8 grade teachers with the

V. PRESETATIONS

goal of making sure there is consistency across the grade level so as to allow all the students to be on the same level when they move on. She explained that she has looked at the core materials and made sure that everyone has the same core materials in each grade and has created materials that provide the lesson information for each of the different levels of students.

Ms. Heimarck stated that the next steps are to look at how to use the currently scheduled time differently, create a building based data expert, provide training in Performance Pathways, and provide continued training and support in NWEA.

In response to a question from Mr. Brew, Ms. Hamel explained that some teams have three teachers so those teams have a high, medium, and skills group. Ms. Manolis noted that the RIT range on her team is 25 points and then those students are separated between two teachers. Mr. Dodge noted that grouping can also occur in smaller groups within the classroom. Ms. Heimarck noted that they try to cluster students in the teams so that resources can be used efficiently to enrich or remediate.

Ms. Field noted that extra teachers, such as a Special Education teacher of the math coach, are brought into the classrooms when needed.

In response to a question from Mr. Maresco, Ms. Hamel stated that the first time students were moved between groups it was stressful to them but after that there were no issues and the children got used to it happening. Ms. Heimarck noted that the fifth grade has had no issues moving because they were used to it from fourth grade. Mr. Dodge noted that students move within the class or on the same team so they do not find it as stressful.

A. Phase III Renovations

Ms. Head explained that Phase 1 and 2 of the renovations are complete and they are now working on Phase 3.

Mr. Miner explained that the voters approved \$3,995,000 for the complete project and Phase 1 and 2 were completed for \$1,745,483.56 which was \$96,000 under budget, so there is \$2,249,516.44 remaining in the budget. He stated that the guaranteed maximum price for Phase 3 of the elementary schools is \$1,621,969.09, and while he is still waiting for a guaranteed maximum price for the middle school, he is projecting the total to cost to be under budget by \$170,000 including administrative fees.

Mr. Brew noted that it is more than good luck that the work has been done on schedule, with good quality, and under budget and the Board thanked Mr. Miner

VI. ACTION ITEMS

for his work.

A MOTION was made by Mr. Brew and SECONDED by Ms. Bennett to accept Conneston Construction Inc.'s guaranteed maximum price of \$1,621,969.07.

Mr. Brew noted that the vast majority of the work, 87% out a possible 94%, has been competitively bid out.

Voting: 4 ayes; motion carried unanimously.

In response to a question from Damond Steer, of the Milford Cabinet, Mr. Miner stated the Wilkins will have vast improvements after the construction is complete.

B. Sale of Clark School Modular Classrooms

Dr. Jennings explained that the administration is bringing a proposal forward to go into negotiations for the sale of the modular classroom unit due to declining enrollment.

Mr. Miner explained that the present value of the classrooms is \$30,000 - \$35,000 and the replacement cost is \$68,000. He noted that the manufacturer expects that it will be needing repairs in the next six to seven years and there is always the possibility that they will have to upgrade the unit due to code issues. He further explained that after a period of time the district will need to invest money to reroof and upgrade the HVAC systems in order to keep the unit running. He further explained that it costs \$3,000 to \$4,000 a year to keep the unit running.

In response to a question from Ms. Bennett, Mr. Miner stated that there is someone who is interested in buying the unit and the district would sell it in an as is condition and the buyer is obligated to move it.

In response to a question from Ms. Head, Mr. St. Amand stated that they will not need the space for the next few years.

Dr. Jennings pointed out that this is a good time to move the unit because site work is already being and also noted that the unit would be going to a good cause as the Boys and Girls Club is interested in purchasing it.

A MOTION was made by Mr. Brew and SECONDED by Mr. Maresco to authorize the administration to negotiate the sale of the portable classrooms.

Voting: 4 ayes; motion carried unanimously.

C. AMS Field Improvements (Recommendations by Amherst Recreation Department)

Mr. Brew explained that he has been approached by the Amherst Recreation Department about making improvements to the middle school field. They would like to move the fences back, level the field, and move the trees back so the field gets full sun. He explained that the Recreation Commission would pay for the improvements and they would not be funded by the school district, although the district would benefit from the improvements. He further explained that the improvements would involve removing 30' of trees and noted that the Recreation Commission has contacted two of the abutters and have committed to contacting the other abutter before going before the town.

Ms. Head expressed concern that all the abutters be notified, stated that she hopes that the clear cut areas can be re-landscaped.

A MOTION was made by Mr. Brew and SECONDED by Mr. Maresco to accept the plan provided to the Board by the Amherst Recreation Department contingent upon notification of the abutters and securing approval of the Zoning or Planning Board.

Voting: 4 ayes; motion carried unanimously.

D. Review of Occupational Therapy Needs

Dr. Jennings noted that the budget which was approved in March included a .5 FTE occupational therapist position and increased the related services line in order to contract out services but Ms. Sparks is asking the board to change the budget to include 1.0 FTE therapist while reducing the contracted therapy costs.

Ms. Sparks thanked the Board for reconsidering the issue and explained that it is always a struggle to determine what the Special Education needs will be the following year but explained that 1.0 FTE position will save the district \$5,581 versus contracting out the services.

In response to a question from Mr. Brew, Ms. Sparks confirmed that the comparison includes retirement, insurance and other related expenses.

Mr. St. Amand noted that previously the school had not started RTI but now they have and an Occupational Therapist is essential to the process.

Mr. Dodge explained that having an Occupational Therapist on staff fulltime allowed for them to be available a lot more because they do not have to juggle

other schedules with other districts.

A MOTION was made by Mr. Brew and SECONDED by Ms. Bennett to accept the Superintendents recommendation to increase from .5 FTE to 1.0 FTE Occupational Therapist and reduce the contracted services from 28 hours to 13 hours.

Voting: 4 ayes; motion carried unanimously.

E. Manifest Signature Authorization

A MOTION was made by Mr. Brew and SECONDED by Mr. Maresco to authorize Mr. Maresco and Mr. Graybill to sign manifests with Ms. Bennett as an alternate.

Voting: 4 ayes; motion carried unanimously.

A MOTION was made by Mr. Brew and SECONDED by Ms. Bennett to enter non public session under RSA 91 A:3 II (a) to discuss the compensation of a public employee.

Board members voting in favor: Brew – yes, Head – yes; Bennett – yes, and Maresco – yes.

Chairman Head declared the Board to be in non public session at 7:55 p.m.

Dr. Jennings presented the board with her 2009-2010 professional staff nominations and recommendations for contracts for the school administrators for the 2009-2010 school year.

A MOTION was made by Mr. Brew and SECONDED by Ms. Bennett to come out of non public session.

Board members voting in favor: Brew – yes, Head – yes; Bennett – yes, and Maresco – yes.

A MOTION was made by Mr. Brew and SECONDED by Mr. Maresco to enter non public session under RSA 91 A:3 II (e) to discuss a pending legal matter.

Board members voting in favor: Brew – yes, Head – yes; Bennett – yes, and Maresco – yes.

Dr. Jennings updated the board on a pending legal matter.

A MOTION was made by Mr. Brew and SECONDED by Mr. Maresco to come out of non public session. Board members voting in favor: Brew – yes, Head – yes; Bennett – yes, and Maresco – yes.

**VII. NON-PUBLIC
SESSION – RSA 91-
A:3 II (a)**

**VIII. PUBLIC
SESSION**

**IX. NON-PUBLIC
SESSION – RSA 91-
A:3 II (e)**

X. PUBLIC SESSION

A MOTION was made by Dwight Brew and SECONDED by Peg Bennett to approve the professional staff nominations for the 2009-2010 school year put forward by Superintendent Jennings.

Voting: 4 ayes; motion carried unanimously.

A MOTION was made by Mr. Brew and SECONDED by Mr. Maresco to approve the contracts recommendations for the school district administrators for the 2009-2010 school year proposed by Superintendent Jennings.

Voting: 4 ayes; motion carried unanimously.

A MOTION was made by Peter Maresco and SECONDED by Peg Bennett to adjourn the meeting at 8:55 PM.

Voting: 4 ayes; motion carried unanimously.

XI. ACTION ITEMS

XII. REVIEW OF MEETING/ ADJOURN