

MINUTES

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:** Chairman William Blake, Mr. John Belfonti, Ms. Robyn Berke, Mr. Christopher Browe, Ms. Patricia Cardozo, Ms. Sue Cohen, Mr. Steven DeMaio, Ms. Amy Esposito, Mr. Thomas Hurley, Ms. Tracey Lane Russo, Ms. Sheila McCreven, Mr. James Stirling and Ms. Diane Urbano.

**BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:** None

**Staff members present:** Dr. Charles Dumais, Ms. Terry Lumas, Mr. Ernie Goodwin, Mr. Shawn DeRosa, Ms. Anna Mahon, Dr. Marie McPadden, Ms. Mary Raiola, Ms. Kathleen Cutler, Mr. Frank Barretta, Ms. Ashley Caron and Dr. Charles Britton.

**Also present:** Mrs. Ruth Natzel, and other members of the public.

A regular meeting of the Amity Regional Board of Education (BOE) was held on Monday, March 14, 2016 at 6:30 pm in the presentation room at the Amity District Offices.

1. **Call to Order:** Chairman William Blake called the meeting to order at 6:35 pm.
2. **Pledge of Allegiance** was recited by those present.
3. **Swearing in of new Board member.** Mr. Blake swore in new Board member Ms. Robyn Berke.

**4. Recognition of Superintendent's SCASA Award recipients**

Dr. Dumais called on Dr. Dellinger to present awards to 2 students from Amity Middle School, Bethany, Ephemia Nicolakis and Mateo Delsanto.

Ms. Cutler presented awards to 2 students from Amity Middle School, Orange, Caitlin Carlson and Joshua Ford.

Ms. Mahon presented awards to 2 students from Amity High School, Casey Culligan and Ryan Olenick.

Dr. Dumais thanked the parents of the students who were honored and congratulated them.

Mr. Blake echoed Dr. Dumais' statements and congratulated the students and parents.

**5. Presentation on Quebec Trip – French Club**

French teacher Madam Caron introduced students Amy and Sarah who gave an excellent presentation of their Quebec immersion trip. They showed photos of their trip, outlined their itinerary and all the activities that took place in the city.

**6. Approval of minutes.**

- A. **Special BOE meeting, February 29, 2016 (enclosure)**

***Motion by Ms. Cohen, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Ms. McCreven to accept the minutes as submitted.***

Corrections/edits were pointed out.

**Vote to accept the minutes as corrected (Ms. Berke abstained)**

**Motion carried**

*Minutes were corrected and re-submitted*

**7. Public Comment**

Dr. Brian Laubstein gave an update to the Board regarding his concerns about the middle school science (biology) curriculum.

**8. Student Report**

Mr. R. J. Kaoud gave an update and follow up regarding events at Amity High School Amity Middle Schools, Orange and

Bethany over the past 2 weeks as well as informing the Board of upcoming events.

**9. Correspondence – none.**

**10. Superintendent's Report**

**A. Personnel Report – (enclosure)**

Dr. Dumais stated that the new teacher hired is the person who had been the long-term substitute and is indeed the best person for the position.

**B. Other**

Dr. Dumais highlighted other items in his report:

Continued progress and expansion on goals for BOWA districts – transition to the middle school math will be coordinated with the 6<sup>th</sup> grades in member town elementary schools.

STAR universal reading assessment – administration members have attended workshops regarding how to interpret STAR data.

March 24<sup>th</sup> is a professional learning day will include ALL staff. World language teachers will have an all-day session with a national consultant.

Operations – The Department of Motor Vehicles does a yearly study on bus transportation for schools. B&B Transportation, who provides bus transportation for Amity, was graded as the safest company in the State.

**11. Chairman's Report -**

**A. Committee Reports**

- 1. ACES** - The Deputy Commissioner of Education stated at the ACES meeting that there will be about a \$70 million dollar cut in funding along with decreased special education reimbursement. There was discussion and questions regarding the negative impact on Amity's budget.
- 2. CAFE** - Ms. McCreven reported that the Day on the Hill was very successful and that there was some very helpful CAFE training being done by Ms. Rebecca Adams.
- 3. Curriculum** – The Curriculum Committee is scheduled to meet on April 7<sup>th</sup>. The Curriculum Steering Committee did meet last week.
- 4. Facilities** – The next Facilities Committee meeting is scheduled for March 24<sup>th</sup>
  - A. Facilities Department monthly report, February 2016 (enclosure)**  
Dr. Dumais reported that the bids for the FuelCell were opened today.
- 5. Finance**
  - A. Discussion and possible action on proposed 2016-2017 budget**  
The Superintendent's recommended budget is \$48,104,745, an increase of 2.56%.

***Motion by Ms. Cohen, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Ms. Esposito to approve the Superintendent's recommended budget of \$48,104,745, an increase of 2.56%.***

Mr. Stirling stated that the Finance Committee recommended by a vote of 4 to 1 that a budget be recommended at an increase of 1.99%, which is less than the proposed budget. He reminded the Board of the bylaw regarding the Finance Committee bylaws and gave each Board member a copy of that information. (enclosure)

A point of order was raised regarding the motion itself; this was discussed and resolved.

There was discussion by all the Board members regarding the proposed budget versus the recommendation of the Finance Committee for a decrease of 1.99% without an actual budget with cuts.

All Board members participated in a lengthy discussion regarding the budget. Members gave their reasons for supporting the budget as proposed or for making further cuts. Questions were raised and discussed regarding the amount of the increase, the recommendation of the Finance Committee and the feedback from the member towns regarding the proposed budget. There was concern voiced that if the budget is not reduced further the Board risks losing the support of the public. Members spoke in support of and in agreement with the budget as presented. The budget must be passed in time for the public hearing which is scheduled for April 4<sup>th</sup>.

Mr. Blake called the question.

**Vote in favor 5** (Ms. Berke, Ms. Cardozo, Ms. Cohen, Ms. Esposito and Ms. Russo)

**Vote opposed 7** (Mr. Belfonti, Mr. Browe, Mr. Hurley, Mr. DeMaio, Ms. McCreven, Mr. Stirling and Ms. Urbano)

**Motion defeated**

***Motion by Mr. Hurley, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Mr. Stirling to ask the Superintendent to develop an alternative budget, keeping in mind that the Finance Committee has requested an increase of 1.99% or less and to forward the revised budget to the Board and the Finance Committee no later than March 28, 2016.***

There was further discussion regarding the motion. There was also discussion regarding asking the Finance Committee for a budget showing the line items to be cut to get to 1.99%.

**Vote in favor 7** (Mr. Belfonti, Mr. Browe, Mr. Hurley, Mr. DeMaio, Ms. McCreven, Mr. Stirling and Ms. Urbano)

**Vote opposed** (Ms. Berke, Ms. Cardozo, Ms. Cohen, Ms. Esposito and Ms. Russo)

**Motion carried**

A special meeting of the Finance Committee and the Board will need to be called once a new budget is available.

**B. Report on awarding of extension of electricity rate and term**

Mr. Levine reports that the Superintendent approved a 1-year extension at 7.5 which was better than the 8.2 cents predicted.

**C. Update on district lighting project**

The information is in the packet and there is nothing to vote on yet. The information will go to the Facilities Committee who will make a recommendation to the full Board. Dr. Dumais stated that this, as well as other items like it, are put on the agenda to make the Board aware of what is taking place and to keep the Board informed.

**D. Discussion of Monthly Financial Statements**

Mr. Levine pointed to page 28 of the packet, we were \$107,000 under for claims; this number is already incorporated in the proposed budget of 2.56%.

Mr. Stirling asked about 2 items on page 23 of board package of \$145,000 and \$300,000. Mr. Levine answered that they are now on the unfavorable side and are yet to be decided upon.

Dr. Dumais spoke about the effort made to even the budget out rather than have it fluctuate every year and to keep the budget process completely transparent. He stated that the funds mentioned above on page 23 could be transferred earlier.

**E. Director of Finance and Administration-approved transfers under \$3,000 – no questions.**

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

***Motion by Mr. Browe, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Ms. Cardozo to make the following budget transfers detailed in the enclosed memo from Mr. Levine to Dr. Dumais dated March 09, 2016:***

***For special education***

***The amount of \$18,000 from account 04-12-6111-5560 tuition expense, to account 04-13-2130-5330 other professional and technical service.***

***The amount of \$126,500 from accounts 04-12-6117-5560 tuition expense and 04-12-6110-5560 tuition expense, to account 04-12-6130-5560 tuition expense.***

***For facilities***

***The amount of \$25,000 from account 03-14-2600-5420 repairs, maintenance and cleaning, to account 03-14-2600-5731 equipment replacement***

***For athletics***

***The amount of \$5,945 from account 03-11-3202-5420 repairs, maintenance and cleaning to 03-11-3202-5731 equipment replacement***

There was some discussion and there were a few questions about the line items which were answered by Mr. Levine and Dr. Dumais.

**Vote unanimous**

**Motion carried**

**6. Policy** – A Policy Meeting is scheduled for March 21<sup>st</sup> at 5:30 pm.

**7. Personnel** – No meetings scheduled.

Mr. Browe stated that the Board needs to schedule a meeting to address Board goals as stated in the bylaws.

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

**13. Adjournment**

***Motion by Mr. Hurley , 2<sup>nd</sup> by Mr. Browe to adjourn at 8:37 pm.***

**Vote unanimous**

**Motion carried**

Respectfully submitted,

Ruth E. Natzel, Recording Clerk

Thomas Hurley, Secretary