

MINUTES

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: William Blake, Patricia Cardoza, Sue Cohen, Diane Crocco, Rita Gedansky, James Horowitz, Thomas Hurley, Tracey Lane Russo, James Stirling.

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: Christopher Browe, Steven DeMaio and John Grasso, Jr.

Staff members present: Charles Dumais, Jack Levine, Jim Saisa, technical/video recording staff.

Also present: Ruth Natzel, current and former athletic directors, baseball team members and coaches, reporter from New Haven Register Pam McLoughlin, and other members of the public.

A regular meeting of the Amity Regional Board of Education (BOE) was held on Monday, August 11, 2014 at 6:55 pm in the Presentation Room at the Amity District Offices.

1. **Call to Order:** Chairman William Blake called the meeting to order at 6:55 pm.
2. **Pledge of Allegiance** was recited by those present.
3. **Recognition of 2014 State Champion Amity Regional High School Baseball Team.** Current and former athletic directors, head baseball coach and Amity High School principal gave short speeches. Plaques were presented to each player by name and position and to the coaches.

Chairman called for a short break at 7:10 p.m. Call back to order at 7:20 pm

4. **Approval of minutes.**

A. Regular BOE meeting, June 9, 2014

Motion by Mr. Stirling to accept the minutes as submitted, second by Mr. Horowitz.

Vote unanimous

Motion carried

B. Special BOE meeting, July 8, 2014

Motion by Ms. Crocco to accept the minutes as presented, second by Mr. Hurley.

Mr. Hurley says the name of Thomas Hurley should be added to the bottom of the minutes to make them official.

Motion by Ms. Crocco to accept the minutes as amended, second by Mr. Hurley.

Vote unanimous

Motion carried

5. **Public comment** – none

6. **Student Report** – none. The student representative to the board has graduated and there is no replacement as yet.

7. **Correspondence** – Thank you note received from Julie Altman for the send-off that was given to her, read by Mr. Dumais. Thank you note received from a teacher in the Woodbridge summer program regarding the summer program at Amity Regional High School, expressing appreciation for use of the facility that met all of their needs and commending the facilities staff for their excellent service.

8. **Approval of non-resident tuition.** Mr. Dumais recommends the non-resident tuition rate be set according to board policy 424.0 at \$14,397 for the academic year 2014-2015. There are currently 7 non-resident students, one of whom is charged tuition at the employee rate.

Motion by Mr. Hurley to approve the non-resident tuition rate at \$14,397 for the academic year 2014-2015. Second by Ms. Cohen.

Vote unanimous

Motion carried

9. **Approval of revised teacher evaluation plan (TEP).** Mr. Dumais stated that the State of Connecticut changed their process for approval of the education plan included in the packet. Modifications to the plan were sent to the State of Connecticut for approval first, before approval by the Amity Board.

Motion by Ms. Crocco to approve the TEP as revised and submitted in the packet dated July 29, 2014, second by Ms. Gedansky.

Ms. Cohen asked about the use of standardized test scores and Mr. Dumais responded that there will be an array of test scores used, not use one standardized test. A “confirmation of practice” is also required and will supplement the evaluation as required by the State. Ms. Cardoza asked Mr. Dumais what his feeling is about the plan? Mr. Dumais said it is still driven by compliance despite the good pieces from the State and from our Board. Ms. Cohen asked about administrator evaluation plan and Mr. Dumais responded that it is on the agenda to be reviewed this year.

Vote unanimous

Motion carried

10. **Superintendent’s report**

A. Personnel report – see attached new hire information for new personnel (13) and list of resignations (7).

Mr. Hurley states his concern about resignations, especially with 3 of them in the area of math and school starting in only a few weeks. What are we doing to fill this gap and make sure we are getting quality replacements? Mr. Dumais said candidates are actively being sought and interviews will take place right up until just before school begins.

B. Other – Updates from Mr. Dumais

- Cafeteria á la carte station, increase in á la carte prices this year.
- Importance of growth and learning for all. Mr. Dumais requested and received an executive coach for himself for this year at no cost to the district, paid by CAPS.
- Leadership team retreat as a team took place to discuss goals for the school year. A larger retreat is taking place in a few weeks that includes other staff in addition to the administrators, specifically to address the teacher hiring process.
- Woodbridge summer programs are finished as of August 1st. Jack Levine, Jim Saisa and the high school administration did a fantastic job adjusting the work schedule to accommodate them. There was nothing but positive feedback about the program.
- All Hazards plan. Thanks to Mr. Hurley for his review of the plan. Bethany is complete, Orange and Woodbridge are still working on their portion of the plan.
- Personnel subcommittee will be asked to consider 2 new positions: one in the technology department for PowerSchool and one for an assistant to the Director of Finance and Administration
- Convocation August 28th. Amity BOE is invited to be introduced at convocation, August 28, 7:30 am.
- Personal – My proposal for my dissertation has been approved and I have been authorized to complete research.
- Distribute Amity School calendar for 2014-2015.

11. **Chairman’s report**

A. Committee reports

1. **ACES** – none.
2. **CABE** – A leadership training day took place and it was of value to those who attended.
3. **Curriculum** – none.
4. **Facilities** – none.

5. Finance

- a. **Discussion and possible action on recommended uses of 2013-2014 year end available funds as outlined in the memo dated August 6, 2014 from Jack Levine to Charles Dumais, Recommended Use of Year-End available funds**
 1. **Recommendation to authorize the Director of Finance and Administration to award the contract for the purchase of the MUNIS Fixed Asset Accounting Module for \$30,012.00 including software, installation, training, support, conversion and scanning device. The Amity Board of Education waives the bidding requirement.**
 2. **Recommendation to authorize the Director of Finance and Administration to award the contract for the Amity Regional High School cooling tower refurbishment to All State Construction, Inc., of Farmington, Connecticut at the bid priced of \$85,793.000.**

Mr. Dumais took responsibility for the fact that this has not gone to the facilities committee. He explained the need for this to be done per Mr. Saisa's assessment, research and sending the specifications out to bid. All State Construction was one of 3 bidders for the project. The hope is that, given year-end funds that are available, this would be funded as a preventative measure.

3. **Recommendation to authorize the Director of Finance and Administration to award the contract for the conversion to natural gas at Amity Middle School Orange Campus to A. R. Fonda Mechanical Services of West Haven, Connecticut at the bid price of \$55,265.000 subject to the gas line project moving forward and the gas line being installed with the Board's approval. This is to put the money in the capital non-recurring account in anticipation of this project being done in the future.**
4. **Recommendation to authorize the Director of Finance and Administration to award the contract for an engineering study for fuel cell waste heat use at Amity Regional High School to vanZelm Engineers, Farmington, Connecticut at the cost of \$57,950.00. We ask the money be put into the non-recurring capital fund in anticipation of this project going forward.**
5. **Recommendation for asphalt sealing and crack repair of the parking lot at a cost of \$25,000.**
6. **Self-insurance reserve fund (SIRF). The balance in this fund is low. There are 3 possible scenarios (as outlined in the memo dated August 6, 2014 from Jack Levine to Charles Dumais, Recommended Use of Year-End available funds). Scenario 3 is recommended – Transfer of about \$506,955 of year-end available funds and \$166,767 from the OPEB Trust budget to leave a balance in the SIRF of approximately \$788,000, or 18% as a percent of claims. The recommended target is 25%, so this brings us closer to the recommended amount.**

- b. **Discussion and possible action on contracts of \$35,000 or more.**

Mr. Blake asked the board if they wished to consider these separately or as a package; the board wanted to discuss them separately.

Motion made by Mr. Hurley to authorize the Director of Finance and Administration to award the contract for the purchase of the MUNIS Fixed Asset Accounting Module for \$30,012.00 including software, installation, training, support, conversion and scanning device. The Amity Board of Education waives the bidding requirement, second by Mr. Stirling.

Mr. Hurley stated that the current module is obsolete, runs on a 32-bit platform and that currently we have no way of meeting the asset tracking accounting requirements. This will help complete our financial modules that we need to effectively run the district. Ms. Russo asked if this addresses the scanning issue along with everything else and the answer was that yes, it does. Chairman called the question.

Vote unanimous

Motion carried

1. Amity Regional High School cooling tower refurbishment

Motion to authorize the Director of Finance and Administration to award the contract for the Amity Regional High School cooling tower refurbishment to All State Construction, Inc., of Farmington, Connecticut at the bid priced of \$85,793.000 by Mr. Hurley, Mr. Horowitz second.

Ms. Russo asked how many bids – there were three. Mr. Saisa explained the process and the bid. Stainless steel parts will be used this in replacement instead of galvanized parts which will last longer. Annual inspection was done in May, 2014 and Mr. Saisa called in the manufacturer's representative to assess the situation which led to the refurbishment recommendation. Ms. Russo is frustrated that such a big ticket item is just coming to the board now instead of in May. She stated that we do not budget for these things long-term and we should. Ms. Russo asks that we have a plan in place instead of spending money at the end of the year. Question regarding whether or not the cooling tower will fail if this work is not done immediately; this cannot be predicted. Mr. Stirling brought up the fact that the finance committee ended in a 2-2 vote on this issue and that he was of the opinion that this should go to the facilities committee and the money not be spent. Mr. Horowitz stated that he is in favor of this replacement, that Mr. Saisa does a wonderful job and the fact that he has uncovered a problem speaks well of the kind of job he and his staff do and the money should be allocated. Mr. Hurley spoke about the capital plan, that this expenditure was not in the plan and additionally, the facilities budget was cut so we would have experienced this problem anyway. Mr. Stirling said that we create a budget and go to the town with the process for capital improvements. This process was not adhered to and he wants to put it in the budget and stick with the process in order to create greater goodwill to the towns. Ms. Cardozo asked what the risk would be of not doing it now, perhaps mold, etc.? Mr. Blake asked about lead time for ordering parts if the tower fails; lead time would be 6 weeks. Mr. Blake felt we cannot and should not wait. Ms. Crocco asked how much the price would go up if we wait. There were further questions about down time and about how much money is currently in the nonrecurring capital fund. Chairman calls the question.

Vote 7 in favor, opposed 2 (Mr. Stirling and Ms. Russo)

Motion carried

1. Conversion to natural gas at Amity Middle School Orange Campus

Motion to authorize the Director of Finance and Administration to award the contract for the conversion to natural gas at Amity Middle School Orange Campus to A. R. Fonda Mechanical Services of West Haven, Connecticut at the bid price of \$55,265.000 subject to the gasoline project moving forward and the gas line being installed with the Board's approval by Ms Cardozo, second by Ms. Gedansky.

Mr. Stirling stated that the finance committee also split 2-2 on this recommendation with Mr. Stirling not in favor and states his reasons; Mr. Horowitz stated he is in favor and gave his reasons. Ms. Cohen asked about the time frame question; Mr. Saisa stated the gas line would be done next spring at the earliest. Discussion of putting funds in capital reserve versus self-insurance ensured. The money in the capital reserve fund can be allocated elsewhere which is not the case with the self-insurance reserve fund. Mr. Stirling is concerned that for years we have returned a surplus to the towns and that we need to continue to do this instead of spending the money. He states that the returned funds are a source of pride and confidence in the board's fiscal management; he does not want to jeopardize the goodwill of the towns. Mr. Blake said that we are looking at this in a serious and responsible manner, no one is making light of this. Ms. Russo stated that this is not justifiable because it isn't going to be spent in the 2014-2015 school year and this can be put in the budget for next year or next year's year-end funds could be used. Chairman called the question.

Vote – 3 in favor (Mr. Horowitz, Mr. Blake and Mr. Hurley), 8 opposed

Motion not passed

2. Engineering study for fuel cell waste heat use at Amity Regional High School

Motion to authorize the Director of Finance and Administration to award the contract for an engineering study for fuel cell waste heat use at Amity Regional High School to vanZelm Engineers, Farmington, Connecticut at the cost of \$57,950.00 by Mr. Stirling, second by Ms. Cohen.

Ms. Russo cannot support this motion because it did not go out to bid, will not be spent in the 2014-2015 year and it should go through the facility committee. Mr. Saisa stated that this study will provide excellent data and it is conceivable that this could happen before the next budget year. Mr. Hurley said that the MicroGrid committee recommended this and the board recommended this and we need to go forward to find out if this is worthwhile, that the MicroGrid committee asked the administration to get this information. Ms. Russo said that this was not the recommendation, it was just to investigate. At a minimum this motion should be tabled. Mr. Levine stated that this company was chosen because of all the work they've done and their familiarity with the project, rather than putting it out to bid and this is permissible under our current bidding rules for this type of effort. Mr. Stirling stated that the finance committee recommended unanimously that the board pass this motion because the data is needed going forward.

Vote 8 in favor, 1 opposed (Mrs. Russo)

Motion carried.

Motion to allocate \$25,000 for asphalt sealing and crack repair by Ms. Russo, second by Mr. Horowitz.

Discussion of moving to asphalt question, changed back to original agenda.

Ms. Russo withdrew her motion.

3. Athletic training contract.

Motion by Ms. Cardozo to authorize the Director of Finance and Administration to award the contract for all the services of a certified athletic trainer to Rehabilitation Associates, Inc., of Fairfield, Connecticut, for the 2014-2015 academic year at the annual fee of \$56,200.00, second by Mr. Hurley.

Mr. Dumais explained that a contract was signed in 2003-2004 that provided for automatic yearly renewal unless a 3-day notice was given, so this has not come to the board's attention. This is not year-end money, but the contract is being brought to the board's attention. Mr. Hurley asked if there are any more automatic renewal contracts. Mr. Levine said there are not any that he is currently aware of.

Vote unanimous

Motion carried

Motion to approve motions 1, 2, 4 and 5 as listed in Mr. Levine's memo to Mr. Dumais of August 6, 2014, Recommended Use of Year-end Available Funds by Ms. Cohen motion, Mr. Hurley second.

Vote unanimous

Motion carried

Discussion about item numbers 6 and 7 in Mr. Levine's memo to Mr. Dumais of August 6, 2014, Recommended Use of Year-end Available Funds. Mr. Hurley would rather see this money go to OPEB; we can always come up with a good excuse not to fund it and there is no money in the budget for it next year. Mr. Levine stated that we always want to fully fund OPEB and that money can only be used for retirees provided that the money collected that year is less than the claims. If the board goes along with the recommendation the money would go in the medical and dental line and then in the insurance reserve. That money would be available to pay current claims; if the claims are lower than budgeted then the board would have the option of moving the money into OPEB. Fully funding OPEB would be \$167,767. If this does not go in OPEB then next year's number would be necessarily higher. Mr. Hurley said the purpose of a trust fund is to protect the money from being spent elsewhere.

Motion for budget transfer of \$166,767 to medical and dental insurance for the purpose of putting the funds into the self-insurance reserve fund, moving the funds from OPEB, by Mr. Stirling, second by Ms. Russo.

Mr. Horowitz stated we have a commitment to current employees and retirees, so we should fund the OPEB trust. Mr. Stirling speaks in favor of continuing to fund the trust as fully as possible. Mr. Russo stated she thinks we need to get ahead of the self-insurance fund without jeopardizing the OPEB fund. Mr. Horowitz said the ideal reserve of the SIRF is 25%; currently it is at 5%. What we are discussing is if we should have a reserve of 16% or 18%, so the numbers are very small. Ms. Cardozo suggested taking the \$55,000 that we did not use for the gas conversion (budget transfer proposal #3) and transfer it to OPEB.

Motion amended to leave \$55,265 in the OPEB account by Mr. Hurley, second Ms. Cardozo.

Mr. Stirling spoke against the amendment because he would rather see the \$55,000 returned to the towns.

Vote 8 in favor, 1 opposed (Mr. Stirling)

Motion carried

Motion to transfer \$111,502 to medical and dental for putting the funds into the self-insurance from OPEB and leave \$55,265 in OPEB by Mr. Hurley, second by Mr. Horowitz.

Vote 8 in favor, 1 opposed (Mr. Stirling)

Motion carried

Mr. Levine requested a motion for confirmation and audit purposes regarding the OPEB trust.

Motion for confirmation and audit purposes that \$ 55,265 shall be put in the OPEB trust by Mr. Horowitz, Mr. Hurley second.

Vote unanimous

Motion carried

Motion for budget transfer for all remained 2013-2014 year-end funds for purposes of putting the funds into the self-insurance reserve fund, second by Ms. Cohen

Ms. Russo is supporting this motion; in spite of the fact that we will not be returning money to the towns, it's a good compromise.

Vote unanimous

Motion carried

c. Discussion and possible action on budget transfers of \$3,000 or more.

1. Fiscal year 2013-2014

Motion to approve the 3 budget transfers laid out in Mr. Levine's memo to Mr. Dumais July 25, 2014 memo Motion by JH, 2nd DC by Mr. Horowitz, second Ms. Crocco.

Vote unanimous

Motion carried

Chairman asked if there are any questions on the monthly financial report – no questions.

d. Discussion and possible action on new funding requests – tabled

e. Other

1. Mr. Dumais provided an update on the MicroGrid project and HVAC upgrades at Amity Middle School Orange Campus. Mr. Hurley asked if the proposed pad site will be adequate for the fuel cell installation. Mr. Saisa said that there is more room than originally thought and no space problems are expected on the site.
2. Information on second quarter 2014 executive summary – no questions.
Review of Amity Pension Fund, sick and severance account and OPEB trust.

12. **MicroGrid** – UI is trying to get us preliminary numbers and the timing of our meeting and vacation time means that we do not have the numbers yet. The MicroGrid committee has completed its work and has been disbanded. This project will now go through the Facilities Committee. Mr. Hurley thanked the MicroGrid committee for all their many hours of work.
13. **Policy** – none.
14. **Personnel** – has not met. Mr. Dumais is preparing for fall meetings.
15. **Items for next agenda** – please forward to Mr. Dumais or to Mr. Blake.

Motion to adjourn at 9:10 pm by Mr. Stirling, Mr. Horowitz second.

Vote unanimous

Motion carried

Respectfully submitted,

Ruth E. Natzel, Recording Clerk

Thomas Hurley, Secretary