

**MINUTES**

***AMITY BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:*** Julie Altman, William Blake, Christopher Browe, Patricia Cardozo, Sue Cohen, Steven DeMaio, Rita Gedansky, James Horwitz, Thomas Hurley, James Stirling

***AMITY BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:*** Diane Crocco, John A. Grasso, Jr., Tracey Lane Russo

***Staff Members Present:*** John Brady, Charles Britton, Richard Dellinger, Kathleen Fuller Cutler, Kevin Keller, Jack Levine, Marianne Lippard, Terry Lumas, Marie McPadden, Paul Mengold, Mary Raiola, Jim Saisa

***Also Present:*** Peggy Choiniere, Thomas Falcigno, Sarah Hale, Robert Howard, Brian King, Jeff Kwolek, Bill McNeil, Matthew Miller, Jim O'Connor, Samantha Thomas, Joe Velardi, Jeffrey Walsh, others

---

A regular meeting of the Amity Regional Board of Education was held on Monday, January 14, 2013 at 6:30 p.m. in the cafeteria of Amity Regional High School.

- 1. Call to Order:** William Blake called the meeting to order at 6:47 p.m.
- 2. Pledge of Allegiance** was recited by those present.

*Motion to change the order of the agenda, moving discussion of the audit from Item #17 to Item #5 (Mr. Hurley).*

*Vote in favor unanimous.*

***Motion passed.***

**3. Recognition and Presentation of Awards to Amity Softball Team Players and Coaches – 2012 State Champions**

Dr. Brady said that he would like to take this opportunity tonight to congratulate the Amity Girls' Softball team. The team managed to earn the 2012 State Championship. Mr. Mengold noted that earning the State Championship was a great accomplishment. The varsity head coach has relocated to San Diego, but sent his best wishes to all of the players. Plaques were distributed. Those recognized included players: Haley Cologgi; Jillian DeMaio; Jenna DiLorenzo; Heather Ferranti; Mary Kozan; Julie Luce; Cassandra Madigan; Krista Reynolds; Heather Watt; Janaya Young; Corina Zdowski; Megan Aconfora; Tayler Baker; Dana Blydenburg; Jacqueline Ferraiolo; Emily Fox; Catherine Semones; and Stephanie Shepa. The Board recognized the dedication of coaches Bob Purcell, Sarah Hale, Loren Vorrace, and Lindsay Castano.

*The Board took a two minute recess.*

**4. Presentation of the CAFE Award of Excellence for Educational Communications**

Amity received a CAFE Award of Excellence for Educational Communications for its District calendar, which showcases the artwork of its students. Sheila McCreven presented the award.

Mr. Blake thanked Ms. McCreven for coming tonight to present the award.

**5. Discussion on Audited Financial Statements**

Robert L. Howard, Jr., Partner with Grant Thornton, offered an overview of the audit. He noted that the opinion was that this was an unqualified clean audit. There were no items of concern.

Mr. Stirling questioned whether any recommendations were made for changes in the future.

Mr. Howard said that there were not. He noted that this year's audit was performed by Grant Thornton and a somewhat different approach was taken, offering a fresh perspective. There were no issues whatsoever with journal entries.

Dr. Brady thanked Mr. Levine and Ms. Lumas, who were largely responsible for the audit.

**6. Approval of Minutes**

a. Regular BOE Meeting, December 10, 2012

*Motion to approve the minutes as presented* (Mr. Hurley, 2d Ms. Gedansky).  
*Vote in favor unanimous. Motion passed.*

b. Special BOE Meeting, December 18, 2012

*Motion to approve the minutes as presented* (Mr. Hurley, 2d Ms. Cardozo).  
*Vote in favor:* Patricia Cardozo, Steven DeMaio, Rita Gedansky, James Horwitz, Thomas Hurley, James Stirling  
*Vote opposed:* none.  
*Abstain:* Julie Altman, Christopher Browe, Sue Cohen

*Motion passed.*

**7. Discussion of Consultant for Superintendent Search**

Dr. Jacqueline Jacoby, CAFE Senior Search Consultant, outlined the steps involved in the search for a new superintendent. The work performed last spring will be relevant to the search now underway. She noted that the Board should consider the timeline as to when a new superintendent should be in place. An appointment might be made in April effective July 1, for example. Strategic recruitment is an important piece of the process and it is important to move quickly. Interviewing will be addressed with the Board. Background checks,

transcript reviews, financial reviews and criminal background checks will all be performed.

Ms. Cohen questioned whether the contract includes assistance with the hiring of an interim superintendent until a permanent replacement is found.

Dr. Jacoby said that it does.

#### **8. Public Comment**

Joe Velardi, a Bethany resident who also serves as athletic director at Pomperaug, said that he knows firsthand the benefits of an artificial turf field, having seen one installed where he works. Cushioning and drainage are two key benefits. The field is used by multiple sports teams, including lacrosse, football, and field hockey. Most people in our community know of at least one child who would benefit from the new field. With a natural grass field, there is a lot of wear and tear and use is diminished. It puts athletes at a disadvantage to practice only on grass and compete on turf.

Sarah Hale, a field hockey coach at Amity, said she strongly supports the artificial turf field project. Practicing on a grass field and then playing games on artificial turf is difficult. Colleges play on turf.

Jim O'Connor, an elementary school principal and also a coach for youth sports, said that most towns have an artificial turf field now. With the current setup, Amity is limited because the fields at the High School can't be used for youth sports.

Matthew Miller, captain of the lacrosse team, said that he has seen a lot of injuries on the grass field. There are often divots in the fields and puddles in goals for days. He said that the team has had to be bussed to other towns to use fields elsewhere. The quality of the games has been better elsewhere.

James Semanella, captain of the football team, said that statistically there are more knee injuries on grass fields. Conditions at the field at the High School have been a problem. The team is sometimes unable to play and games have had to be cancelled. When several games take place close together, it isn't good for the safety of the players.

Parent Bill McNeil said that he has been very active in youth sports. There are up to 200 children in the girls' lacrosse program. When the team uses the practice field after football, the field is full of dirt and mud. The impact of this new field will be tremendous.

Peggy Choiniere of Bethany said that she takes pride in the Amity School District and has four sons who have participated in sports at Amity. The artificial turf field is something that has been talked about for many years. She had hoped that

this field would have been a reality, but her children are almost all out of high school. Parents are frustrated with Amity and it is time to make this new field a reality.

Brian King of Orange, a coach, said that without an artificial turf field, Amity is at a disadvantage. There are more injuries. He agrees with the points made by earlier speakers.

Jeff Kwolek said that it is time to make Amity premier in all areas.

*Discussion:*

Ms. Cardozo asked how much money has been raised thus far.

Mr. Kwolek said that two thousand dollars has been raised.

Dr. Brady said that the Facilities Committee has expressed support for moving this topic to the full Board. The administration isn't seeking action tonight. This item has been in the Capital Five-Year Forecast for a large number of years and was removed. Fundraising only produced \$2,000. Bonding is an option and financial details will be available at a later date. With the current low interest rates, now might be a good time to consider this option.

**9. Discussion and Possible Action on Appointment of Superintendent Search Consultant**

*Motion to amend the agenda to include the appointment of the full Board as the Superintendent Search Committee (Ms. Cohen, 2d Mr. Browe).*

*Vote in favor unanimous.*

***Motion passed.***

*Motion to appoint the entire Board as the Superintendent Search Committee (Mr. Hurley, 2d Ms. Cohen).*

*Vote in favor unanimous.*

***Motion passed.***

*Motion to enlist the services of CAFE for a Regional Search for the Superintendent of Schools (Ms. Cardozo, 2d Mr. Browe).*

*Motion to amend the motion by Ms. Cardozo to include a cost of up to \$9,000 for the search (Mr. Hurley, Mr. Browe).*

*Vote in favor unanimous.*

***Motion passed.***

**10. Student Report**

Thomas said that a clothing drive is going on now to benefit battered women. Boxes are located in the front hallway of the High School. The clothing drive runs until January 25<sup>th</sup>. He noted that students can still order yearbooks. Yearbook ads can also be placed through a yearbook sales representative. The end of the second quarter is approaching and midterms will take place at the end of January. The Link Crew is organizing an event to help freshmen study for exams. The annual winter concert at the High School was dedicated to the Newtown community. Tulips were sold honoring those that died. Efforts are

underway to have a green and white day. Another fundraiser involved the sale of “Amity Rally” towels. More than \$500 was raised selling these towels. Amity students raised \$1,500 in just one week. Thomas concluded by saying that he supports the artificial turf field proposed for the High School.

**11. Information on Artificial Turf Field, Including Payment Option**

Dr. Britton and Mr. Mengold provided a presentation about the artificial turf field. The mud bowl that took place on Thanksgiving weekend highlighted the problem with the football field. Use of the field could triple with artificial turf. The physical education program could be enhanced. Artificial turf fields have improved since the fields were last renovated in 1999. Amity has since added nine additional outdoor sports. We would like to improve the program, but we’re landlocked. A sample schedule was provided in the presentation. Research shows fewer injuries have been reported with artificial turf compared with grass. With improved technology, these fields can last longer than they did previously.

*Discussion:*

Mr. Hurley questioned what the numbers presented tonight include.

Mr. Mengold said that the numbers include everything.

Mr. Browe noted that he has heard of bacteria being trapped in these surfaces and questioned whether the field would be a problem for those with latex allergies.

Dr. Brady said that concerns about safety have been examined. The governor of New York had put a moratorium on these and former Connecticut Attorney General Blumenthal also looked into the safety of artificial turf fields. The moratorium was lifted and health concerns were not proven. Concerns at the time also had to do with decomposing rubber and the gases emitted.

Mr. Horwitz said that in looking at the mock schedule, he is concerned about gender equity. It appears that boys would be using the field 63 percent of the time, versus 37 percent for girls. The percentages concern him, although he generally supports the new field. He realizes this schedule was put together quickly, but questioned whether the goal is to have 50/50 access for both boys and girls.

Mr. Mengold said that it is. This has never been a problem in his 30 years as athletic director.

Mr. Stirling questioned whether there is any more space for a grass field.

Mr. Mengold said that there is not.

Mr. Levine discussed the cost of the field. The District could secure a 20-year bond. The field would last about 20 years with maintenance. The costs were considered while projecting an average of one percent growth in the Grand List. Costs for the three towns were based on the average home value and came out to \$4.48 per year for a homeowner in Bethany, \$3.93 per year for a homeowner in Orange and \$4.07 per year for a homeowner in Woodbridge. Mr. Levine noted that even if the one percent increase in Grand List growth didn't work out, the numbers don't change much.

Mr. Browe asked if the District could bond for 10 years, rather than 20.

Mr. Levine said that we could, but 20 years makes more sense financially speaking.

Mr. Horwitz asked about the tax impact of the maintenance and whether it would amount to anything significant for taxpayers.

Mr. Levine said that the maintenance cost would be very minimal in the breakdown.

Mr. DeMaio questioned whether this would affect bonding for other projects that the towns have going on.

Mr. Levine said that this would not have a negative impact on other projects in the towns. Dr. Brady said that this does not come close to the credit limit.

Ms. Altman questioned whether the small amount of fundraising dollars raised is indicative of the support for the bond. With the commitment of the Board, the project might be viewed differently by donors.

Mr. Mengold said that potential donors wouldn't get behind the project because they did not see commitment from the Board. He believes that there is support in the community for this.

Mr. Blake noted that this topic will come up next month.

**12. Second Reading – Policy 4117.4 Technical Amendment to Non-Renewal/Suspension Policy**

*Motion to accept technical amendment to Non-Renewal/Suspension Policy (Mr. Hurley, 2d Mr. Stirling).*

*Vote in favor unanimous.*

*Motion passed.*

**13. Discussion of Hall of Honor**

The question was raised as to why the application for the Hall of Honor isn't on the District's website. Dr. Brady said that when he came to Amity, he noticed

that there was an athletic Hall of Fame, but academic awards weren't visible. Now, banners pertaining to athletics are in the gymnasium and the trophy cases showcase academic awards. An academic wall of honor was established and maintained. Dr. Brady said that with the retirement of Sheila Wycinowski and significant work being done in other areas, there isn't time to pursue the Hall of Honor right now. Two members of the Board offered to take this on. He feels that this is administrative work and he feels it isn't appropriate to involve the Board.

Mr. Blake said that he agrees with Dr. Brady. Board members aren't supposed to be doing the work at the schools, but are here to set policy. He welcomed comments from other Board members.

Mr. Browe referred to the mission statement and said that he feels it is important to keep the Hall of Honor going. He said if the Hall of Honor is abandoned, it says that it's not that important. Perhaps another group could take this up, such as the PTA.

Ms. Cohen asked what the process is for determining who to honor.

Dr. Brady said that a committee of staff and volunteers work on this. Nominations are solicited. Usually, there are 12 to 15 people nominated. He agrees with Mr. Browe and the accomplishments are always very impressive. Although the administration is committed to this, with all the new requirements we are dealing with, there is the need to free up some time.

Mr. Hurley said that he is concerned because with Dr. Brady's retirement, the strongest supporter of the program won't be here. Ms. Wycinowski was very involved and she is now retired. Ms. McPadden has a lot to deal with in a new position and managing all the new state requirements.

#### **14. Report on NEASC Five Year Progress Report**

Dr. Brady said that the report on the work done since the last NEASC visit is available. An executive summary will be given. Mr. Hurley said that he would like to see the 40-page report.

Dr. Britton said that the District is required to submit a five-year report. Much work has been done. Areas of concentration included more time for faculty and promoting the least restrictive environment for students. Consistent formatting of paper documents was another area that the administration addressed. Adjustments have been made in the area of leveling. There are no more level four classes at the High School. Levels two and three are being combined.

Dr. Brady noted that all core courses at the middle schools haven't been eliminated.

Mr. Blake asked if the report could be put on the website. Dr. Brady said that it can.

Mr. Stirling questioned whether the trend in education is to eliminate levels. Dr. Britton said that it is.

Dr. Brady said that high academic standards are needed for students, whatever level they're in. The Common Core is going to help with that.

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

The Board acknowledged the recent passing of Jill Ferraiolo. Ms. Ferraiolo helped the District get the building project together and passed. Her help was invaluable and made a tremendous impact.

### **16. Correspondence**

- a. Letters from QVHD Regarding 2012-2013 Annual Inspection of Amity Regional High School and Amity Middle School, Bethany Campus  
Dr. Brady mentioned some of the positive comments about Amity outlined in a letter from the Quinnipiac Valley Health District. Dr. Brady said that the facilities in the District will continue to be maintained to keep them in pristine condition.

Ms. Cohen questioned whether Orange was also inspected. Dr. Brady said that it was, but not by the Quinnipiac Valley Health District.

Mr. Hurley said that he was pleased to see the letter from the health district.

Other recent correspondence was also noted, including a letter that Mr. Hurley received about reading.

Mr. Stirling said that Amity was recognized by the Governor for the efficiencies taken on by the District in order to save money.

### **17. Superintendent's Report**

#### **a. Personnel Report**

Dr. Brady noted one retirement that did not appear on the report.

### **18. Chairman's Report**

#### **a. Committee Reports**

1. ACES – Dr. Brady noted that discussions are taking place to determine which rubric to use to rate teachers. There is a movement underway to extend the period of time during which teachers can be evaluated. Some districts are opposed to the new model. Classroom observations can be done by exemplary teachers.

2. CABE – Mr. Stirling had no new information to report.
3. Curriculum – Ms. Altman noted that a meeting took place last month. Amity has two darkrooms and will keep one to be used for a unit on film developing. The other darkroom will be used for other purposes.
4. Facilities – Ms. Cardozo noted that a meeting took place last month. The artificial turf field was discussed, as was the Capital Budget. Dr. Brady added that the topic of setting aside money for large capital projects was addressed. Mr. Hurley asked if anything special is being done to prevent flu. There has been a lot of talk in the media about the large number of cases of flu this season. Dr. Brady said that all systems are in place. There has been no additional disinfecting being done beyond what is already performed routinely.
5. Finance
  - a. Discussion and Possible Action on Audited Financial Statements
    1. Review of Audited Financial Statements by Auditors

The review was discussed under Item #5.
    2. Discussion and Possible Action to Accept Annual Financial Report  
*Motion to accept the Annual Financial Report* (Mr. Hurley, 2d Mr. DeMaio).  
*Vote in favor unanimous. Motion passed.*
    3. Discussion and Possible Action to Return Funds to Member Towns

Move to authorize the Superintendent of Schools to return the balance of \$329,571 from the fiscal year ended June 30, 2012, to the Member Towns, as follows: Town of Bethany - \$67,513; Town of Orange - \$159,542; Town of Woodbridge - \$102,516 (Mr. Hurley, 2d Mr. Browe).  
*Vote in favor unanimous. Motion passed.*
  - b. Discussion and Possible Action on Award of Contract of \$35,000 or More
    4. Mr. Levine said that the contract with Xerox would save \$15,000 a year for product and service. A two-year contract was signed and he would like the Board to consider a five-year deal. He noted that he believes it would be worthwhile to lock in the price. If the price changes Amity can get out of the contract. The Finance Committee supported this request.  
*Move to authorize the Director of Finance and Administration to extend the Xerox contract for toner, maintenance kits and fusers, as well as service, for the District's printers, up to five years, at the contracted price* (Mr. Browe, 2d Mr. Horwitz).  
*Discussion:* Mr. Hurley noted that the cost of color would likely go down. Mr. Levine said that there is an out clause.  
*Vote in favor unanimous. Motion passed.*
  - c. Update on Preliminary Superintendent's Proposed 2013-2014 Budget Development

Dr. Brady said that the preliminary budget calendar will be going out tomorrow. A number of factors are driving the budget increase, particularly state mandates. There are also requests for technology items that are needed. There are no significant cost savings initiatives that can be pursued at this point.

A 3.87 percent increase is projected. Dr. Brady noted that the District will be facing a difficult year. It is hard to consider asking the public to support a turf field, but only time will tell whether that plan can become a reality.

Mr. Stirling said that the Finance Committee has asked Dr. Brady to once again look at staffing levels as a means for achieving savings.

Mr. Blake agreed with Mr. Stirling. Now that the High School is in its second year with the 8 Period Schedule, it would make sense to ensure that the staffing levels are optimal.

Dr. Brady said that the administration always carefully considers staffing.

Mr. Hurley said that with such a significant increase, the public will ask about staffing, so it is necessary to look at staffing once again.

Dr. Brady noted that members of the Board have expressed interest in two items that were removed from the budget as cost savings measures. One item was a graduate study that would cost \$15,000. The other item that was cut from the budget was a virtualization server, which cost \$120,000.

Mr. Hurley said that he supports the purchase of the virtualization server. He noted that the new server is where technology is today. A new piece of physical hardware isn't needed with this new technology. There would be energy savings as well. There is less to track and fewer security issues. He has brought this topic up for three years now.

Ms. Altman said that she would like to put this item aside.

Mr. Hurley said that delaying this purchase is like kicking a can down the road.

Ms. Cardozo said that the \$15,000 for the graduate study seems like a nominal cost for information that would be useful for future planning.

Mr. DeMaio said that questioning recent graduates about their experience at Amity makes sense to him. It would help the administration and Board determine if everything is being done to prepare students to be successful upon graduation.

Dr. Brady said that perhaps there might be money leftover at the end of the year that could be used for this purpose.

- d. Discussion of Monthly Financial Statements  
There were no questions.
- e. Director of Finance and Administration Approved Transfers Under \$3,000  
There was no discussion.
- f. Discussion and Possible Action on New Funding Requests  
This new funding request is summarized in a memo from Mr. Levine to Dr. Brady, dated December 20, 2012.  
*Move to make the following budget transfer of \$64,561 to pay Pearson School Systems of Rancho Cordova, CA, for PowerSchool software and related support services (Mr. DeMaio, 2d Mr. Hurley):*

<u>Account Number</u>	<u>Account Name</u>	<u>From</u>	<u>To</u>
05-15-0000-5850	Contingency Account	\$64,561	
05-14-2350-5690	Other Supplies		\$64,561

*Vote in favor unanimous.*

***Motion passed.***

*Move to make the following budget transfer of \$15,000 to pay West Haven Public Schools as a donation toward a Zamboni for Bennett Rink. In return, Amity's ice rental fee would remain at \$374 per hour for the fiscal year 2013-2014. Also, the \$15,000 donation will be credited towards ice rental time in 2013-2014 (Mr. Hurley, 2d Mr. Browe):*

<u>Account Number</u>	<u>Account Name</u>	<u>From</u>	<u>To</u>
05-15-0000-5850	Contingency Account	\$15,000	
03-11-3202-5440	Rentals-Land, Bldg, Equip.		\$15,000

*Vote in favor unanimous.*

***Motion passed.***

- g. Update on Financial Operations
  - 1. Information on 2013-2014 Budget Calendar  
Some modifications to the budget calendar were made.
  - 6. Policy – This was discussed under Item #12.
  - 7. Personnel – There was no discussion.

**19. Executive Session – Security Issues**

*Motion to enter into Executive Session at 9:41 p.m. (Ms. Gedansky, 2d Ms. Cohen).*

*Vote in favor unanimous.*

***Motion passed.***

*The Board came out of Executive Session at 10:10 p.m.*

**20. Items for the Next Agenda**

No new items were added.

**21. Adjournment**

*Motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:10 p.m. (Ms. Cohen, 2d Mr. Hurley).*

*Vote in favor unanimous.*

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

Respectfully submitted,

---

Marianne Lippard, recording clerk  
Rita Gedansky, secretary

**References/Attachments:**

**Minutes:**

Regular BOE Meeting, December 10, 2012  
Special BOE Meeting, December 18, 2012

**Reports:**

Amity Regional School District No. 5 FY June 30, 2012 Audit Results, Federal and Single Audit Reports  
Amity Regional School District No. 5 Year-to-Date Budget Report, 12/31/12  
Amity Regional School District No. 5 Revenues and Expenditures for FY 2012-2013

**Memos:**

John J. Brady to Amity Board of Education (12/14/12) re: Award of Contract of \$35,000 or More  
Jacqueline Jacoby to William Blake (December 2012) re: CABE Proposal for a Regional Search for the Superintendent of Schools  
Jack B. Levine to John J. Brady (12/28/12) re: 2013-2014 Budget Calendar  
Jack B. Levine to John J. Brady (12/20/12) re: New Funding Requests for FY 2012-2013  
Jack B. Levine to John J. Brady (12/28/12) re: Return Funds to Member Towns  
John J. Brady to Amity Finance Committee and Amity Board of Education (1/8/13) re: Update on Preliminary Superintendent's Proposed 2013-2014 Budget