

## Minutes

**Committee Members Present:** William Blake (Chair), Tom Hurley, Steven DeMaio, Tracy Lane Russo, John Grasso, Jr., James Stirling, Diane Crocco, Rita Gidansky, Sue Cohen, Patricia Cardozo, Chris Browe, and Julie Altman

**Committee Members Absent:** James Horwitz

Others present include Charles Dumais, Jack Levine, Trish Fitzgerald, Mary Raiola, Jim Saisa, Sean DeRosa, Paul Michaud, Nancy Spagnolo and others

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A meeting of the Amity Regional Board of Education was held on Monday, April 21, 2014, at 6:30<sub>pm</sub> in the Presentation Room at the Amity District Offices.

1. **Call to Order:** William Blake called the meeting to order at 6:44<sub>pm</sub>. and the Pledge of Allegiance was said.
2. **Staff Recognition:**

Trish Fitzgerald, the recipient of the Teacher Award from the SCSU Center of Excellence on Autism Spectrum Disorders was recognized by the Board for her outstanding work. Mary Raiola spoke to her program for special education and her work in integrating them into the Amity community.
3. **Presentation of the CABA Award of Excellence for Educational Communication for the 2013-2014 Amity District Calendar - Presenter John Prins:**

The award is for both the District and the Art Department. This award has been existence for eight years and Amity has won it every time.
4. **Approval of Minutes:**
  - A. **Regular BOE Meeting, March 10, 2014: (Tom Hurley, Patricia Cardozo 2<sub>nd</sub>)**

Tracy Lane Russo made a correction. The prefix before her name and Patricia Cardozo's should be "Ms." and not "Mr."

*Diane Crocco abstained.*

*The motion to approve the minutes as corrected passed.*

- B. **Public District Hearing, April 7, 2014: (Sue Cohen, Dianne Crocco 2<sub>nd</sub>)**

*James Stirling, Tom Hurley, Patricia Cardozo, and Julie Altman abstained.*

*The motion passed.*

- C. **Special BOE Meeting, April 7, 2014: (Sue Cohen, Dianne Crocco 2<sub>nd</sub>)**

*Tom Hurley abstained.*

*The motion to passed.*

5. **Public Comment:**

James Stirling remarked upon his recent involvement with the Drama Club's production of *In the Heights* and encouraged other parents to take a roll helping with their children's extra curricular activities.

**6. Student Report:**

The student set to give the report was unable to attend the meeting.

**7. Information Regarding Out of State, Overnight, Student Trip:**

Mary Raiola spoke about the second trip to Disney she and Trish Fitzgerald will be taking 5 students on. There is a curriculum built around the the experience of traveling as well as and this is also possibly the only time these students will take a trip with their peers. The students have been fund raising so their expenses will not be a cost to the district. Mr Dumais described this as a "capstone experience" that encompasses all that these students have learned and we probably couldn't do it any other way.

**8. Presentation on the Micro Grid Project;**

Jim Saisa and Paul Michaud of the firm Murtha Collina described the portion of the proposed micro grid that concerns Amity Regional High School's campus. They described the layout of the equipment and what it all would do for the school. Advantages include continuous power, cost savings via power purchase agreements, the usage of waste heat to either heat or cool water and avoid using the boilers as much, there is also an educational possibility to explore how these things work.

Ms. Cohen asked if Amity would be housing all of the project's equipment and Mr. Saisa said that they would know for sure after the engineering study. She also asked how the developer recouped their investment and Mr. Michaud described the power purchase agreement process in which the developer owns the equipment, but the school owns the power created by it and pays a predetermined rate to use the equipment to make power. Steven DeMaio asked how long that predetermined rate would be in place and Mr. Michaud responded that they are typically 20 year agreements at which time they can be renegotiated.

Mr. Michaud explained the two different agreements offered regarding the gas used to power the equipment - either as a pass through to the Town of Woodbridge or as part of a power purchasing agreement. They discussed what the grant would cover, various technical aspects of the machinery itself and the possibility that solar could be added to increase savings.

Mr. Stirling pointed out the possibility of Amity becoming a place of shelter in an emergency involving an extended loss of power. Ms. Russo pointed out that the District has insurance to cover losses and the benefits of continuous power to a school that is not occupied for several months is minimal. Mr. Michaud explained that the District would only be billed for what power they used.

Mr. Hurley asked if the system could added power to the grid and get a credit. Mr. Michaud said it was not designed to do that.

Mr. Hurley asked what would happen if the system were to break down and Mr. Michaud sated that it would just revert back to using your regular utility company.

Ms. Russo and others raised their concern about the roll and interests of the District being properly considered when they are not a signer on the grant contract, only Woodbridge is. Each time Mr. Michaud said that the PPA contracts will involve Amity and that is where their leverage is. It was also pointed out that Woodbridge will not act unless Amity says they're onboard. An extension of that is the concern of who would be paying the bill for this project due to rules regarding separate billing. The response was that Amity would be continuing to get their own bill and not have to pay for anything that went to the town of Woodbridge. Mr. Michaud explained that this would be a "smart grid" that adjusts output based on energy costs.

Mr. Stirling raised the issue of the exhaust gases and their presence near the educational space. Mr. Michaud said they should not be cause for concern.

Ms. Altman highlighted again the benefits of uninterrupted power.

Ms. Russo expressed reservation about the project and a desire to put off any decision until there was more information to review.

Mr. Blake said that there was a presentation on this some weeks prior, but given the the importance of the issue, they would take it up again at the next meeting and he asked Mr. Dumais to get something from the town of Woodbridge stating what they need from the Board. He cautioned against getting too far into the weeds on this complex project that is in its very early stages.

Mr. Hurley asked about what the District's liability would be regarding the micro grid and who would be responsible for it if it broke down.

Mr. Grasso asked Mr. Blake if he would be involved in the RFP process and if he was no, how would the Board then make its interests known. Mr. Blake respond that if the Board would not sign any contract that was not to its satisfaction.

Mr. Browe asked if there was a sellback option with any additional power. Mr. Michaud explained that with the net metering system they use it would credit on the bill. A sellback would be at the wholesale rate which is very low.

**9. Setting Graduation Date:**

Friday, June 20th, 2014. This leaves one snow day available. (Diane Crocco, Rita Gedansky 2<sup>nd</sup>)

***The motion passed unanimously.***

**10. Correspondence:**

None

**11. Superintendent's Report:**

No new hires for certified staff, some new coaches. Some leaves of absence which are maternity-related. Two coaching resignations and one teacher resignation in Physics.

SBAC Pilot is completed.

Barnes and Nobel has a "My Favorite Teacher" student essay contest. McKenzie Stratton wrote an essay about Tasia Kimball and won. It is going to be submitted for the regional contest.

The continuing discussion about the Bethany 6th grade moving to the high school building has led to a search for documents on the establishment of the region 5 district which has proven difficult. The First Selectman of Orange supplied two - one regarding one of its first board meetings in 1954 and the other was a copy of the original budget.

**12. Committee Reports:**

**A. ACES:**

Sue Cohen reported that Dr. Craig Edmonson, the executive director, is retiring. The new executive director is Dr. Thomas Danahey from Winchester who holds a Masters' in business, a law degree, and a Doctorate in education.

There is also a nearly unified school calendar. One large magnet school in Meriden has April vacation week later than everyone else in ACES next year, but they are unified otherwise.

**B. CABE:**

None

**C. Curriculum:**

None

**D. Facilities:**

None

**E. Finance:**

Mr. Levine explained that he had referred to the Finance Committee on the Professional Auditing Services decision. Mr. Stirling explained how the decision to remain with Mahoney Sabol, LLC had been reached.

**- Professional Auditing Services:**

Motion: (John Grasso, Jr, Patricia Cardozo 2<sup>nd</sup>)

*Move to award the professional auditing services to Mahoney Sabol & Co. LLP for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2014 at the bid price of \$32,500.*

**Steven DeMaio and Tom Hurley opposed the motion.  
The motion passed.**

- **Site-Based Grounds Maintenance Program, Snow Removal, Ice Control & Sanding Services, Safety Service Program, Trash and Recycling Removal Services, and Substitute Teacher Services (contracts #2-#6):**

The Board chose to vote on these contracts together. The Finance Committee had approved them all unanimously. These are all companies the District is currently using.

Motion:(Tom Hurley, Sue Cohen 2<sup>nd</sup>)

*Move to approve the award of contracts 2 through 6 as peeled out in Mr. Levine's April 6, 2014 memorandum to Mr. Dumais.*

It was explained that the substitute teacher service is the last resort for getting a substitute after the bench subs, interns, and the Amity sub list has been exhausted and the contract is for per diem work.

***The motion passed unanimously.***

- **Workers' Compensation Insurance and Liability, Automobile, and Property Insurance (contract #7):**

Mr. Hurley stated that he would be recusing himself from votes on contracts 7, 9, and 11.

Motion:(Sue Cohen, Diane Crocco 2<sup>nd</sup>)

*Award the workers' compensation insurance for July 1, 2014 to June 30, 2015, to Connecticut Interlock Risk Management Agency (CERMA) of New Haven, Connecticut, at the premium of \$191,925 plus the audit premium to be determined. Award liability, automobile, and property insurance to Connecticut Interlock Risk Management Agency (CERMA) of New Haven, Connecticut, for the base premium of \$141,673 for July 1, 2014 to June 30, 2015. This is the third year of a three-year contract for workers' compensation and liability, automobile, and property insurance.*

Discussion: Ms. Russo asked if the audit premium listed as 'to be determined' would be that way regardless of the firm chosen. Mr. Levine confirmed that.

***Tom Hurley abstained.  
The motion passed.***

- **District Chiller Maintenance Contract (contract #8):**

Motion:(Chris Browe, John Grasso Jr 2<sup>nd</sup>)

*Award the district chiller maintenance contract to Trane Building Services (local Trane office in Rocky Hill, Connecticut) for the first year of a Three-year contract commencing June 2014, through May 2015, for \$12,122. The Board reserves the right at its sole discretion to award year two at \$12,606, and year three at*

\$13,110, for a total of \$37,838. This is a sole source vendor for the District's Trane equipment, and thereby, the sealed bid requirements are not required.

***The motion passed unanimously.***

**- Student Accident Insurance (contract #9):**

Motion:(Julie Altman, Patricia Cardozo 2<sup>nd</sup>)

*Move to award the student accident insurance for the 2014-2015 school year to Abbate Insurance Associates of New Haven, Connecticut, for the bid price of \$24,650, which includes catastrophic accident insurance. Further, there shall be two option years at the sole discretion of the Board. The Director of Finance and Administration shall negotiate with Abbate Insurance Associates, and if the prices are favorable to the District, shall present the terms and conditions to the Board for their consideration. If the terms and conditions are unacceptable, the Director of Finance and Administration shall bid student accident insurance. The Board reserves the right to cancel the contract if Abbate Insurance Associates fails to perform in a satisfactory manner.*

Discussion: Mr. Levine added that the Board should be sure that this came to the Board in enough time to go out to bid if they felt they needed to bid it.

***Tom Hurley abstained.  
The motion passed.***

**- Telephone System Replacement (contract #10):**

Motion:(Sue Cohen, Tom Hurley 2<sup>nd</sup>)

*Move to award the telephone system replacement to Pilothouse Communications, LLC of Cheshire, Connecticut, per the bid specifications. The system will be paid through a lease/purchase agreement with a \$1.00 buyout with an annual payment of \$37,182.94 due in July 2014 through 2018, inclusive. The total cost is \$185,915.70 (including \$1.00 buyout).*

Discussion: Ms. Russo asked what the budget was for this project and whether this fit in that number. Mr. Levine said that they had budgeted exactly this number because it was part of the superintendent's recommendations.

Mr Levine pointed out that, while this was not the low bid, but it was the consensus of those involved that this would provide the most value.

Mr. Blake commented on previous vendor ceasing to support the equipment after seven years and asked if there was any safeguard against that. Mr. Levine said that they had not used that vendor. Mr. DeRosa gave a technical rundown of what the project entailed and mentioned that there would still be some copper lines as emergency backup.

***The motion passed unanimously.***

**- Investment Consulting Services (contract #11):**

Motion:(James Stirling, John Grasso, Jr. 2<sup>nd</sup>)

*Move to retain Fiduciary Invest Advisors for a contract at a rate of \$18,000 for 2014-2015 with the option to continue with them at the bid prices - \$18,540 for 2015-2016, and \$19,096 for 2016-2017 - at the Board's discretion.*

**Tom Hurley abstained.  
The motion passed.**

**- Extension of Electricity Rates:**

Mr. Levine said that the town of Woodbridge is considering extending their electricity rates for about a six months period, but several entities have to approve it including the Woodbridge Board of Selectmen who will see it at their May meeting, so there is no proposal to vote on. It will likely appear on next month's agenda and action will be needed so that the superintendent will have the authority to act on the bid if it is taken and if it's in the best interest of the school district because it will occur some time between meetings.

**- Monthly Financials:**

No questions or comments.

**- Director of Finance and Administration Approved Transfers Under \$3,000:**

No Comments

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

Special Education:

Motion:(James Stirling, Patricia Cardozo 2nd)

*Move to transfer \$15,000 from Tuition Expense Account #04-12-6111-5560 to Tuition Expense Account #04-12-6130-5560*

***The motion passed unanimously.***

Motion:(James Stirling, Tom Hurley 2nd)

*Move to transfer \$6,000 from Tuition Expense Account #04-12-6111-5560 to Instructional Supplies Account #04-13-2190-5611 to pay for a new version of the Woodcock Johnson test materials.*

***The motion passed unanimously***

**- Discussion and Possible Action on New Funding Requests:**

Motion (James Stirling, Tracy Lane Russo 2nd)

*Move to transfer \$7,075 from Contingency Account #05-15-0000-5850 to Repairs, Maintenance, and Cleaning Account #03-14-2600-5420 for the purpose of paying for snow removal and sanding.*

That will leave \$98.920 in contingency.

***The motion passed unanimously.***

- **Information, Discussion, and Possible Action Related to the Use of Amity Regional High School by the Woodbridge Public Schools for their 2014 Summer Program:**

Mr Dumais explained that, due to the construction happening at Beecher Road School, many summer programs offered there can't be held there this summer. Dr Stella has asked if they could be relocated to the high school campus. There was an evaluation and, with some adjustments to custodial staff and other things, they could be accommodated without interfering with the programs that are already offered here.

The exact cost and how Woodbridge Public Schools would go about paying for these services without having it show as revenue in the budget and effect allocations for next year has not yet been determined. Some things like materials can be purchased by Beecher out right, but not everything require can be dealt with in that way.

Mr. Dumais asked the Board for the authority to work on that agreement to accommodate Beecher Road School's programs. the goal is to keep it revenue neutral.

Motion:(Diane Crocco, Rita Gedansky 2<sup>nd</sup>)

*Move to recommend to the Amity Board of Education to permit the Superintendent of Schools to enter into a proper agreement with Woodbridge Public Schools for the limited and temporary use of facilities for the summer of 2014.*

Discussion: Mr. Stirling highlighted the value of sharing within the district and with other towns and mentioned and drew a comparison between this and the Bethany sixth grade issue. Ms. Russo also mentioned that this would make a good, small pilot program for the Bethany sixth grade.

***The motion passed unanimously.***

- **Policy:**

Did not meet.

- **Personnel:**

Did not meet yet. There are two open positions they are working on.

**13. Items for the Next Agenda:**

Mr. Hurley requested a discussion on an enrollment report. When asked to clarify he asked to discuss a population study. It is an issue within the towns.

Ms. Russo asked for a follow-up on the data backup and file retention issue she had brought up previously. She wanted to discuss having a uniform plan for who keeps what files and in what format because when a school in Orange had a technical failure there was no plan in place there and Amity has no policy dealing with that either.



**14. Adjournment:** Diane Crocco, Tom Hurley 2<sup>nd</sup>  
The meeting adjourned at 8:43<sub>pm</sub>.

