

AMHERST SCHOOL BOARD

Minutes

August 14, 2008

Chairman Dwight Brew called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.

CALL TO ORDER

Present

Amherst School Board: Chairman Dwight Brew, Peg Bennett, Peter de Bruyn Kops, Rob Graybill and Nancy Head.

ATTENDANCE

Administrative Team: Gerry St. Amand, Dr. Mary Jennings, Porter Dodge, Jim Miner, Jan Bunker, Nicole Heimarck, and Lisa.

Minutes Recorder: Heather Loewy Nichols

A. Principal's Report

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Gerry St. Amand, Elementary School Principal, explained that currently 192 students are enrolled at Clark School and 535 students are enrolled at Wilkins School, however 3 students at Clark and 15 students at Wilkins still need to be placed. He also explained that one office position remains open at Clark School and one para-educator position is still open at Wilkins School. He further explained that staff will not be allowed into the Wilkins building until August 25th, due to renovations. Gerry St. Amand stated that he has been communicating with parents regarding the late starts and some parents expect to experience difficulty with getting their children to school and with morning care issues. He noted that he is working on solutions, for instance New Mornings is willing to work with the school to provide coverage during the late starts and would be willing to provide morning coverage everyday if there was enough interest.

In response to a question from Peg Bennett, Gerry St. Amand explained that the 15 students that still need to be placed at Wilkins are enrollments from the entire summer as the staff has been unable to get into the building due to renovations, and that the 3 Clark students yet to be placed were enrolled today. In response to a question from Peg Bennett, Gerry St. Amand stated that he thinks that the late starts will get worked out. In response to a question from Dwight Brew, Gerry St. Amand explained that the late starts create a problem with some parents getting their children on the busses. In response to a question from Nancy Head, Gerry St. Amand stated that there have been less last minute enrollments than expected and first grade enrollments are down but the

enrollment numbers for kindergarten are about the same.

Porter Dodge, Middle School Principal, submitted a report to the Board and opened the floor for questions. In response to a question from Peg Bennett with regards to late starts, Porter Dodge stated that he has only had questions about the start time, which will be at 7:15 a.m.

B. SAU Administrative Reports

Mary Jennings, Superintendent, reporting in Betty's place, explained that concerns have been expressed about the oil issue and how the rising costs will effect SAU 39. She explained that, since Amherst has been renovating, the issue should be mitigated because the building will be more energy efficient, which will save money. Lisa explained that the SAU is working in conjunction with the town but has not locked in a price as of yet. In response to a question from Peter de Bruyn Kops, Jim Miner stated that the oil company is not offering a plan that would allow a price decrease if the cost of oil were to go down after the SAU locked in a price. In response to a question from Dwight Brew, Jim Miner stated that the SAU as a whole uses 65,000 gallons of oil a year and that last year the SAU paid \$2.19 a gallon. He noted that the most recent price the SAU was given is \$4.09 a gallon but the price has gone down since then.

Mary Jennings passed badges out to the Board Members and invited them to the dedication of the Bean Fields at 9:30 a.m. this Saturday.

Porter Dodge stated that he met with town officials regarding election day and he has scheduled a late start for the Middle School, rather than canceling school, and he has plans in place to bus the students through the Middle School rather than through the High School parking lot.

C. Investment Committee

Jan Bunker stated that everybody is concerned regarding how the SAU is collateralized as a protective measure of their monies that are in the bank considering the recent bank closings. First the committee reviewed the investment policy that states that the SAU must meet a "prudent investment" standard and then they met with Beth Bartlett, Bruce Leighton, and Tammy Buchanan of Ocean National Bank. She explained that in April or May of 2008 the New Hampshire Banking Commissioner appointed a committee to look at how municipal funds are being collateralized and how they can be improved. The committee found out that Ocean National Bank is a family of banks owned by People's Bank, has been around for over 100 years, and last year raised \$3.44 billion in public offerings on its common stock. They further learned that

the bank has no exposure in the sub prime market and after reviewing all the data the committee feels that the SAU meets the “prudent investment” standard as set forth in the policy. They stated that they will continue to keep refreshing their information and reporting back to the Board. Also she noted that Bruce Leighton stated that he would be willing to meet with the Board if they wished.

After a detailed discussion between Peter de Bruyn Kops, Lisa, and Jan Bunker, the Board decided to have Peter de Bruyn Kops pursue his questions with the committee and Bruce Leighton and report back to the Board.

Jan Bunker asked the Board for support in signing the form to include the new capital account as part of the collateralization.

A MOTION was made by Peter de Bruyn Kops and SECONDED by Peg Bennett to support the treasurer in adding the Capital Projects fund to the collateralization agreement.

Voting: 5 ayes; motion carried unanimously.

The Board requested that the minutes be pulled from the Consent Agenda.

CONSENT AGENDA

A MOTION was made by Nancy Head and SECONDED by Rob Graybill to approve Consent Agenda items B. Treasurer’s report from May, June, and July of 2008, and C. Acceptance of Donations to the Activity Fund for Wilkins School and the Amherst Middle School and to the General Fund.

Voting: 5 ayes; motion carried unanimously.

A. Minutes

- April 3, 2008 Minutes

A MOTION was made by Nancy Head and SECONDED by Peg Bennett to approve the minutes of April 3, 2008 as written.

Voting: 4 ayes; motion carried with Peter de Bruyn Kops abstaining.

- May 8, 2008 Minutes

A MOTION was made by Peg Bennett and SECONDED by Nancy Head to approve the minutes of May 8, 2008 with the following amendments:

- Change “dr.” to “dr” throughout
- Page 115, 6th paragraph; Strike paragraph and replace with “Dwight Brew asked the Board to approve a bond anticipation note as the Board is not authorized to get a bond until July and they are incurring expenses and will need \$100,00 to pay bills that are owed.
- Page 115; 8th paragraph; change “to sell sais” to “to sell said”
- Page 119; 2nd paragraph; strike paragraph and replace with “Pam Dudoff

made a motion. Nancy seconded the motion. All members voted in favor and the meeting ended at 9.15 p.m.”

- Page 114, 7th paragraph; change “Cost Control of Efficiency” to “Efficient Cost Control”

Voting: 4 ayes; motion carried with Peter de Bruyn Kops abstaining.

- June 5, 2008 Minutes

A MOTION was made by Nancy Head and SECONDED by Peter de Bruyn Kops to approve the minutes of June 5, 2008 with the following amendments:

- Present; add “Peter de Bruyn Kops joined at 6:05 p.m.”
- Item I, last paragraph; add “Peter de Bruyn Kops joined the Board after being sworn in by Jan Bunker.”
- Page 6, 2nd paragraph; add “All board members voted in favor.” to the end of the motion.
- Item VI E; end of motion; add “Voting: 5 ayes; motion carried unanimously.”
- Strike the separate page of non public minutes at the end of document.

Voting: 5 ayes; motion carried unanimously.

A. Renovation Update

Nancy Head stated that following the planning period the renovation work was divided into three phases; phase 1 involved replacing the windows and phase 2 included some small additions, the sprinkler systems, changes to the entrance at Clark School, wiring and electrical repairs, kitchen work, the health and administrative areas at the Middle School, gym storage, and freezer space. She explained that the team determined that both these phases could be done this summer. She noted that work at Wilkins School was delayed a little due to asbestos abatement. She also explained that planning for phase 3 will take place this fall including the acquiring of a Guaranteed Maximum Price in December or January.

Nancy Head further explained that at this time the construction is on schedule and Clark and Wilkins are expected to be ready for opening day but it may be a few weeks into September before the office area at the Amherst Middle School is complete. She stated that weekly meetings have been occurring at which progress and problems are discussed, follow through is assigned, notes are taken, and walk-throughs occur. She explained that Wilkins has presented the most problems, such as items not being up to code, and as the issues arise they are corrected. She also noted that Jim Miner has been putting in cost effective

PRESENTATIONS/ DISCUSSION ITEMS

items now, such as wiring, so money will not have to be spent to open the walls up again later. She stated that the team is running a smooth operation and the consultants are very knowledgeable.

Jim Miner explained that all but five windows are complete, even though the window delivery was delayed by two weeks, and the floor tiles in three rooms had to be replaced due to moisture issues. He also noted that the exterior caulking and glazing of the Wilkins windows had asbestos in it and required abatement but the cost will be covered by the asbestos contingency funds. He explained that 26 out of the 31 classrooms have new ceilings and lighting and the furniture is back in. He also noted that the sprinkler systems will be fully installed when school starts but will not be functional for two weeks.

B. Late Start Days

Nicole Heimark, Curriculum Director, submitted to the Board the 2008-2009 Late Start Scope and Sequence for Amherst and Mont Vernon School Districts. She explained that the SAU has a strong desire to become more data driven and to determine whether they are effectively using the data to improve instruction. She reviewed the scope of each late start meeting and noted that each month will target a different skill in using data to inform teaching practices.

C. New Hire Summary

The Board was presented with the 2008-2009 new professional staff and administration replacements costs and it was noted that overall the district has stayed within their hiring budget.

A. Approval of Nominations

A MOTION was made by Nancy Head and SECONDED by Rob Graybill to approve the motions that were presented in non-public time as follows:

Karie Swift – Music Teach (AMS) – 1 FTE

Dr. Karen Abrams – School Psychologist (AMS) - .5 FTE

Kimberly Smith – Spanish Teacher (AMS) – 1 FTE

Karin Hopper – Special Education Teacher (AMS) – 1 FTE

Nicole Wright – Special Education Teacher (AMS) – 1 FTE

Susan Blair – Assistant Principal (C/W) – 1 FTE

Kim Ballantyne – Kindergarten Teacher (Clark) - .5 FTE

Mary-Elizabeth Cregan – Technology Integration Specialist (Wilkins) – 1 FTE

Voting: 5 ayes; motion carried unanimously.

B. Renovation Change Order Request #3

ACTION ITEMS

A MOTION was made by Nancy Head and SECONDED by Rob Graybill to approve Change Order #3 in the amount of \$24,294.

Voting: 5 ayes; motion carried unanimously.

Nancy Head noted that this change order represents work and expenses that have been budgeted as part of phase 3.

C. FY08 End of the Year Reports

A MOTION was made by Nancy Head and SECONDED by Rob Graybill to approve DOE25 and MS25 as submitted.

Voting: 5 ayes; motion carried unanimously.

Lisa explained that the year end reports have not been audited yet and that the district's expenses were under budget by \$435,000 and revenue fell below the budgeted amount by \$85,000 so the fund balance is \$335,000.

A. 2008 ASB Goal Setting

Nancy Gerzon, Educational Consultant, and the Board discussed the definitions of Project Goals, Objectives, and Strategies and worked on creating them for the Board for the 2008-2009 school year. The Board decided to continue working with, and possibly finalize, the following goal and objectives in September:

To improve communication with a focus on the current status of student improvement data, student learning, and gains and challenges.

- Determining metrics that measure student learning to be communicated to public
- Work with administration to look at current measures
- Learn more, build more knowledge about range of measurement options
- Baseline – what had been communicated to whom
- What is coming out each month

A MOTION was made by Rob Graybill and SECONDED by Nancy Head to enter into non public session per RSA 1-A:3, II. (b)

Voting: The Board Members were polled and all voted in favor.

The Board entered into non-public session at 9:19 p.m.

Professional nominations were presented and discussed.

A MOTION was made by Peg Bennett and SECONDED by Nancy Head to come out of non-public session.

Workshop

**NON-PUBLIC
SESSION**

Voting: The Board Members were polled and all voted in favor.

The Board re-entered public session at 9:22pm.

A MOTION was made by Dwight Brew and SECONDED by Nancy Head to adjourn the meeting.

Voting: The Board Members were polled and all were in favor.

Chairman Dwight Brew declared the meeting adjourned at 9:26pm.

**REVIEW OF
MEETING/
ADJOURN**