

MINUTES

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:** Chairman William Blake, Mr. John Belfonti, Mr. Christopher Browe, Ms. Patricia Cardozo, Ms. Sue Cohen, Ms. Diane Crocco, Mr. Steven Demaio, Ms. Rita Gedansky, Mr. Thomas Hurley, Ms. Sheila McCreven, Ms. Tracey Lane Russo, Mr. James Stirling and Ms. Diane Urbano.

**BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:** None.

**Staff members present:** Dr. Charles Dumais, Ms. Terry Lumas, Mr. Shaun DeRosa, Mr. Gary Castella, Ms. Kathi Fuller-Cutler, Ms. Anna Mahon, Mr. Thayer Doyle, Dr. Marie McPadden and Ms. Mary Raiola.

**Also present:** Mrs. Ruth Natzel, Mr. R. J. Kaoud and other members of the public.

A regular meeting of the Amity Regional Board of Education (BOE) was held on Monday, November 09, 2015 at 6:30 pm in the cafeteria at Amity Regional High School.

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

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

3. **Recognition of Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents (CAPSS) Award recipients**

Mr. Blake introduced Dr. Dumais, who called Principal Kathi Fuller-Cutler to the podium to present the CAPSS award to the 2 students from Amity Middle School Orange – Kylee Gustafson and Carsten Fielosh.

Principal Thayer Doyle presented the CAPSS award to two students from Amity Middle School Bethany – Ella Marin and Tanner Santos.

Principal Anna Mahon presented the awards for Amity Regional High School to six students – Nicholas Bencivengo, Thomas Boutros, Benjamin Clemens, Diana-Kate Karsanow, Kathleen Tajmajer, and Wendy Zhan.

4. **Recognition of National Merit Scholar Program semifinalists and commended students**

Principal Mahon presented the National Merit Scholarship semifinalists and commended students from Amity High School. These students are among the 50,000 who achieved the highest scores out of 1.5 million entrants. From these 50,000 entrants, 16,000 have been named semifinalists and 34,000 others have been commended for their performance. The semifinalists will continue in the competition for 8,000 National Merit Scholarships offered in 2016.

The twenty-four commended students are: Ethan Bershtein, David Cease, Benjamin Clemens, Nicole Feng, Clara Gamsu, Jordan Gorelick, Cameron Greifenberger, Jamie Hashem (also National Hispanic recognition), Dasha Kanevsky, Steven Kim, Victoria Li, Kimberly Liang, Helen Liu, Kadan Lottick, Matthew McKenna, Gabrielle Miller, Youngwook Nam, Sarah O'Brien, Aaron Reiner, Benjain Santaus, Vincent Silverman, Kabir Thombre, William Wang and Yiran Zhang.

The six semifinalists are: Nicole Feng, Victoria Li, Yongwook Nam, Vincent Silverman, William Wang and Yiran Zhang.

Chairman Blake recognized Ms. Diane Crocco, who is serving at her last meeting after serving 8 years on the Board of Education and thanked her for her years of service.

Chairman Blake called for a short recess so that students and their families could depart. The Board re-convened at 7:17 pm.

5. **Approval of minutes.**

A. **Regular BOE meeting, October 19, 2015 (enclosure)**

**Motion by Ms. Cohen, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ms. Gedansky, to approve the minutes of the October 19<sup>th</sup> Board meeting.**

Two corrections were made to page 3 of the minutes per Mr. Hurley; the wording of a motion (changing three (3) to four ***“and “V...Requests will rest for three (3) years before being vetted by the Superintendent”*** and the vote on the motion from a tie to 5 in favor, 4 against.

Ms. Lane-Russo stated that the minutes should have the identifying student information stricken from public comments, as this was a privacy issue. There was discussion regarding whether or not this should be stricken, as the speaker identified himself with his name and address. The phrase was removed.

Ms. Lane-Russo further commented that she felt the minutes were greatly lacking in detail and were “sanitized”, especially with respect to item #6, the presentation of the testing results. She stated that the lack of detail in the minutes would not allow anyone to know what actually went on at the meeting and that had she known they would be so sparse, she would have taken notes herself. Mr. Browe commented that when there is a long presentation or discussion with a lot of detail, the online video of the meeting could be accessed for that information. Mr. Browe agreed that there could be more detail in the minutes without going back to the previous, more lengthy, style of minutes. The current style of minutes are more in line with Roberts Rules versus a “word-for-word” style. Chairman Blake stated that he and Dr. Dumais would confer with the recording clerk to arrive at an acceptable version of the minutes and make those changes going forward.

***The Chair called the motion to approve the minutes as amended.***

**Vote 10 in favor (abstention Ms.Gedansky; Ms. McCreven, no.)**

**Motion carried.**

Minutes of the October 19<sup>th</sup> meeting were corrected and re-submitted.

**6. Public Comment – none.**

**7. Student Report**

Mr. R. J. Kaoud gave an update on events at Amity High School over the past month as well as informing the Board of upcoming events. The first quarter is now complete. The Homecoming Dance is being planned. Spirit Week is the week before Thanksgiving. The Senior Lounge is complete as of November 6<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Hurley asked what the qualifications are for going to the Senior Lounge and Mr. Kaoud answered him. The old Senior Lounge space is being converted to another study area. He gave an update on the Amity sports teams and preparation/rehearsal underway for the next theatre production to take place on December 3<sup>rd</sup> and, 4<sup>th</sup>

**8. Discussion regarding Amity Pension Fund, Sick and Severance Account and OPEB Trust**

**A. Discussion and possible vote on composite investment policy statements (enclosure).**

**B. Discussion of market review (enclosure)**

Mr. Hurley recused himself from this discussion.

Mr. Michael Goss presented the update and review on the performance of the three accounts (Amity Pension Fund, Sick and Severance Account and OPEB Trust). Based on the performance of the funds, he is recommending no change in the investment allocation.

Mr. Blake asked Mr. Goss to speak to a question asked of him by a student regarding the loss in the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter due to the downturn in the stock market and how that recovered. Mr. Goss explained the recovery and the value of risk versus return.

Mr. Stirling noted that the Finance Committee recommended unanimously that the same asset allocation be maintained.

***Motion by Mr. Stirling, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Ms. Cohen that the Board maintain the same asset allocation for the three funds, (Amity Pension Fund, Sick and Severance Account and OPEB Trust).***

Vote unanimous

Motion carried

**9. Correspondence****10. Superintendent's Report**

**A. Personnel Report (enclosure)**– Dr. Dumais highlighted the news that Mr. Levine will be retiring in June 2016. Ms. Cohen commented that it has been reassuring to have Mr. Levine in charge of the finances for all these years and congratulated him on his upcoming retirement. Mr. Hurley mentioned that Mr. Levine was the first business manager in Connecticut to bring a financial manual to completion.

**B. Other (enclosure)** - Dr. Dumais reported on activities for professional development that took place on Election Day which included all departments and was coordinated with member districts.

Next week is the first installment of Parent University, which will in part cover understanding standardized testing results.

Dr. Dumais, Ms. Mahon and Dr. McPadden have been attending Great Schools Partnership meetings.

**11. Chairman's Report -****A. Committee Reports**

**1. ACES** - ACES did not meet.

**2. CAFE** - Professional education conference is coming up and several Board members will attend. Interested members can contact Karen Wade to register.

**3. Curriculum (enclosure)** – The Curriculum Committee met on October 29<sup>th</sup> to discuss new course proposals as outlined in the enclosure, as well as two textbooks. All the courses and textbooks were approved. Ms. Lane-Russo asked whether or not the courses were being offered to all of the “Bell curve” or just to particular groups of students. Dr. McPadden and Ms. Mahon answered and explained the prerequisites and scope and sequence of the proposed courses. Mr. Hurley told the Board that there was a recommendation that these course be student-driven and perhaps be made one semester courses rather than a full year.

**4. Facilities** – The Facilities Committee has not met.

**A. Facilities Department monthly report, October 2015 (enclosure)** Mr. Hurley asked about the location of the problem with the paving in the parking lot. Dr. Dumais reported that it is in the middle of main lot and is being repaired.

Dr. Dumais reported that the middle school bridge is being done by students supervised by a teacher and the hope is that middle schools students will be able to come at some point to observe this process.

**5. Finance****A. Presentation and discussion of enrollment projections (enclosure)**

Dr. Dumais directed the Board to page 34 and the graphs showing the enrollment projections up to the next 10 years. Only 16 districts out of 169 in the State are projected to have an increase in enrollment, all others are projected to have a decrease, including Amity.

Ms. McCreven noted that Amity does not qualify as a small town per the State legislature and wanted to know if the data could be broken down by town and be made available. Ms. McCreven asked to see if the enrollment numbers match what each sending town has and noted that this might be useful at budget time. Dr. Dumais explained that the figures do not come broken down by town. Dr. Dumais referred the Board to the table on page 28 and stated for longer-term planning and for budget calculations the average daily membership numbers are used. Ms. McCreven asked if there was a way to check the figures that Amity has versus what each town has, to make sure the numbers agree so that the townspeople are hearing the same thing from their town and from the Region. Overall, the change in enrollment is not as dramatic as it was thought it might be.

**B. Discussion of Monthly Financial Statements (enclosure)**

**C. Director of Finance and Administration approved transfers under \$3,000 (enclosure)****D. Other****1. Update on budget development.**

Dr. Dumais, stated that all of the budgets have been submitted and he will be meeting with school leaders to discuss budget priorities. Mr. Demaio asked a question regarding the rules for budgeting, i.e. whether or not the spending could be lower than the previous year. There are rules in place regarding spending if the budget does not pass at referendum; the Board can certainly approve a budget at any number. The budget can only be reduced to the amount per student established by the State legislature if the district is shrinking using the established formula.

**2. Update on financial audit.**

Mr. Levine stated that the audit itself is complete. The audit documents need to be read and processed, but everything is on target to be completed on time. Mr. Levine anticipates receipt of the final report in January 2016. Dr. Dumais noted that this would be our 5<sup>th</sup> consecutive clean audit.

**6. Policy****A. Policy 7551 – Naming of Amity Facilities (revised) second reading**

Mr. Hurley stated that this is more like a 3<sup>rd</sup> reading since the policy was amended at the 2<sup>nd</sup> reading and presented to the Board again. (page 66) There was discussion regarding the wording of the policy and the wording in the minutes. Ms. McCreven asked about the wording of the policy in the minutes. Mr. Hurley stated that the word “currently” should be added to make the policy clear. There was further discussion of the policy, specifically regarding the wait time.

***Motion by Ms. McCreven to send the policy back to the Committee, no second. Motion died.***

The word “currently” will be inserted in the policy IV.F.

There was further discussion about the wait time for someone employed by the school district versus someone else in the town. The timing of the naming is tied to the time of the request to name the facility.

***Motion by Mr. Hurley, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Ms. Urbano to approve Policy 7551 as amended above.***

**Vote in favor 10, vote against 2 (Ms. McCreven, Ms. Cardozo)**

**Motion carried**

Mr. Hurley explained that the policies for first reading listed below are all part of new State legislature directives. Mr. Blake asked Dr. Dumais to summarize each policy listed below for the Board, which he did with added information from Mr. Hurley. All the information is listed in the enclosure.

**B. First reading of the following:**

- 1. Policy 1331 – Community Relations - Smoke-free environment**
- 2. Policy 5141.4 – Students - Reporting of child abuse, neglect and sexual assault**

Ms. Lane-Russo requested that the Policy Committee make sure there is a policy in place that requires students to be educated regarding sexual harassment by a teacher or staff member.

- 3. Policy 5144.1 - Students - Use of physical force, physical restraint/seclusion**
- 4. Policy 5144.4 – Students - Discipline, physical exercise and discipline of students**

Ms. Cardozo asked that someone look at the placement of signage in the buildings (no smoking signs for example), stating that the placement could be better, more consistent and less haphazard.

Ms. Urbano asked who makes the decision regarding the curriculum for bullying harassment, etc., and also how and when teachers get the required education. Dr. Dumais answered her question – for students it is primarily part of health curriculum and for teachers it is done during a faculty meeting or professional development.

Ms. McCreven asked whether or not a teacher or other adult could have smoking materials on their person while in the building. Dr. Dumais explained that the policy applies to students, teachers and the public but that question is not addressed in this particular policy and is addressed elsewhere.

Ms. Lane-Russo asked about the language in the restraint policy, whether this was the language recommended by CAFE or if it was written by the Committee; the answer is that the language came from CAFE. She was concerned that the policy would be in place before staff had proper training. The State requires the policy to be in place by July 01, 2019.

Ms. Cardozo had a question regarding “psychopharmacologic medication administration”. Dr. Dumais stated that this portion of the policy is woefully outdated and is being reviewed by the appropriate staff. The policy is in line to be addressed at the next meeting.

Ms. Lane-Russo asked if there is a policy regarding age of consent, considering the wide age range the district covers. Mr. Hurley encouraged any Board member to come to the Policy Committee meeting on November 16th with any questions they have.

## **7. Personnel (enclosure)**

**9. Items for next agenda** – please forward any items to Dr. Dumais or Mr. Blake.

Mr. Hurley requested that any items that need to come before the Policy Committee be forwarded to him by Board members by this Thursday.

## **10. Adjournment**

***Motion by Mr. Stirling , 2<sup>nd</sup> by Mr. Hurley to adjourn at 8:47 pm.***

**Vote unanimous**

**Motion carried**

Respectfully submitted,

Ruth E. Natzel, Recording Clerk

Thomas Hurley, Secretary