

MINUTES

AMITY BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: William Blake, Christopher Browe, Patricia Cardozo, Sue Cohen, Diane Crocco, Steven DeMaio, Rita Gedansky, James Horwitz, Thomas Hurley, Tracey Lane Russo, James Stirling

AMITY BOARD MEMBER ABSENT: Julie Altman, John A. Grasso, Jr.,

Staff Members Present: John Brady, Kevin Keller, Jack Levine, Marianne Lippard, Terry Lumas, Jim Saisa

Also Present: Janet Brunwin, Thomas Falcigno, Matthew Giglietti, James Leahy, Sheila McCreven, Joseph Nuzzo, James Zeoli; other members of the Public

A special meeting of the Amity Regional Board of Education was held on Monday, April 2, 2012, at 7:30 p.m., in the Presentation Room at the District Offices.

- 1. Call to Order:** William Blake called the meeting to order at 7:40 p.m.
- 2. Pledge of Allegiance** was recited by those present.
- 3. Public Comment**

James Zeoli, Orange First Selectman, said that he came tonight to raise several concerns. He came before this Board at recent meetings and feels that he made no progress and doesn't want to rehash the numbers again. Nonetheless, he would like to address bonding for the roof repairs and a few other items. Since he is not a part of this Board, residents speak candidly with him when he is out and about. Roof repairs are planned at the High School, but there are problems with the roof at Amity Middle School in Orange. There are issues at the Orange facility that should be looked at. He questioned whether exploratory work is going on there. The bond will affect us for years ahead.

There may be new requirements for bus transportation with respect to insurance and owner/operators. He will fight for Orange to go its own way.

He has been approached by a number of people in Orange and has concerns about the information he is hearing. He has enjoyed the theater programs at Amity, but is disappointed to hear the students say it's like they're gearing up just for an award. They're taking the fun out of it. When he visited the bank last week, seven people stopped him to talk. There are concerns in the community because people have read in the newspaper that we take what we need. Orange has the highest population of seniors in the county. He suggested that Dr. Brady should've softened the wording to say that we ask for what we need. He has been

approached by all political parties. The unemployment rate is improving in the town. He cautioned the Board not to be kept in the dark, as there is a lot of chatter in the community by people with concerns. We've gone a long way without a lot. The town will be going forward with a bond in the \$10 million to \$12 million range. School roofs and road drainage are problems. Raising taxes isn't easy. He sees the faces of the people of the community. He cautioned the Board to look at the faces as decisions are made.

Thomas Falcigno, the student representative to the Board and an Amity junior, said that he feels that the budget puts money in all the right places. It adds more quality to all departments. He came to bring attention to where the money will be going to. He urged everyone to review and look at the budget before May 8th.

Patty Legeo of Orange said that she spoke out on the budget back in 1970. It's a difficult time for Orange, as the town is taking the bulk of the expenses. It is easy for Woodbridge to say it doesn't matter because that town is paying a lot less. In the past, Woodbridge was in this position. She questioned if anything could be done to lessen the impact on Orange. She said that the 50 percent taxpayer should not be overlooked.

4. To consider and act upon resolutions with respect to an appropriation and borrowing authorization for various improvements to the District's school facilities, including restoration of the existing gravel-surfaced, built-up roofs at Amity Regional High School, replacement of the air handler units in the boys' and girls' locker room at Amity Regional High School, and repaving of the side parking lot at the Amity Regional Middle School Orange Campus; and the calling of a District referendum thereon.

The Amity Board of Education passed the following resolution with a roll call vote:

APPROPRIATION OF \$1,748,000 AND AUTHORIZATION OF BONDS AND TEMPORARY NOTES IN THE SAME AMOUNT FOR DESIGN, CONSTRUCTION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF VARIOUS IMPROVEMENTS TO THE DISTRICT'S SCHOOL FACILITIES

RESOLVED,

1. That Regional School District Number 5 of the State of Connecticut appropriate ONE MILLION SEVEN HUNDRED FORTY-EIGHT THOUSAND DOLLARS (\$1,748,000) for costs related to the design, construction and implementation of various improvements to the District's school facilities, including (a) restoration of the existing gravel-surfaced, built-up roofs at Amity Regional High School, including repairs as necessary, upgrading of the wall, unit and perimeter flashings, and any related work (estimated cost of \$1,400,000), (b) replacement of the air handler units in the

boys' and girls' locker room at Amity Regional High School, and any related work (estimated cost of \$176,000), and (c) repaving of the side parking lot at the Amity Regional Middle School Orange Campus, which also serves as the school's outdoor physical education classroom, and any related work (estimated cost of \$97,000); and costs of the financing thereof (estimated at \$75,000). The appropriation may be spent for design, demolition, installation and construction costs, equipment, materials, testing costs, disposal costs, architects' fees, engineering fees, legal fees, net interest on borrowings, other financing costs, and other expenses related to the project. The District Board of Education shall be authorized to determine the scope and particulars of the project, and may reduce or modify the scope of the project as desirable, and the entire appropriation may be spent on the project as so reduced or modified.

2. That the District issue its bonds and temporary notes in an amount not to exceed ONE MILLION SEVEN HUNDRED FORTY-EIGHT THOUSAND DOLLARS (\$1,748,000) to finance the appropriation for the project. The amount of the bonds or notes authorized shall be reduced by the amount of grants received by the District for the project. The bonds and temporary notes shall be issued pursuant to Section 10-56 of the General Statutes of Connecticut, Revision of 1958, as amended, and any other enabling acts. The bonds and notes shall be general obligations of the District and its member towns, secured by the irrevocable pledge of the full faith and credit of the District and its member towns. The law firm of Day Pitney LLP is designated as bond counsel to approve the legality of the bonds and notes. The Chairman and the Treasurer, or such officer or body to whom the Board of Education delegates the authority to make such determinations, are authorized to determine the amounts, dates, interest rates, maturities, redemption provisions, form and other details of the bonds and notes; to designate one or more banks or trust companies to be certifying bank, registrar, transfer agent and paying agent for the bonds or notes; to provide for keeping a record of the bonds or notes; to designate a financial advisor to the District in connection with the sale of the bonds or notes; to sell the bonds or notes at public or private sale; to deliver the bonds or notes; and to perform all other acts which are necessary or appropriate to issue the bonds or notes. (Mr. Horwitz, 2d Ms. Gedansky)

Roll Call Vote:

Christopher Browe	<u>yes</u>
Patricia Cardozo	<u>yes</u>
Sue Cohen	<u>yes</u>
Diane Crocco	<u>yes</u>
Steven DeMaio	<u>yes</u>
Rita Gedansky	<u>yes</u>
James Horwitz	<u>yes</u>
Thomas Hurley	<u>yes</u>
Tracey Lane Russo	<u>yes</u>
James Stirling	<u>yes</u>

Vote in favor unanimous.

3. That the District hereby declares its official intent under Federal Income Tax Regulation Section 1.150-2 that project costs may be paid from temporary advances of available funds and that the District reasonably expects to reimburse any such advances from the proceeds of borrowings in an aggregate principal amount not in excess of the amount of borrowing authorized above for the project. The Chairman and Treasurer, or such officer or body to whom the Board of Education delegates such authority, are authorized to amend such declaration of official intent as they deem necessary or advisable and to bind the District pursuant to such representations and covenants as they deem necessary or advisable in order to maintain the continued exemption from federal income taxation of interest on the bonds or notes authorized by this resolution if issued on a tax-exempt basis, including covenants to pay rebates of investment earnings to the United States in future years.

4. That the Chairman and Treasurer, or such officer or body to whom the Board delegates such authority, are authorized to make representations and enter into written agreements for the benefit of holders of the bonds or notes to provide secondary market disclosure information, which agreements may include such terms as they deem advisable or appropriate in order to comply with applicable laws or rules pertaining to the sale or purchase of such bonds or notes.

5. That the authorization of bonds and temporary notes shall be subject to approval by a referendum vote to be held in the Towns of Bethany, Orange and Woodbridge, being all of the towns comprising said District.

The Amity Board of Education passed the following resolution with a roll call vote:

RESOLVED, that the Board of Education recommends to the towns comprising Regional School District Number 5 that the aforesaid bond and temporary note authorizations be approved by referendum vote; and that said referendum be held on Tuesday, May 8, 2012; that notice of said referendum be given by publication and posting between five and fifteen days before said date, and that said notices of the referendum in the Towns of Bethany, Orange and Woodbridge be substantially in the following form:

5. "WARNING
REFERENDUM VOTE
Regional School District Number 5
Town of _____
May 8, 2012

A referendum vote of the electors and citizens qualified to vote in town meetings of the Town of _____, Connecticut will be held in the Town of _____ at the following polling places:

[INSERT TOWN POLLING PLACES]

and simultaneously in the other Towns in Regional School District Number 5 on Tuesday, May 8, 2012 between the hours of 6:00 A.M. and 8:00 P.M. pursuant to Section 10-56 of the General Statutes of Connecticut, Revision of 1958, as amended, upon a resolution adopted by the Regional Board of Education which will be placed on the ballot labels as the following question:

SHALL REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NUMBER 5 APPROPRIATE \$1,748,000 AND AUTHORIZE BONDS AND TEMPORARY NOTES IN THE SAME AMOUNT FOR DESIGN, CONSTRUCTION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF VARIOUS IMPROVEMENTS TO THE DISTRICT'S SCHOOL FACILITIES?

(Mr. Horwitz, 2d Mr. Stirling)

Roll Call Vote:

Christopher Browe	<u>yes</u>
Patricia Cardozo	<u>yes</u>
Sue Cohen	<u>yes</u>
Diane Crocco	<u>yes</u>
Steven DeMaio	<u>yes</u>
Rita Gedansky	<u>yes</u>
James Horwitz	<u>yes</u>
Thomas Hurley	<u>yes</u>
Tracey Lane Russo	<u>yes</u>
James Stirling	<u>yes</u>

Vote in favor unanimous.

The Amity Board of Education passed the following resolution with a roll call vote:

RESOLVED, that the Secretary of the Board of Education is authorized, in such official's discretion, to prepare, and to cause to be printed and distributed, a concise explanatory text regarding the aforesaid question to be submitted to the voters of the District at referendum to be held May 8, 2012,

such explanatory text to be subject to the approval of the District's general counsel and to be prepared and distributed in accordance with subsections (a) and (b) of Section 9-369b of the General Statutes of Connecticut, Revision of 1958, as amended. (Mr. Horwitz, 2d Ms. Cardozo)

Roll Call Vote:

Christopher Browe	<u>yes</u>
Patricia Cardozo	<u>yes</u>
Sue Cohen	<u>yes</u>
Diane Crocco	<u>yes</u>
Steven DeMaio	<u>yes</u>
Rita Gedansky	<u>yes</u>
James Horwitz	<u>yes</u>
Thomas Hurley	<u>yes</u>
Tracey Lane Russo	<u>yes</u>
James Stirling	<u>yes</u>

Vote in favor unanimous.

Discuss and Take Final Action on the 2012-2013 Amity Board of Education Operating Budget to be Submitted to Referendum on Tuesday, May 8, 2012

Dr. Brady's March 21, 2012 summarizes the proposed changes to the Board of Education 2012-2013 Budget, Adopted on February 13, 2012. Rather than an increase in total expenditures of \$401,022, or 0.92 percent, Dr. Brady recommends modifications that have a net positive effect. The changes will result in total expenditures of \$43,613,162, or \$204,541 or 0.47 percent higher than this fiscal year's budget.

Move that the Amity Board of Education adopt an operating budget for fiscal year 2012-2013 in the gross amount of \$43,613,162 and the net amount of \$41,664,551 and directs that this budget be forwarded to a referendum vote on May 8, 2012 (Mr. Stirling, 2d Mr. Horwitz).

Motion to amend the current motion, withdrawn (Ms. Cohen, 2d Ms. Gedansky).

Discussion:

Mr. Stirling said that there has been intense financial pressure with this budget. The Board has worked hard to find ways to reduce the budget. The Board has put in place methods for responding to decreasing enrollment. The current reduction is going too far in digging away at Amity and may be putting the District in jeopardy halfway through the year. He will, however, vote in favor of this budget. We feel a commitment to educate all students. Some of the expenses are beyond our control.

Mr. Hurley questioned who is paying for the ballots. Dr. Brady said that the towns pay for the ballots. Mr. Hurley said that he can't see funding staff with one-time grants that are eventually added to the operating budget. He applauds the changes he sees. He believes tuition students should be brought in to maintain programs. He hasn't seen a plan to get us out of this hole. The bar has been raised and the state won't let us lower the bar. He doesn't know the effect of reducing staff. When we don't ask the hard questions, we don't know the answers. He requested information on other options and didn't get the information. He can't support this budget. He doesn't feel that everything has been looked at.

Ms. Russo said that teachers are the most important part of the school system and they are getting a zero percent increase. She doesn't believe that we can't do better. We can only raise taxes so much in Orange. We're at over \$17,000 per student. She can't believe \$16,000 per student isn't enough. She doesn't support the budget.

Mr. Browe said that the teachers were asked to take a zero percent increase. The average average for the budget is \$500,000. We should've shown that we could get to zero percent. We're \$200,000 away. The budget process leads to excesses in the half million range. Getting to zero percent would show the teachers that we would be willing to do what they were willing to do.

Ms. Cohen said that the budget is driven by the Board goals. The teacher contract came before this Board. Now it is being said that this isn't the way to go. These things should've come up and should come up with goal setting next year.

Mr. DeMaio said that when the preliminary budget was voted on, he asked that it be put on hold for one month. He talked to Mr. Blake, Mr. Stirling and Dr. Brady. He wanted to go over these issues before moving forward. He takes offense to Ms. Cohen's comments.

Ms. Cohen said that she felt that he voiced his concerns late.

Mr. Horwitz said that the Board has a responsibility to the students and the costs are expensive. The Board has been sensitive to Orange. The budget has been cut again and again. We are doing our best with Band-Aids and Scotch tape. It's not the Board's job to get the budget to zero. He would object that there isn't enough money in the budget. The bleachers aren't needed, but programs are. Real estate values are tied to a strong system of education. This budget should be enthusiastically supported.

Mr. Browe questioned what happens when money comes back from the state.

Dr. Brady said that the money goes into the budget. The money can be dealt with in a number of ways.

Vote in favor: Patricia Cardozo, Sue Cohen, Diane Crocco, Rita Gedansky, James Horwitz, James Stirling

Vote opposed: Christopher Browe, Steven DeMaio, Thomas Hurley, Tracey Lane Russo

Motion passed.

6. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:29 p.m. (Mr. Horwitz, 2d Ms. Gedansky).

Motion passed; meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Rita Gedansky, secretary
Marianne Lippard, recording clerk