

MINUTES

**AMITY BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:** Julie Altman, William Blake, Christopher Browe, Patricia Cardozo, Sue Cohen, Diane Crocco, Steven DeMaio, Rita Gedansky, John A. Grasso, Jr., James Horwitz, Thomas Hurley, Tracey Lane Russo, James Stirling

**AMITY BOARD MEMBER ABSENT:** None

**Staff Members Present:** John Brady, Charles Britton, Kathleen Fuller Cutler, Richard Dellinger, Deb DeMeo, Kevin Keller, Jack Levine, Marianne Lippard, Terry Lumas, Rocco Palmieri, Jim Saisa

**Also Present:** Thomas Falcigno, James Leahy; other members of the Public

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A regular meeting of the Amity Regional Board of Education was held on Monday, February 13, 2012, at 6:30 p.m. in the cafeteria of Amity High School.

1. **Call to Order:** William Blake called the meeting to order at 6:34 p.m.

2. **Pledge of Allegiance** was recited by those present.

3. **Approval of Minutes**

a. Regular Board of Education Meeting, January 9, 2012

*Motion to approve the minutes as presented* (Mr. Hurley, 2d Mr. Horwitz).

*Discussion:* Mr. Horwitz offered a correction.

*Vote in favor of approving the minutes as amended:* Christopher Browe, Patricia Cardozo, Sue Cohen, Diane Crocco, Steven DeMaio, Rita Gedansky, John A. Grasso, Jr., James Horwitz, Thomas Hurley, Tracey Lane Russo, James Stirling

*Vote opposed:* none

*Abstain:* Julie Altman

***Motion passed.***

b. Special Board of Education Meeting, January 25, 2012

*Motion to approve the minutes as presented* (Ms. Cardozo, 2d Mr. Stirling).

*Vote in favor:* Julie Altman, Christopher Browe, Patricia Cardozo, Sue Cohen, Steven DeMaio, Rita Gedansky, James Horwitz, Thomas Hurley, Tracey Lane Russo, James Stirling

*Vote opposed:* none

*Abstain:* Diane Crocco, John A. Grasso, Jr.

***Motion passed.***

**4. Recognition of Student, Zizi Yu, INTEL Science Competition Semifinalist**

Dr. Brady announced that Amity High School student Zizi Yu was named as a finalist in the INTEL Science Competition. It is the second year that an Amity student managed to make it as a finalist in the prestigious competition. There are 40 finalists. A certificate was given to Zizi for her achievement.

Zizi thanked everyone for their support. The project was about food allergies. She decided to study food allergies because she was curious about the factors that lead to these allergies. She looked into whether or not early exposure to an allergen was beneficial. She believes that early exposure will be found to be beneficial.

Mr. Blake wished Zizi luck on behalf of the board.

Dr. Dellinger introduced two principals visiting from China. They visited both middle schools. There are 18 principals from China visiting Connecticut.

**5. Superintendent Search – Leadership Profile**

Dr. Jacobi, who is assisting with the search for the new superintendent, gave an update. She thanked all of those people who participated in focus groups and responded to on-line surveys. There is already an extremely strong foundation at Amity. One hundred people took part in 12 different focus groups. Copies of the survey can still be obtained both on-line and there are also paper copies available. She enjoyed meeting everyone, especially the students, who she found to be very articulate and thoughtful. The students proposed solutions to problems.

According to data gathered thus far, the strengths in the District include: faculty, motivated students, accommodating support staff, diversity of curriculum, opportunities for internships and independent study and an array of afterschool activities. Challenges facing Amity include: budget/finances and differing standards in the three towns. Qualities used to describe the leadership that they would like to see continue at Amity include: progressive, focus on youngsters, personal accessibility and participatory management style, and someone who is thoughtful, resilient and creative.

Dr. Jacobi said that although it is early in the process, she has had a number of people contact her about the position. A written report will be available on-line.

Mr. Blake said that it is good to know that the process is underway and the search is moving forward.

**6. Discussion and Possible Action to Switch from Fully Insured to Self -Funded Medical, Dental and Vision Benefits**

Charlie Rose of Marsh & McLennan gave an overview of the plan. Amity is paying approximately \$5 million in premiums. The District submitted claims over the last several years amounting to approximately \$3.5 million. There is a

large differential between what was paid in claims compared with the cost of insurance. Amity can save \$1.1 million this year. A portion of the savings will be used to set up reserves to protect against what claims could be in the future. There is insurance that stops the claim at \$150,000.

Dr. Brady said that there have been numerous meetings and, looking at the numbers, his original budget proposal can be reduced by \$520,000.

Mr. Rose said that they have taken the most conservative position. There will be no benefit plan changes.

Deb DeMeo, representing the teachers, is present at tonight's meeting.

Ms. Russo questioned what happens if \$1.1 million isn't saved. She noted that in Mr. Rose's model there is a range, including the least amount of money saved. If we try this and it doesn't work, can Amity go back, or is there a penalty.

Mr. Rose said the reserve would be built up as needed. There is no penalty.

*Motion to move from fully insured to self-funded medical, dental and vision benefits (Mr. Stirling, 2d Mr. Grasso).*

*Vote in favor:* Julie Altman, Christopher Browe, Patricia Cardozo, Sue Cohen, Diane Crocco, Steven DeMaio, Rita Gedansky, John A. Grasso, Jr., James Horwitz, Tracey Lane Russo, James Stirling

*Vote opposed:* none.

*Abstain:* Mr. Hurley

***Motion passed.***

**7. Discussion and Possible Action on 2012-2013 School Calendar**

*Motion to move consideration of the 2012-2013 school calendar on agenda (Mr. Hurley, 2d Ms. Gedansky).*

*Vote in favor unanimous.*

***Motion passed.***

Dr. Brady said that Board has a copy of the draft calendar. The consensus is to have school on Election Day, Veterans' Day and another holiday. There will be four snow days. The veterans seem supportive and the schools will enhance the recognition for Veterans' Day.

*Motion to approve the school calendar (Ms. Cohen, Ms. Gedansky).*

*Discussion:* Mr. Hurley said that students usually help out on Election Day and it would be nice to have some assurance that there would be no penalty for their participation. Mr. Blake said that the polls are open for a number of hours, so students should still be able to participate before or after school.

*Vote in favor unanimous.*

***Motion passed.***

**8. Student Report**

Thomas Falcigno said students at the High School are getting ready for the CAPT test. The Mr. Spartan contest will take place this Thursday. The Amity Math Team recently earned an award and will be invited to participate in a state competition. The Amity High School Student Government recently collected clothes for battered women.

*Motion to move Public Comment forward on the agenda (Mr. Hurley, 2d Mr. Grasso).*

*Vote in favor unanimous.*

*Motion passed.*

**9. Public Comment**

David Guzowski of Orange said that he is concerned about drug activity at the High School and is trying to better understand how canine patrols are initiated. Mr. Blake said that the Superintendent makes that determination. Mr. Guzowski said that he is very happy with the Amity school system, and was pleased to hear that the dogs were brought through the school. There are some students that are going to do drugs no matter what we do and there are students who may never try drugs. Canines are a significant way to show students that they cannot bring drugs to this school. He believes it might make sense to bring in canines during a lockdown so as not to disrupt the flow of activities throughout the day. He and other parents are happy that the dogs were brought in. There are a few people that are not happy. Another concern is that many freshmen are waiting to go into the bathroom. There has to be a way to get a smoke detector into the bathroom that can't be tampered with.

James Leahy, vice chairman of the Orange Board of Finance, said that there are concerns about the Amity budget. Student enrollment is declining, but the share in Orange goes up even when the number of students stays the same. There will be an increase of \$200 per household for Amity. The Orange Board of Finance voted unanimously not to support this budget.

Matthew Giglietti of Woodbridge, a member of the Amity Finance Committee, said that he supports the proposed .92 percent budget increase. He described Amity is the crown jewel of the three towns. If Dr. Brady cut \$400,000 from this budget, Orange would still have a \$500,000 increase. He understands the dilemma in Orange. Expenses have gone up in the Woodbridge budget as well. To get to a 0% increase, \$1.4 million would have to be cut, which would dismantle the educational system. He described Dr. Brady as a phenomenal superintendent. He trusts Dr. Brady and fully supports this budget and hopes that the Board will also.

**10. Discussion and Possible Actions Regarding the Superintendent's Proposed 2012-2013 Budget**

Mr. Blake asked Mr. Stirling what action the Amity Finance Committee took earlier tonight. Mr. Stirling said that the Committee approved the Superintendent's proposed .92 % increase by a vote of 4 to 2.

Mr. Blake went over the figures. The \$43,809,643 budget involves a .92 percent increase over the current budget.

Dr. Brady noted that this would be a preliminary vote.

Mr. Hurley said that he would like to consider bonding for the bleachers.

Mr. DeMaio said that he would like the Board to discuss a few topics. There has been a decrease in enrollment and the staffing may need to be reduced through layoffs or not hiring. A new superintendent will be hired. He would like to vote on the Capital Non-Recurring, possibly bonding for some needed work. He would like to delay voting on the budget for two weeks or perhaps until the March meeting.

*Motion to delay voting on the budget until the March meeting (Mr. DeMaio, 2d Mr. Hurley).*

*Discussion:*

Ms. Cardozo said that this is a preliminary vote. She questioned why it would be postponed.

Mr. Hurley said that there are issues that some board members would like to work through. If staff reductions are needed, he would like to have some clarification on what that would mean. He would like to have an idea of the impact. More information will be available in March. The administration doesn't have enough information yet and more information is needed. Some expenses should be bonded and taken off the plate.

Mr. Blake said that the administration has said that the time isn't right for staff reductions. The Board hasn't charged Dr. Brady with looking at that issue.

Mr. Hurley said that he would like to delay the vote. The budget is not ready as proposed. All the numbers must be examined. It's premature to say the budget is good as is. More time is needed to make a reasonable decision.

Ms. Russo said that she shares the concerns raised. An e-mail was received late Friday afternoon. She said that she isn't ready to vote.

Mr. Stirling said that he appreciates the concerns raised, but noted that this vote is preliminary and there should be a better sense of where the Board stands. The Amity budget looks pretty good.

Ms. Altman asked what effect a delay would have on the budget calendar.

Dr. Brady said that the vote has already been delayed by a month. He has not had direction from the Board.

Mr. Browe said that the process is moving and changing at all times and questioned the significance of a preliminary vote. Amity should be bonding for more than the roof.

*Motion to lay on the table the motion by Mr. DeMaio's motion to delay voting (Mr. Stirling, 2d Ms. Cardozo).*

*Vote in favor:* Julie Altman, Patricia Cardozo, Sue Cohen, Diane Crocco, Steven DeMaio, Rita Gedansky, John A. Grasso, Jr., Tracey Lane Russo, James Stirling

*Vote opposed:* Christopher Browe, James Horwitz, Thomas Hurley

***Motion passed.***

*Motion to add bleachers to the Capital Plan for the High School roof project (Mr. Hurley, no second)*

*Motion to open discussion for bonding for more than just the roof (Mr. DeMaio, no second).*

*Motion to include bleachers in the Capital plan (Mr. Hurley, no second).*

*Discussion:* Ms. Cohen said the \$75,000 for the bleachers is not in next year's budget. Dr. Brady said that the bleachers do not affect the .92% increase.

Mr. Hurley withdrew his motion.

Ms. Russo said that she would like to make a motion to identify any issues in the budget that could qualify for bonding.

Dr. Brady said that a Facilities Committee meeting took place. To revisit this issue, it should be addressed by the Facilities Committee.

Mr. Hurley said that he would like Dr. Brady to conduct a study to determine the effect of getting rid of some staff. He would like to know the effects of any staff reductions.

Dr. Brady said that he presented his assessment on November 14<sup>th</sup>. He hopes to present a planning document for the future in March. There will be no additional staff reductions planned based on the information he has so far.

*Motion to direct the Superintendent to conduct a study the results of reducing staff by one, two, three or four faculty positions (Mr. Hurley, 2d Mr. DeMaio)*

*Discussion:*

Mr. Blake said that a case hasn't been made for reducing staff. The issue could be addressed by the Curriculum Committee for feedback.

Mr. Hurley said that the vote should be moved to March so this could be done.

Mr. Horwitz said that Dr. Brady is asking for some direction. If the vote on the budget is approved the process can move forward and if it is defeated, then it would send a signal to Dr. Brady to look for additional cuts. The vote should go forward.

Mr. Stirling said that in the past an early retirement incentive resulted in a net loss of five positions. He looks to Dr. Brady to provide leadership. He would like to vote on the budget.

*Vote in favor:* Christopher Browe, Steven DeMaio, Thomas Hurley

*Vote opposed:* Julie Altman, Patricia Cardozo, Sue Cohen, Diane Crocco, Rita Gedansky, John A. Grasso, Jr., James Horwitz, James Stirling

*Abstain:* Tracey Lane Russo

***Motion failed.***

*Motion to take off the table the motion to postpone the vote* (Ms. Altman, 2d Ms. Gedansky).

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

*Vote opposed:* Christopher Browe, Steven DeMaio, John A. Grasso, Jr., Thomas Hurley, Tracey Lane Russo

***Motion passed.***

*Motion to approve the Superintendent's Proposed Budget* (Ms. Altman, 2d James Stirling)

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

*Vote opposed:* Christopher Browe, Steven DeMaio, John A. Grasso, Jr., Thomas Hurley, Tracey Lane Russo

***Motion passed.***

## **11. Announcements from the Board and Administration**

There have been problems with smoking in the bathrooms at the High School. Dr. Brady said that he would like to get stealth smoke detectors.

## **12. Correspondence**

Mr. Blake read a letter from staff members Peter Downhour and Robert Kennedy. They would like to name the auditorium in honor of Dr. Brady. Mr. Blake said that he strongly supports the idea. The topic was added to the agenda for the next Facilities Committee meeting.

Ms. Russo questioned a hazing incident involving members of a sports team at the High School. Mr. Blake said that the incident was handled by the administration.

**13. Superintendent's Report**

- a. Personnel Report – There were no questions.
- b. ESEA Waiver Flexibility – Dr. Brady said that about 12 states have been granted a waiver. The state is pursuing a waiver. We have the second lowest student to administrator ratio.
- c. CABE's Day on the Hill – Mr. Stirling said that the event costs \$10.00 for CABE members. He encouraged attendance.
- d. PEAC Agreement – There was no discussion.

**14. Chairman's Report**

a. Committee Reports

1. ACES
2. CABE
3. Curriculum
4. Facilities
5. Finance

a. Discussion and Possible Action on Healthy Food Certification Statement for July 1, 2012 through June 30, 2013

*Discussion:* Mr. Blake noted that Amity opted out of this program because it costs more money and involves more paperwork.

*Motion to authorize the Director of Finance and Administration to sign Form ED-099 indicating that Amity Regional District No. 5 will not certify that all food items offered for sale to students in the schools under our jurisdiction, and not exempted from the Connecticut Nutrition Standards published by the Connecticut State Department of Education, will not meet said standards during the period of July 1, 2012 through June 30, 2013 (Mr. Browe, 2d Mr. Hurley).*

*Discussion:* Ms. Altman questioned what is offered in the machines in the High School cafeteria. Dr. Brady said that chips are available for purchase after school.

*Vote in favor unanimous.*

*Motion passed.*

- b. Discussion and Possible Action on Award of Contract over \$35,000  
*Discussion:* Mr. Levine said that extending the lease with Tyler Technologies involves a slight increase in price. He believes it is in the District's interest to continue the lease. Mr. Hurley said that he believes the audit report shows that what Amity is doing is working. *Move the Superintendent of Schools be authorized to sign a three-year extension of the current lease with Tyler Technologies for the MUNIS Financial Accounting Systems for a total cost of \$181,470, or \$60,490 per year. The annual maintenance fee for Tyler Content Manager shall be \$3,086 for the first year and may not increase more than 5% per annum for the annual terms commencing in 2013 and 2014. The Amity Board of Education waives the bid requirement* (Mr. Stirling, 2d Mr. Hurley).

*Vote in favor unanimous.*

*Motion passed.*

- c. Discussion and Possible Action on Amity High School Roof Restoration Project  
*Motion to have the Superintendent request the District's Bond Counsel to prepare documents in connection with an appropriation, and the issuance of bonds and notes to finance such appropriation, for costs related to the restoration of a portion of the roof of Amity High School* (Ms. Cardozo, 2d Ms. Gedansky).

*Discussion:* Mr. Hurley said that this is the bonding that has been discussed. Items may be added. Mr. Blake suggested putting this on the agenda for the next Facilities Committee meeting. Dr. Brady said that this authorizes the administration to get started with the bond. Mr. Stirling asked if a delay would create problems. Mr. DeMaio questioned if the exact amount was needed today. Dr. Brady said no. Mr. Stirling asked if the Facilities Committee met in two weeks whether there would be enough time. Mr. Blake said that the Board would be telling bond counsel to prepare a referendum. Mr. Hurley and Ms. Russo questioned whether additions could be made. Mr. Blake said that the wording needs to be specific. Mr. Stirling said that the Amity Finance Committee voted in favor of this motion, but the Committee didn't have the benefit of this discussion. He would vote against this in the hopes that a Facilities Committee meeting could take place soon. Mr. Levine said that if the motion passed tonight, the project would be put out to bid to gather quotes. The cost is just an estimate at this point. The bond needs to be put in place so that this work can be done this summer. Mr. Hurley questioned whether a vote was needed to get a quote. Ms. Altman said that this isn't free money, the money that is bonded needs to be paid. Mr. DeMaio said that if you are going to bond, you should do it one time and incorporate

needed items. Mr. Blake said that the Facilities Committee can consider this.

*Vote in favor: Julie Altman, Patricia Cardozo*

*Vote opposed: Christopher Browe, Sue Cohen, Diane Crocco, Steven DeMaio, Rita Gedansky, John Grasso, James Horwitz, Thomas Hurley, Tracey Lane Russo, James Stirling*

***Motion failed.***

- d. Discussion and Possible Action on Establishment of Special Revenue Fund for Turf Field

*Motion to authorize the Director of Finance and Administration to open a new bank account for a fund to be called "Amity Regional School District No. 5 – Special Projects." This fund shall be used to hold funds for the purpose of construction and installation of a turf athletic field at Amity Regional High School. Funds for the turf athletic field shall not be comingled with funds for any other purpose (Ms. Cohen, 2d Mr. Browe).*

*Vote in favor unanimous.*

***Motion passed.***

- e. Discussion of Monthly Financial Statements – There was no discussion.

- f. Director of Finance and Administration Approved Transfers Under \$3,000 – There was no discussion.

- g. Discussion and Possible Action on Budget Transfers

*Motion to make the following budget transfer of \$10,000 to pay legal expenditures (Ms. Gedansky, 2d Mr. Grasso):*

<b>Account Number</b>	<b>Account Name</b>	<b>From</b>	<b>To</b>
05-14-2510-5521	General Liability Insurance	\$10,000	
05-14-2310-5330	Other Professional & Tech. Svcs.		\$10,000

*Vote in favor unanimous.*

***Motion passed.***

*Motion to make the following budget transfer to pay Aruba Network, Inc. of Sunnyvale, California, \$32,000 for a M6000 wireless controller and 10 wireless access points (Ms. Cohen, 2d Mr. Grasso).*

*Discussion: This is an immediate need. Teachers are losing connectivity. Mr. Hurley noted that the District may be able to get a better price.*

<b>Account Number</b>	<b>Account Name</b>	<b>From</b>	<b>To</b>
05-14-2350-5690	Other Supplies	\$24,674	
05-14-2350-5730	Equipment – New	\$7,326	
05-14-2350-5731	Equipment – Replacement		\$32,000

*Vote in favor unanimous.*

***Motion passed.***

h. Discussion and Possible Action on New Funding Requests

*Motion to make the following budget transfer of \$11,750 to pay for an infrared analysis to identify any trapped moisture, core tests for tensile strength, and asbestos testing on a portion of the Amity High School roof (Mr. Browe, 2d Mr. Hurley):*

*Discussion:* Mr. Hurley noted that this test is very important. The only way problems can be seen is with this test.

<b>Account Number</b>	<b>Account Name</b>	<b>From</b>	<b>To</b>
05-15-0000-5850	Contingency Account	\$11,750	
05-14-2310-5330	Other Professional & Tech. Svcs.		\$11,750

*Vote in favor unanimous.*

***Motion passed.***

6. Policy – There was no discussion.
7. Personnel – There was no discussion.

**15. Items for the Next Agenda**

Mr. Hurley would like to discuss tuition students.

**16. Adjourn**

*Motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:06 p.m. (Ms. Russo, 2d Ms. Cardozo).*

***Motion passed; meeting adjourned.***

Respectfully submitted,

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Rita Gedansky, secretary  
Marianne Lippard, recording clerk

**Amity Regional School District No. 5  
Regular Meeting**

**Board of Education  
February 13, 2012**

Attachments/References:

- Memos:**
- John J. Brady to the Amity Board of Education and Amity Finance Committee (2/10/12) re: Potential Revisions to Superintendent's Proposed 2012-2013 Budget
  - Jack B. Levine to John J. Brady (1/27/12) re: New Funding Requests for Fiscal Year 2011-2012
  - Jack B. Levine to John J. Brady (2/1/12) re: Healthy Food Certification Statement for July 1, 2012 through June 30, 2013
  - Jack B. Levine to John J. Brady (2/8/12) re: Establishment of Special Revenue Fund for Turf Field
  - John J. Brady to the Amity Board of Education and Amity Finance Committee (2/8/12) re: Amity High School Roof Restoration or Replacement
  - Jack B. Levine to John J. Brady (2/9/12) re: Award of Contracts over \$35,000
- Reports:**
- Amity Regional School District No. 5 Year-To-Date Budget Report 2/6/12
  - Amity Regional School District No. 5 Executive Summary – Fourth Quarter 2011
  - Amity Regional School District No. 5 – Budget Transfers 2011-2012
  - Amity Regional School District No. 5 Revenues and Expenditures for FY 2011-2012
- Minutes:**
- Amity Regional School District No. 5 Finance Committee 1/23/12
  - Amity Regional School District No. 5 Board of Education 1/25/12
  - Amity Regional School District No. 5 Board of Education 1/9/12
  - Amity Regional School District No. 5 Finance Committee 1/9/12