

AMITY REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 5 BOARD OF EDUCATION FINANCE COMMITTEE  
FEBRUARY 8, 2021 MEETING MINUTES  
5:00 pm  
100 Ohman Avenue, Orange, CT

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT**

Christopher Browe, Patricia Cardozo, Matthew Giglietti (remote), Sharon Huxley (remote), Joseph Nuzzo (remote), Dr. Jennifer Turner (remote)

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT**

None

**STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT**

Dr. Jennifer Byars, Theresa Lumas, Kathy Burke, Dr. Marie McPadden, Brian Dower

**BOE MEMBERS PRESENT**

John Belfonti

**1. Call to Order**

Chairperson Cardozo called the meeting to order at 5:05 p.m.

**2. Discussion and Possible Action on Minutes**

a. Finance Committee Meeting – January 11, 2021

*MOTION by Christopher Browe, Second by Sharon Huxley, to approve minutes as submitted*  
*VOTES IN FAVOR, 6 (unanimous)*  
*MOTION CARRIED*

**3. Public Comment**

Summarized by Chairperson Cardozo

*MOTION by Christopher Browe, Second by Sharon Huxley, to table Item #4 Presentation and Discussion of Fourth Quarter 2020 Executive Summary Review of Amity Pension Fund, Sick and Severance Account and OPEB Trust until the end of meeting*  
*VOTES IN FAVOR, 6 (unanimous)*  
*MOTION CARRIED*

**5. Discussion of Monthly Financial Statements**

**6. Director of Finance and Administration Approved Transfers Under \$3,000**

**7. Discussion and Possible Action on Budget Transfers of \$3,000 or More**

*MOTION by Dr. Turner, Second by Christopher Browe, to recommend the Amity Board of Education approve the following budget transfer from contingency to cover the operations of the School Lunch Program:*

ACCOUNT NUMBER	ACCOUNT NAME	FROM	TO
05-15-0000-5850	Contingency	\$ 75,000	
05-15-3100-5590	Cafeteria Other Purchased Services		\$75,000

VOTES IN FAVOR, 6 (unanimous)

MOTION CARRIED

*MOTION by Christopher Browe, Second by Joseph Nuzzo, to recommend the Amity Board of Education approve the following budget transfers between technology accounts to cover the purchases in the Technology Department:*

ACCOUNT NUMBER	ACCOUNT NAME	FROM	TO
05-14-2350-5730	Equipment – New	\$ 4,816	
05-14-2350-5731	Equipment - Replacement		\$ 4,816
05-14-2350-5330	Professional Technical Services	\$30,000	
05-14-2350-5690	Other Supplies		\$30,000

VOTES IN FAVOR, 6 (unanimous)

MOTION CARRIED

**8. Budget Update**

Presented by Dr. Byars

**4. Presentation and Discussion of Fourth Quarter 2020 Executive Summary Review of Amity Pension Fund, Sick and Severance Account and OPEB Trust**

Presented by Michael Goss, DiMeo, Schneider & Associates, LLC

**9. Adjourn**

*MOTION by Christopher Browe, Second by Sharon Huxley, to adjourn meeting*

VOTES IN FAVOR, 6 (unanimous)

MOTION CARRIED

Meeting adjourned at 6:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*Pamela Pero*

Recording Secretary

**From:** [Peter Downhour](#)  
**To:** [Pamela Pero](#)  
**Subject:** Public Comment for Amity Board of Education and Finance Feb 8 2021  
**Date:** Monday, February 8, 2021 12:58:37 PM

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Dear Mr. Belfonti and the Amity Board of Education and the Amity Board of Finance,

We are once again in what appears to be a difficult budget year. I want to voice support for the entirely reasonable budget proposal put to the Board in January by Dr. Byars. The slightly higher budget increase is, in part, a result of decisions the Board made last year. At this point, it is my understanding that the Board is going to cut programs, hastily rearrange programming, and reduce staff for the purpose of cutting the budget. These budget cuts are based on arbitrary numbers from outside people. This is being done without any discussion of the school leadership teams, the groups that drive and guide programming and curricular changes of this magnitude. You need only submit a reasonable budget to the people and they will approve it. Education is central to the overall success of any community.

In the past I have spoken to the Board that continued budget cuts would damage the performance of the district. Last year I observed your deliberations for this year's budget. At that time you recognized that you were making decisions, like the textbook line item, that would have impacts for the future budgets, ones that would still need to be funded. Now is that time and you should follow through with those promises.

I would also urge the members of the Board to do what's right for District 5 and not people whose concerns are not educationally-sound. It seems the budget narrative is being driven by a few who do not have the performance or success of the school district as their goals. Those goals may be more narrowly-focused and serve only a privileged few. Those few have convinced a few others. I ask you to stand up to the people who have differing agendas and put our schools ahead of their budget priorities.

Any significant changes to programs should be done thoughtfully and deliberately.

There should be program evaluations, teacher input, district steering committee review and the input of teacher-leadership teams. Teacher-leaders have not participated in these discussions or decisions, decisions which will have a significant impact for many years. Part of what makes Amity so great is that the teachers are at the forefront of the positive changes in teaching and learning. These current decisions do not follow this known path of success.

I know that we have had serious challenges and disagreements during the pandemic. Though it all we have maintained a positive relationship and have kept moving forward and making progress. I ask that you do what's right for education and the Amity community. I urge the Board to support the Superintendent's budget presented in January.

Respectfully,  
Peter Downhour  
President, Amity Education Association

Leah Smith  
491 Racebrook Road  
Orange, CT 06477

February 8, 2021

Dear Members of the Orange Board of Selectmen and Orange Board of Finance Committees,

I am the proud parent of three children that attend Amity High School. I moved to Orange in 2002 because of the stellar reputation of the Orange and Amity school districts.

I am writing today to express my full support of the Amity Superintendent's proposed budget **without** program or personnel cuts. I trust the expertise of the administration when creating a budget for our children.

Please put our children and their education in the forefront of your minds when voting on this budget.

Thank you.

Sincerely,  
*Leah Smith*

**From:** [Sean Mahon](#)  
**To:** [Pamela Pero](#)  
**Subject:** FW: Public Comment-Amity Board of Finance and Board of Education  
**Date:** Sunday, February 7, 2021 9:10:00 PM

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Hi Pam,  
Can you please use the following email? I incorrectly addressed the Amity Finance Committee.  
Thanks,  
Sean

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**From:** Sean Mahon <Sean.Mahon@amityregion5.org>  
**Sent:** Sunday, February 7, 2021 9:06 PM  
**To:** Pamela Pero <Pamela.Pero@amityregion5.org>  
**Cc:** Sean Mahon <Sean.Mahon@amityregion5.org>  
**Subject:** Public Comment-Amity Board of Finance and Board of Education

Dear members of the Amity Board of Education and Amity Finance Committee,

I have been a resident of Orange and an Amity teacher for the past 22 years. I am also the parent of two current Amity students who are lucky enough to have amazing educational opportunities due to our outstanding programming and educators. I am dismayed to learn of the possibility of cuts to programming and personnel due to arbitrary requests from some local town officials. I strongly urge you to demonstrate your support for our school district and our students by supporting the superintendent's proposed budget **without** any cuts to programming or personnel. I am in favor of the originally-proposed budget made by Superintendent Byars at the January Amity Board of Finance and Amity Board of Education meetings. Please do not rob our students of the quality education that they deserve simply to satisfy the requests of local politicians.

Sincerely,  
Sean Mahon  
Orange, CT