

MINUTES

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Julie Altman, Thomas Hurley

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:

Joe Abbatiello, Diane Crocco, Rita Gedansky, Angela McNabola

Also Present: William Blake, Dr. John Brady, Dr. Charles Britton, Sue Cohen, Dr. Richard Dellinger, Kathleen Fuller-Cutler, Warren Gohsler, Jack Levine, Marianne Lippard, Terry Lumas, Mary Raiola, Rocco Palmieri, Sheila Wycinowski

A meeting of the Curriculum Committee was held in the Presentation Room of district offices at 5:30 p.m. on Tuesday, December 14, 2010.

1. Call to Order: Julie Altman called the meeting to order at 5:32 p.m.

2. Approval of Minutes – November 4, 2010

The minutes were not approved because there was no quorum.

3. Discussion of the 2011-2012 Budget

Dr. Brady briefly reviewed the highlights of the 2011-2012 budget, which is in the planning phase. Dr. Brady said that there is no final budget figure at this point.

A budget report was distributed to the committee. The report addressed personnel, curriculum and staff development, textbooks, technology, and equipment. Dr. Brady noted that the requests that the committee will be reviewing represent those that are being supported after careful review and reductions at the administrative level.

Currently, a 1.86% budget to budget increase is projected for a total of \$794,011. Member town allocations are: Bethany - \$105,670, Orange + \$788,082 (40% of increase is due to enrollment shift), Woodbridge + \$174,799. These allocations are up \$857,191. The allocation amounts are over the budget to budget amount due to the fact that there are fewer dollars from the current budget to assign to the 2011-2012 budget. Dr. Brady stressed that the figures are very preliminary and he expects to have more concrete figures by mid-January.

Biology

The budget includes one F.T.E. increase for a new faculty position at the high school. This new position would be utilized in biology, providing the ability to offer a lab experience to students for the first time. The new eight period schedule will allow time for this lab. Dr. Brady said that he is not aware of any other high

school in the state without a biology lab experience for students. The cost attached to this request is \$65,000.

Tom questioned whether there is any way to fill the position without adding a new teacher. Dr. Britton, principal at the high school, said that moving a teacher from another area in order to fill the position would involve cutting from another area. The administration does not support shuffling teachers in order to provide the lab, Dr. Britton said.

More information is being gathered on the plan, such as what sections would be needed. Dr. Brady said that he expects to present options to the board at a later date when the budget discussions continue.

Julie Altman questioned how many F.T.E.s were lost with retirements. Dr. Brady said that there were five.

Curriculum and Staff Development

Sheila Wycinowski, Director of Curriculum & Staff Development, referred to the Curriculum and Staff Development section of the information packet distributed to the committee. The cost for Curriculum and Staff Development is \$81,120.86. The budgeted figure encompasses a number of areas, including curriculum writing at the high school and middle school, developing essential curriculum aligned to an eight period day, and curriculum technology. Sheila said that this funding area deals with professional development of in-house trainers, instructional program improvements, instructional supplies, and other needs. She noted that writing a curriculum is a labor intensive process. In the area of curriculum writing for the middle school, the district pairs new teachers with mentors to make sure they are off to a good start. A steering committee looks at the alignment of grades 7 through 12. The district is committed to seeing new teachers succeed and spends a year working with staff to show them what a model curriculum would be like. In aligning to NEASC standards, we are ensuring that teachers are well prepared.

Dr. Brady said that the district is looking at raising the standards in English. Geometry, French and Spanish are among the areas also being worked on. In the area of special education, the district is concentrating on the math curriculum.

Tom questioned where money could be saved and whether it would be possible to put off curriculum changes for one year in order to make sure that the eight period schedule is well implemented next year.

Sheila said that the budget figure that was presented already reflects a number of cuts.

Dr. Brady said that he believes that the eight period day and the curriculum changes can both be done successfully.

Tom said that the district is doing a good job with moving to an eight period day.

Tom pointed out that another area of the Curriculum and Staff Development budget that is likely to be considered for reductions is conference travel. At \$5,365, the amount budgeted isn't large, Tom noted, but if the area is continually reduced, at some point the district loses out on the information that the conferences could provide.

Dr. Brady said that he would like to put more money into the conference account because the amount set aside in the new budget is really not enough. The district

does not have the funding to send teachers to all the conferences that he feels should be attended.

Sheila noted that a TEAM support program is a severely underfunded mandate. Sheila said that for years, Amity has trained its trainers. Colleagues share information and it has been highly effective.

Tom questioned whether there is any way that the district can generate revenue by having staff members train others.

Mary Raiola said the possibility of having teaching staff train others has been explored. Dr. Brady said that Amity is not in a position to be like ACES.

Dr. Britton said that eliminating level four courses was a good use of funds and shows commitment to supporting teachers.

Dr. Brady said that the administration supports change.

Textbooks

The budget set aside for textbooks is \$78,005. Sheila said that the district forecasts textbook needs, prioritizing what the needs are.

Tom asked if there are textbooks in use that are over 10 years old. Sheila said that there are. Julie said that she is aware that some books are very old.

Tom said that he is concerned about the idea of shifting problems around so that the budget figures are lower.

Technology

Under technology, \$114,995 has been set aside in the budget. Warren said that as a district, Amity is moving toward using more on-line resources to improve student performance. Study Island is an example. The program engages the students and makes them want to move forward. A counseling program allows students to look at and plan for their future. Dr. Brady said that the state is requiring the district to implement a success plan. The software will help to satisfy this requirement.

Tom said that there is much better, faster technology than the servers currently in use. If the system needs to be upgraded, he said that it would be better not to have to do the work all at once. Dr. Brady said that the district has a technology plan in place and a short list of replacement items.

4. **Public Comment:** none
5. **Other:** none
6. **Adjourn:** The meeting adjourned at 6:49 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Marianne Lippard, recording clerk