

1 **Amherst School Board Meeting**
2 **Thursday, June 16, 2011**
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5 **Attendance**
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7 **Amherst School Board:**

8 Peter Maresco, Peg Bennett, Lucienne Foulks, James Manning, Andrew Zell
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10 **Administrative Team:**

11 Nicole Heimarck, Porter Dodge, Gerry St. Amand, Renea Sparks, Janet Davis, Patty
12 Wons, Pam Gross, and Meg Trainor
13

14 **Minutes Taker**

15 Beth Penney
16

Public Hearing

17 **Public Hearing**
18

19 Ms. Bennett started the public hearing at 6:10pm.
20

21 Mr. Maresco explained that this hearing was to spend money out of the Expendable
22 Trust Fund to address the roof of the Clark School building. Mr. Maresco discussed
23 quotes received for the roof and how it would be installed.
24

25 Jim Miner discussed the benefits and drawbacks of replacing what is there vs. using
26 energy audit data, which said the roof, had little insulation. It has been decided to
27 use the company that will remove the roof and add insulation and a new roof. The
28 company is reputable and has done work for the district before.
29

30 Ms. Bennett closed the public hearing at 6:15pm.
31

32 **Call to Order**
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Call to Order

34 Ms. Bennett called the meeting to order at 6:15pm.
35

36 **Action Items**
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Action Items

38 **Deputy Treasurer's appointment**
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40 Ms. Bennett and the board thanked Jan Bunker, who has been the treasurer for 7
41 years and is retiring. The board honored her with a plaque for her service.
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43 CJ Butler will be replacing her.
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45 Ms. Butler asked the board to appoint Jan Bunker to be Deputy Treasurer when CJ's
46 term starts.

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Ms. Bennett stated that the board accepts this recommendation.

Signing of AEA Agreement

Ms. Bennett stated that this contract was voted on and approved on March 9th.

Peg Bennett, Mary Jennings, Sam Giarusso, and Peter Denosyers signed the contracts.

Announcements

Announcements

Principals Report

Ms. Foulks asked if the 8th graders have to attend school on Step-up day.

Mr. Dodge stated that school is held on June 24th for the 8th graders even though Thursday is their graduation celebration. Officially it is their 180th day, but usually attendance is low. When they attend on Friday they help teachers and younger students with step-up.

Ms. Bennett discussed the retirement party for 4 teachers who retired at Clark Wilkins. They had a125 years of service between four people and they will be missed.

Public Time

Public Time

No Public present.

Consent Agenda

Consent Agenda

Mr. Maresco asked to pull the RFP.

Ms. Foulks made a motion to accept the consent agenda containing the May 19th minutes, treasure’s report, and the unanticipated revenue. Mr. Zell seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous.

Mr. Maresco asked why the district pays full salary for the occupational therapist to drive to work and not just mileage fees.

Ms. Sparks stated that this is a contracted person not an employee and this is typical for contracted services, people charge for travel.

Ms. Shankel stated that this is very common for professional services, they charge for travel, and it is typical to pay to have the person travel to us.

93 Ms. Bennett asked how the district could attract more companies to respond to the
94 RFP.

95
96 Ms. Sparks stated that this is a new vendor for OT services for the Middle School.
97 Once an RFP announcement hits the paper, Ms. Sparks emails anyone who may be
98 interested. For this RFP emails were sent to four organizations, it was in the paper
99 and on the website.

100
101 **Ms. Foulks made a motion to accept the Occupation Therapy Formal**
102 **Competitive Bid Recommendation. Mr. Zell seconded the motion and the vote**
103 **was unanimous.**

104
105 **Presentations** **Presentations**

106
107 FY11 School Goals

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109 Mr. St. Amand, Ms Trainor, Ms. Wons, and Mr. Dodge gave the presentation.

110
111 Mr. St. Amand recognized the people who helped with this report.

112
113 Mr. St. Amand started the presentation by discussing the process from last year to
114 this year and the goals for all grade levels in Literacy and Math.

115
116 He also discussed the connection of the goals for K-1 for literacy and Math to the
117 Dibbles program. The school wanted to see 2% decrease for at risk students. He
118 discussed the tests and the higher expectations at the end of the year. He then
119 discussed the data.

120
121 Mr. St. Amand went on to discuss the literacy goals for 2nd-4th grade based on NWEA
122 data. He discussed the data: 2nd grade reached the target growth and the 4th grade
123 almost reached the target. Fourth grade has seen improvement, but the school
124 would like to see more.

125
126 Ms. Heimarck explained the NWEA assessment for new board members.

127
128 Mr. St. Amand explained the purpose of the NWEA Assessment to answer a question
129 from Mr. Manning.

130
131 Ms. Wons explained that the NWEA reading assessment gives a kid a reading lexile
132 range, which is given to parents on the report card. Ms. Wons cautioned that not
133 every novel is ok for a child with a high lexile.

134
135 Mr. Dodge discussed how teachers at AMS meet with kids to set goals, then
136 conference with kids at end of year to see if they met their goal using the NWEA
137 data.

138

139 Mr. St. Amand discussed the types and challenge of the reading questions, which are
140 all multiple choice. He gave examples of 2nd grade, 3rd grade and 4th grade questions,
141 vocabulary, etc. The examples he gave were very hard.
142

143 Dr. Jennings stated that these are not typical, and the test is designed is to have the
144 students fail 50% of the questions, that is how the assessment determines growth.
145

146 Mr. St. Amand discussed the percentage of students reaching target and where the
147 school ranks nationally for 2nd -4th grade in reading. He also discussed the RIT
148 scores for Clark/Wilkins compared to the national scores. For all grades
149 Clark/Wilkins is above the national scores.
150

151 Ms. Wons discussed the NWEA scores for AMS. She explained that NWEA states that
152 as kids get older typically they see scores go down. She discussed the scores and
153 percentages for AMS vs. nationally. She stated that they are not pleased with the 8th
154 grade scores and are digging deeper into the data.
155

156 Ms. Wons continued to discuss how she has been looking at the data to try to figure
157 out why target growth is lower this year. She discussed how as 7th graders the
158 students could have had high growth rates, and this year they did not grow because
159 past growth has been so high. A high rate of growth is hard to maintain. She will
160 continue to work with the data to get more information. She discussed how the
161 school uses the data to inform their instruction.
162

163 Mr. Dodge and Ms. Wons discussed the growth at AMS compared to nationally using
164 RIT scores. All of the grades at AMS are above the national averages.
165

166 Ms. Wons, Ms. Heimarck and the board discussed the limitations of the NWEA test.
167

168 Ms. Heimarck stated that she would be bringing forward a proposal to the SAU to
169 ask NWEA to do a virtual analysis of the district's schools compared to other schools
170 that are demographically similar.
171

172 Mr. Manning and Ms. Heimarck discussed how NWEA and NECAP are related.
173

174 The board and the administrators discussed how the test shows where
175 improvements in the curriculum need to happen. It also shows where parts of
176 literacy and math instruction are missing. They also discussed how NWEA data will
177 be used to inform instruction and that the NECAP scores are high and we are
178 meeting state standards.
179

180 Ms. Heimarck stated that the schools look good on NECAP, but NWEA scores do not
181 reflect that high rate proficiency. She explained the disconnect between the two
182 tests because the tests are different.
183

184 Mr. Maresco discussed his worry over how much of the scores are based on guessing
185 because of the multiple-choice nature of the test.

186
187 Ms. Trainor stated that the schools use multiple data points for all kids. She gave an
188 extensive list of assessments the schools get data from and then also discussed what
189 is happening for kids socially and emotionally, which can impact their test scores.

190
191 Mr. St. Amand discussed the Math scores k-1 for Math Dibbles, and explained how
192 the Math assessment is given to K-1 on a computer.

193
194 The board discussed the struggle some K-1st graders may have with using a
195 computer. The kids do get practice using technology before the tests and there are
196 also teachers available to help point and click for the students. They discussed how
197 many of the assessments are moving in the same direction to be given using a
198 computer.

199
200 Mr. St. Amand discussed the NWEA scores for grades 2nd -4th and the comparison to
201 national percentage score and in raw scores. Clark/ Wilkins is above the national
202 means in 2nd -4th grade.

203
204 Ms. Foulks expressed her concern about the lack of improvement in the 4th grade the
205 last two years. She would like to see a discussion about what has been learned from
206 the assessments.

207
208 Ms. Wons discussed the Math scores for 5-8th and discussed AMS compared to the
209 national percentage. All grades are above 70% nationally and the raw scores are all
210 above the national mean scores.

211
212 The board and the administrators discussed the growth of the accelerated students.
213 They also discussed the challenges of trying to look at growth for specific cohorts of
214 students. Ms. Heimarck stated that they would be looking into the data for the top
215 and bottom groups of students.

216
217 Mr. St. Amand discussed how scores are communicated to parents and how scores
218 will be used for instruction.

219
220 Ms. Wons stated that scores are mailed home to AMS parents. She also discussed
221 how teachers use scores as a response to intervention, for reflection, summer work
222 and planning for next year.

223
224 Mr. Dodge stated the staff has been trained to use the data to plan and it is valuable.

225
226 Ms. Wons added that there are step-by-step directions on how to access different
227 parts of the data. Teachers discuss how they use data at grade level meetings and
228 have rich conversation after looking at the data

229

230 The board discussed using the Literacy and Math coaches to help address some of
231 the student's strengths and weakness. They also discussed the 4th grade and how
232 those teachers are also concerned about the scores. The board discussed how
233 teachers are addressed if they are consistently not seeing growth in their
234 classrooms. Mr. St. Amand meets with every teacher to discuss his or her NWEA
235 scores each year. The board discussed how they are starting to see more growth
236 since the implementation of the core-reading program.

237

238 FY11 Budget/Legislative Update

239

240 Dr. Jennings stated that not much is happening, the bill was vetoed and sent back
241 because the language was not right. The retirement board is having an argument
242 and we have been advised to hold steady with being conservative with our
243 estimates. She discussed different scenarios, and stated that the district may not
244 know final numbers till January. She also stated there may be new ten-year laws,
245 changing to after 5 yrs to be ten year not after 3yrs.

246

247 Action Items

Action Items

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249 Expendable Trust

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251 \$85,847.00 out of \$99,342

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253 **Mr. Maresco made a motioned to authorize the spending of \$85,847.00 out of**
254 **the Expendable Trust for the Clark School roof. Mr. Zell seconded the motion**
255 **and the vote was unanimous.**

256

257 Preschool Curriculum Approval

258

259 Ms. Sparks gave the board an update about the enrollment into the preschool. They
260 currently have 6 same age peers registered or inquiring about registering. Parents
261 of students with special needs have asked for more flexibility in time of day for the
262 preschool, so they maybe combining 3 and 4 yr olds for a morning or an afternoon
263 class. She reminded the public that documents for the program are on both the
264 sprise and Clark Wilkins websites.

265

266 **Ms. Foulks made a motion to approve the preschool curriculum as developed.**
267 **Mr. Zell seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous.**

268

269 Policy JJE – Fundraising Activities

270

271 Ms. Shankel stated that she recognized confusion based on Buster Clubs and
272 separate organizations. The SAU has no regulation over Buster Clubs or other
273 organizations. She discussed money collected from parents must be used for those
274 students. She also explained why Buster clubs are important because they do not
275 have to comply with the regulated school money. She is hoping the board will add

276 the line back in that states money raised in one year is used in that year and also
277 hopes not to remove the entire 2nd and 3rd paragraphs. She hopes the board
278 reconsiders the policy; maybe rewrite to better fit the schools. The SAU has made a
279 commitment to have same policy for all districts or as much as possible.

280

281 Ms. Foulks stated that while she understands the removal of the paragraphs, she
282 feels the policy should be left as it was in May and is in support of keeping policies
283 similar to the other school districts.

284

285 Mr. Zell stated that he feels the policy does not need the 2nd and 3rd paragraphs
286 because the principal and AD have the final decision.

287

288 The board discussed why the policy was brought forward and the advantages and
289 disadvantages over keeping the 2nd and 3rd paragraphs.

290

291 Ms. Foulks made a motion to accept policy JJE as written for the 1st reading on May
292 19th. Mr. Maresco seconded the motion and all vote in favor to accept the policy,
293 except Andrew Zell opposed it.

294

295 Approval of international travel for student trip

296

297 Dr. Jennings stated that this would be further discussed in August.

298

299 Mr. Dodge stated that the Media specialist has formed an alliance with a school in
300 Italy and have an exchange using Skype. They have been discussing an exchange
301 program for next year and the teacher wants to come to present to the board.

302

303 **Discussion**

Discussion

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305 Unified SAU Proposal

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307 Mr. Manning discussed this idea with a few towns' people and people do not like the
308 idea. He stated he is intrigued by idea and can see how having multiple school
309 boards can get in the way for administrators. He would like to better understand
310 the benefits and the blocks of this proposal.

311

312 Dr. Jennings discussed the effort needed to move three districts in one direction and
313 how there is a lot of wasted effort. She stated it is beneficial to have school board
314 members who understand K-12 and administrators that know K-12. Also the
315 boards being in two separate towns gives kids a pieced together education. Schools
316 need to have leadership from the board. She discussed the differences between
317 each board. She discussed how boards across the country are different and
318 generally much larger. She gave an example using the Fundraising policy and NWEA
319 tests to show how the conversations would be simpler and provide a larger picture.
320 Other districts like Wilton-Lyndeborough have done it before. People might not like
321 it because they do not know any different. Across the country whole counties can be

322 one school district. Time is being spent coordinating efforts, that is time away from
323 time spent with teachers and pushing growth for students.

324

325 Mr. St. Amand and Mr. Dodge are both advocates of this idea and gave examples of
326 things that take up time because the boards are separate.

327

328 Ms. Heimarck discussed how changing the Math curriculum for the entire SAU
329 would have been faster and smoother had there been only one board.

330

331 The board discussed procedurally how the boards would combine. At the SAU level
332 a task force would be created. The take the proposal to the town for a vote after the
333 task force works for a year or two. Dr. Jennings recommends expanding the
334 Souhegan Cooperative School district. The board also discussed the collective
335 bargaining agreement and how that would be honored till it expires. The board and
336 Mr. Manning discussed why people did not like the idea, including potential politics
337 and not understanding the challenges the boards face.

338

Non-Public Session

339 **Mr. Zell made a motion to go into Non-public session under RSA 91-A:3 II. (a)**
340 **(c). Ms. Foulks seconded the motion and the role call was yes from all board**
341 **members at 8:03pm.**

342