

1 **Amherst School Board**  
2 **Thursday, October 21, 2010**  
3  
4

5 **Attendance**  
6

7 **Amherst School Board:**

8 Nancy Head, Peg Bennett, Lucienne Foulks  
9

10 **Administrative Team:**

11 Mary Athey Jennings, Nancy Maguire, Elizabeth Shankel, Porter Dodge, Gerry St.  
12 Amand, Renea Sparks  
13

14 **Minutes Recorder:** Beth Penney  
15

16 **Call to Order**

**Call to Order**

17  
18 Ms. Head called the meeting to order at 6:02pm.  
19

20 **Announcements**

**Announcements**

21  
22 **Principal's Report**  
23

24 Ms. Bennett and Ms. Head thanked Mr. Dodge for making another time for kids to go  
25 to camp.  
26

27 Ms. Foulks asked about the crisis prevention training.  
28

29 Mr. St. Amand explained how this is the third year of the crisis prevention plan and  
30 how and when the teachers will get to interact with the speaker.  
31

32 **PTA Grants**  
33

34 Jillian Smith was at the meeting to present the PTA grants totaling \$10,095. The  
35 PTA offered grants to teachers that had applied. At Wilkins teachers were awarded  
36 grants for math games, headsets, CDs, and a TV display with mounting set for the  
37 lobby to show children's artwork. At AMS teachers were awarded grants for flip  
38 video cameras, a robotics kit for the CAD class, math manipulatives, a computer cart  
39 for projecting art on the wall, an art press, laminator, and badminton set.  
40

41 **Public Time**

**Public Time**

42 No Public  
43

44 **Consent Agenda**  
45

**Consent Agenda**

46 Ms. Foulks asked to pull the minutes from September 15<sup>th</sup> and Transfer 10.  
47 **Ms. Foulks made a motion to accept the consent agenda containing the**  
48 **treasure’s report, the manifest, and a donation to the Clark/ Wilkins activity**  
49 **fund. Ms. Bennett seconded the motion.**

50  
51 **Ms. Bennett made a motion to accept the September 15<sup>th</sup> minutes. Ms. Foulks**  
52 **seconded the motion.**

53  
54 Ms. Foulks asked to change Lines 27-36 to indicate that the scheduling of coffees are  
55 done by the administrators who use calendars for future years to look at the  
56 religious holidays and plan accordingly.

57  
58 Ms. Head asked to change Line 104 when discussing the NWEA test to change the  
59 language to “test of student progress that helps us understand the instructional  
60 progress and the curriculum”.

61  
62 **The September 15<sup>th</sup> minutes were accepted as amended and the vote was**  
63 **unanimous.**

64  
65 Ms. Bennett asked Ms. Shankel to explain transfer 10.

66  
67 Ms. Shankel stated that this transfer was the result of redistributing the salaries for  
68 the administrators for the realignment done this spring regarding the principal’s  
69 and special education. The funds were available from the 4 eliminated coordinator  
70 positions.

71  
72 Ms. Head asked if the district would be drawing on the capital reserve fund.

73  
74 Ms. Shankel stated that currently money was spent from the fund to repair Wilkins  
75 roof, which will pull the fund down to about \$39,000. The trust is used to address  
76 problems that come up unexpectedly. Currently no other funds are being drawn  
77 from the capital reserve fund. If the district needed to draw more money from the  
78 fund then a public hearing would happen.

79  
80 **Ms. Foulks made a motion to accept transfer 10. Ms. Bennett seconded the**  
81 **motion and the vote was unanimous.**

82  
83 **Presentations/Reports** **Presentations/ Reports**

84  
85 Preschool Proposal

86  
87 Ms. Sparks introduced the people that helped with this presentation and have been  
88 working on this proposal for the last year, Janet Davis, Caroline Smith, Amy  
89 Sarsfield, Gerry St. Amand, Nancy Maguire, and Jen Eccleston.

90

91 Ms. Sparks continued the presentation by stating this is the 3<sup>rd</sup> time a preschool  
92 proposal has been presented for board to consider. This proposal has tried to  
93 address as many questions as possible from the previous proposals. This proposal  
94 is for an integrated preschool because the district believes in inclusion as much as  
95 possible. The preschool will educate special education students with same age  
96 peers. The district will get program approval for an early childhood setting, which  
97 means more than a 50/50 ratio of special education students to regular students.  
98 For FY 11/12 there will be no more than 11 special education students and then the  
99 program would need 13 same age peers. It is very valuable to provide special  
100 education students with early prevention to limit the services that will be need later.  
101 Data shows many students with early prevention need minimal service by the time  
102 they reach middle school.

103

104 The preschool would have 12, 3yr. olds in the morning and 12, 4yr. olds in the  
105 afternoon Monday through Thursday. Fridays would be used for staff development  
106 and meetings. The preschool would be held at Clark and would only need one  
107 classroom for FY11/12 and FY 12/13.

108

109 Ms. Sparks reviewed the answers to the board's questions from June. 84% of other  
110 surrounding districts have an integrated preschool. The preschool group met with  
111 local preschools to discuss the impact. Since there is a small number of students  
112 there would be a small impact on the private preschools. Sunrise would have the  
113 largest impact because that is currently where we send our out of district  
114 placements for preschool. Another option is to partner with a local private  
115 preschool. The results of the survey were overwhelmingly there were 247  
116 responses and 65% would support a preschool. If the district does not have 50/50  
117 ratio of students than the program could not be an Early childhood setting and  
118 would need to file with the state for a different program setting. Financially this  
119 proposal would have little impact on the district because of the money that is being  
120 paid to place the preschool aged special education students out of district.

121

122 The board and Ms. Sparks discussed whom the survey went to and the results of the  
123 survey.

124

125 Ms. Sparks discussed the cost and saving associated with the preschool proposal  
126 and how they were determined. Savings would be seen at the end of the FY11/12  
127 budget year and then realized for the planning of the FY12/13 budget.

128

129 Ms. Sparks reviewed the timeline for the preschool proposal with the board. The  
130 next step is to look for private preschool's to make requests for the private/ public  
131 partnership before the board's November meeting. At the November meeting the  
132 board would need to approve the proposal. If the preschool was approved then the  
133 district would seek approval from the department of education, enroll students, and  
134 hire staff by the end of April.

135

136 Ms. Foulks asked what happens programmatically if there is not 50/50 ratio of  
137 students and what does it mean to have a reclassification of the program by the  
138 state.

139 Ms. Sparks explained there is a continuum of learning environments. If the 50/ 50  
140 ratio is not met than the program could not be a Early childhood setting and would  
141 be a more restrictive program called a special education program  
142

143 Ms. Sarsfield stated that as long as the district is working to find same age peers the  
144 district would not need to go back and forth with state over the classification of the  
145 program.  
146

147 Ms. Sparks stated that nothing would change except for staffing if the program was a  
148 special education setting or an early childhood setting.  
149

150 The board and Ms. Sparks discussed if other districts also have one preschool class,  
151 how the districts choose the same age peers, if the other districts have tried a  
152 private/public partnership. If there is a private/public partnership it was discussed  
153 that the district hired teacher would work more with the special education students  
154 and the private preschool teacher would work more with the same age peers, but all  
155 students would be co-taught at Clark. The district would be looking for a  
156 partnership where the private preschool teacher would teach the districts  
157 curriculum so it would align with the current curriculum at Clark and Wilkins.  
158

159 The board discussed how if the preschool is passed it would appear in the budget. It  
160 was determined the preschool would be with in the special education portion of the  
161 operating budget because of the timeline for getting the budget approved. It was  
162 also determined that there would be no added expense to having a preschool in the  
163 district.  
164

165 The board also discussed space needs, extended day options, additional services for  
166 the special education students, the need to still pull kids out at times even though  
167 this would be an integrated setting and if other districts have a hard time finding  
168 same age peers.  
169

170 Mark Vincent, the chair of the ways and means committee, asked if this program  
171 would need to get approved on a ballot and if the passage of this program would be  
172 included in the out of district budget.  
173

174 Dr. Jennings explained it would not have to be a warrant article either year because  
175 the district would not be going to the voters for extra funding. This would just be a  
176 programmatic change.  
177

178 Mr. Vincent and Ms. Sparks discussed the difference in the cost savings and the  
179 proposal from the last time it was presented.  
180

181 Ms. Foulks asked if the preschool program becomes a special education program  
182 does the district get more funding.

183  
184 Ms. Sparks stated no, because the district gets the funding for the same students  
185 anyway if they are educated in or out of district.

186  
187 The board discussed what would happen if there were more special education  
188 students in the future and whether the designation of the program would change or  
189 would a second class be added.

190  
191 The board requested that the public/ private partnership be brought back once the  
192 district has requests from the private preschools.

193  
194 Dr. Jennings stated this would be an action item for the November meeting.

195  
196 FY11 Budget Assumptions

197  
198 Dr. Jennings explained why budget assumptions are presented and that the draft  
199 budget would be presented in November and the final budget would be presented in  
200 December.

201  
202 Mark Vincent presented the Ways and Means committee- Chairman, David  
203 Yabroudy, Stephanie Hall and Paul Prescott – still looking for new members  
204

205 Dr. Jennings started the presentation by discussing the Federal and state grants and  
206 catastrophic aide. She stated that the goal is to manage the budget closely and the  
207 administrators will let the board know if they think they can give more than 1%  
208 back.

209  
210 Dr. Jennings discussed enrollments for FY11 are 629 at Clark/ Wilkins and 798 at  
211 AMS. The assumption for FY12 is 609 students at Clark/ Wilkins and 767 students at  
212 AMS. The class load at graded K-1 would remain at 18:1 and at grade 2-4 would be  
213 20:1. At AMS teams would have 80 students and Specials would have 20-25  
214 students.

215  
216 Dr. Jennings also discussed staffing considerations including administration, Special  
217 Education, support staff, and teachers.

218  
219 Ms. Shankel discussed the 10% increase for health benefits. She explained why the  
220 numbers show enrollments decreasing yet the staffing costs are going up. This is  
221 because of rate increases up to 30% in last 4 years. NH retirement for certified staff  
222 and non-certified teachers is increasing by 13%. In the past 4 years there has been a  
223 rate increase of 203.8%. For these reasons the budget cannot remain flat.

224

225 Dr. Jennings continued by discussing contracts and how there will be a separate  
226 warrant article for AEA. The ASSA in the 3<sup>rd</sup> yr of 3yr contract will be included in  
227 the operating budget. The district will continue to hire at an MA Step 5 rate. Dr.  
228 Jennings also discussed retirement benefits.  
229

230 Dr. Jennings discussed operations cost including energy costs, specific maintenance  
231 and repairs, transportation, and food service.  
232

233 Dr. Jennings discussed initiatives including the strategic plan, the curriculum review  
234 cycle including the Scott Foresman reading program and the math program review.  
235

236 Dr. Jennings discussed other issues that reduced the budget including reallocation of  
237 resources because of RTI and the SINI designation gives the district some money  
238 from the state. This reduction is a reflection of restructuring curriculum  
239 coordination and supervision and the preschool proposal.  
240

241 Dr. Jennings discussed the expendable trust in which there is \$39,354 left after the  
242 Wilkins roof repair.  
243

244 Dr. Jennings ended the presentation by discussing the timeline of presenting the  
245 draft and final budget to the board, having a public hearing in January and the vote  
246 in March.  
247

248 The board discussed keeping specials at AMS to under 20 students, especially for the  
249 classes that have safety concerns like sewing, cooking, saws, etc. The board  
250 discussed installing projectors at Wilkins and where technology would be in the  
251 budget. The technology plan would continue as approved by the board last year.  
252 Some of the technology costs would be found in both technology and maintenance.  
253 The board also discussed bringing the amount in the Expendable Trust back up to  
254 \$100,000.  
255

256 Mr. Vincent asked about the sizeable surplus and for an explanation of this surplus.  
257

258 Ms. Shankel explained the various reasons including the biggest savings found in the  
259 reduced energy costs because of the building renovations. The district also had  
260 savings in special education that was unexpected.  
261

262 Ms. Sparks explained the savings in special education was because of the stimulus  
263 package from the federal government matching the districts Medicare  
264 reimbursements.  
265

266 Mr. Vincent asked about the technology plan.  
267

268 Dr. Jennings stated that she would show the plan to the ways and means committee.  
269

270 Ms. Shankel stated that many of the ways and means suggestions did go into the  
271 plan.

272  
273 FY11 Quarterly Report

274  
275 Ms. Shankel stated that this is from July 1st to September 30<sup>th</sup>, which is only one  
276 month of school. There are no differences in the revenues and the expenditures are  
277 on track. There may be a savings in regular education benefits, salaries and  
278 retirements of about \$100,000, which is not even 1% of the budget.

279  
280 Ms. Head asked about the \$10,000 transfer to food service.

281  
282 Ms. Shankel explained that the district normally budgets the money for capital  
283 equipment and over last 4 years the food service has been self-supporting.

284  
285 **Discussion** **Discussion**

286  
287 Policy JFAB- Non-Resident Tuition

288  
289 Dr. Jennings stated that the policy would need to be revised because of a recent  
290 legislation change. If a non-resident with a special education student comes to the  
291 district then the prior district will pay the special education costs. Other than that  
292 there are no major changes to this policy.

293  
294 Ms. Bennett asked to see the prior version of the policy where the language had  
295 been striked out to better understand the changes.

296  
297 Dr. Jennings stated she would bring a strike out version of the policy for next  
298 meeting and the second reading of this policy.

299  
300 **Adjourn** **Adjourn**

301  
302 **Peg motioned to move the meeting into non-public session. 2<sup>nd</sup> Ms. Foulks**  
303 **seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous at 7:49pm.**