

AMITY REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 5 BOARD OF EDUCATION
NOVEMBER 9, 2020 REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
6:30 P.M., 100 Ohman Avenue, Orange, CT

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

John Belfonti, Christopher Browe, Patricia Cardozo, Paul Davis, Steven DeMaio, Patrick Reed, Robyn Berke (remote), Shannan Carlson (remote), Carla Eichler (remote), George Howard (remote), Andrea Hubbard (remote), Dr. Jennifer Turner (remote), Sheila McCreven (remote, departed 8:05 p.m.)

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES PRESENT

Caroline Chen, Alison Bowler (remote)

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT

Dr. Jennifer Byars, Theresa Lumas, Stephen Martoni, Karen Marren

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Belfonti called the meeting to order at 6:33 p.m.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Recited by those present

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. Regular Board of Education Meeting – October 19, 2020

MOTION BY George Howard, Second by Paul Davis, to approve minutes as submitted

VOTES IN FAVOR, 13 (unanimous)

MOTION CARRIED

**4. PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF THIRD QUARTER 2020 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
REVIEW OF AMITY PENSION FUND, SICK AND SEVERANCE ACCOUNT, AND OPEB**

Presented by Mike Goss, DiMeo Schneider & Associates, LLC

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5. **STUDENT REPORT**

a. **Monthly Report**

6. **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Carla Eichler summarized a letter received from a citizen.

7. **SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

a. **Personnel Report**

b. **Superintendent Report**

c. **COVID Status Update**

8. **PRESENTATION OF 2021-2022 SCHOOL CALENDAR**

9. **CORRESPONDENCE**

Carla Eichler summarized letters received from parents and citizens.

10. **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

Chairperson Belfonti publicly reminded all Board of Education members not to respond to correspondence individually. He explained that Dr. Byars responds individually; and if the Board members respond, they should do so as a whole Board.

a. **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

1. **ACES**

2. **AD HOC SCHOOL SAFETY**

3. **CABE**

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4. **CURRICULUM**
5. **DISTRICT HEALTH AND SAFETY**
6. **DISTRICT TECHNOLOGY**
 - a. **Monthly Report**
7. **FACILITIES**
 - a. **Monthly Report**
8. **FINANCE**
 - a. **DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ON CAPITAL PROJECTS**
 1. **Roof projects**

MOTION by Patricia Cardozo, Second by Christopher Browe, to approve expanding the designation of capital fund for 2012 roof section to include all of the building roofs in the District
VOTES IN FAVOR, 12 (Belfonti, Browe, Cardozo, Davis, DeMaio, Reed, Berke, Carlson, Eichler, Howard, Hubbard, Turner)
OPPOSED, 1 (McCreven)
MOTION CARRIED

2. **Orange Modular Demolition**

MOTION by Paul Davis, Second by Patrick Reed, to approve the demolition of the modular building at Amity Middle School in Orange
VOTES IN FAVOR, 12 (Belfonti, Browe, Cardozo, Davis, DeMaio, Reed, Berke, Carlson, Eichler, Howard, Hubbard, Turner)
OPPOSED, 1 (McCreven)
MOTION CARRIED

- b. **DISCUSSION OF MONTHLY FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**
 - c. **DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION APPROVED TRANSFERS UNDER \$3,000**

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d. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ON BUDGET TRANSFERS OF \$3,000 OR MORE

MOTION by Christopher Browe, Second by Patrick Reed, to approve the following budget transfer to cover the cost of virus protection for the new devices purchased:

ACCOUNT NUMBER	ACCOUNT NAME	FROM	TO
05-14-2350-5690	Other Supplies		\$17,500
05-15-5000-5850	Contingency	\$17,500	

VOTES IN FAVOR, 13 (unanimous)
 MOTION CARRIED

MOTION by Steven DeMaio, Second by Christopher Browe, to approve the following budget transfer to cover the increased transportation costs:

ACCOUNT NUMBER	ACCOUNT NAME	FROM	TO
05-14-2700-5515	Transportation Public Out		\$7,721
04-12-6117-5560	Tuition Public Out	\$7,721	

VOTES IN FAVOR, 13 (unanimous)
 MOTION CARRIED

MOTION by Patrick Reed, Second by Steven DeMaio, to approve the transfer of funds for demolishing the modular building at Amity Middle School Orange:

ACCOUNT NUMBER	ACCOUNT NAME	FROM	TO
02-14-2600-5715	Improvements to Buildings		\$8,000
01-14-2600-5715	Improvements to Buildings	\$8,000	

VOTES IN FAVOR, 12 (Belfonti, Browe, Cardozo, Davis, DeMaio, Reed, Berke, Carlson, Eichler, Howard, Hubbard, Turner)
 OPPOSED, 1 (McCreven)
 MOTION CARRIED

e. OTHER

1. Adult and Continuing Education

Theresa Lumas explained that general interest courses will not be offered during the winter session of 2021. Spring session is under review.

9. POLICY

a. FIRST READ

- 1. Policy 3532 Liability Insurance**
- 2. Policy 3532.3 Responsibility for Loss or Damage of Personal Property on School Premises**
- 3. Policy 3541.32 Special Transportation for School-Related Trips**
- 4. Policy 3541.44 Transportation Equipment - Privately Owned Vehicles**
- 5. Policy 5131.6 Alcohol, Drugs, and Tobacco**
- 6. Policy 6171 Special Education**

b. SECOND READ

- 1. Policy 5141.4 Reporting of Child Abuse, Neglect, and Sexual Assault**
- 2. Policy 5122 Assigning Students to a Grade Level**
- 3. Policy 3516 Safety and Secure School Facilities, Equipment, and Grounds**
- 4. Policy 3517 Security of Buildings and Grounds**
- 5. Policy 3524.2 Hazardous Materials in Schools**
- 6. Policy 3533 Employee Bonds**
- 7. Policy 3541 Transportation**

MOTION by Christopher Browe, Second by Patricia Cardozo, to approve all policies listed under SECOND READ (Policy 5141.4 Reporting of Child Abuse, Neglect, and Sexual Assault; Policy 5122 Assigning Students to a Grade Level; Policy 3516 Safety and Secure School Facilities, Equipment, and Grounds; Policy 3517 Security of Buildings and Grounds; Policy 3524.2 Hazardous Materials

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in Schools; Policy 3533 Employee Bonds; and Policy 3541 Transportation)
VOTES IN FAVOR, 12 (unanimous)
MOTION CARRIED

10. PERSONNEL

11. NEW BUSINESS

12. ITEMS FOR THE NEXT AGENDA – Due to Chairperson by November 23, 2020

13. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Paul Davis, Second by Christopher Browe, to adjourn meeting.
VOTES IN FAVOR, 12 (unanimous)
MOTION CARRIED

Meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Pamela Pero
Pamela Pero, Recording Secretary

Abigail Scott and Thomas Raich
34 N. Pease Rd.
Woodbridge, CT 06525

November 9, 2020

To the Amity Region 5 Board of Education,

We can only assume concern for the health and safety of Amity students was one of your motivations when you volunteered to become a Board of Ed member. We, too, am concerned about the health of the children as well as the community and of course our own household which abuts the football field. Right now that concern focuses on your plan to dump the equivalent of thousands of used tires and then cover it with a chemical blanket made of unknown substances a very short distance from our house and our well. You will be removing something natural that works as part of the biome and replacing it with something that is inherently unnatural and potentially toxic.

With regard to the use of artificial turf on the high school field, we ask that you take a critical look at what the vendor is actually promising instead of thinking you have enough information to consider the artificial turf risk-free. For-profit businesses are not known to operate in the public interest, though you are supposed to. If you're ignorant of the science and are not taking basic steps to be informed about this deeply complex subject, perhaps you shouldn't be barreling towards an undertaking we may all later regret. Let us parse out some of the questions that occur to us upon reading the FieldTurf guarantee. We would like answers to these questions from you.

In their guarantee, FieldTurf is promising their turf carpet filaments are free PFAS, PFOS or fluorine chemicals, but they avoid making any guarantees about the manufacturing process. PFAS chemicals may well have been used in the manufacturing process and could be on the surface of those filaments. They also do not talk about what chemicals might be in the backing material. This language is suspiciously restrictive. You should be questioning why that is and demanding a more comprehensive statement of safety. Some questions you should get answers to are:

- 1.) Can they guarantee no PFAS, PFOS or fluorine was used in the manufacturing process?
- 2.) Can they guarantee no PFAS, PFOS or fluorine was used in the backing or in the backing manufacturing process?

The SVP of FieldTurf's marketing department promises to the "best of my knowledge, information and belief" the product they propose for Amity are free from PFAS, PFOS and fluorine in accordance with current testing of synthetic turf carpet by using the EPA Method 537 Modified.

- 1.) Are you aware that this EPA Method only tests for 24 to 28 of the most common PFAS/PFOS chemicals? The current count of chemicals in this family is about 4,700. That is an awful lot of chemicals excluded from their guarantee, rendering it almost meaningless. Does that seem right to you?
- 2.) Are you aware that the EPA Method they reference as the benchmark test is actually performed on liquid solutions? Since turfgrass is not a liquid, shouldn't you question how this test was done? Did they rinse the filaments and then test the water? That is clearly an insufficient test to analyze the materials themselves. Without information about the testing, this is a disingenuous statement at best. Did you ask for a copy of the data or information on the testing?

- 3.) Are you aware that as the older PFAS chemicals are banned, new ones are being introduced that have even less of a public safety record and could be potentially even more toxic? This should give you pause.
- 4.) Do you see how this wording “to the best of my knowledge” allows the company to hide behind the classic excuse, “he didn’t know” and keep themselves conveniently at one remove from the facts?

FieldTurf says they have worked with its supplier to verify their products don’t contain PFAS, PFOS or fluorine chemicals. This tells me that they have not done any independent testing. They are taking their supplier’s word for it and they expect you, in turn, to take their word for it. If neither FieldTurf nor their supplier has anything to hide, then they should welcome the opportunity to prove the safety of their product by letting it be tested in an independent lab. We would like the chemicals in the proposed field identified and samples tested. It is literally impossible for the Amity neighbors to test their wells for these chemicals as a baseline measurement unless we know what to test for. There simply are too many PFAS chemicals. We find this an alarming fact all by itself.

Without a baseline test of our wells before installation, it will be difficult to establish that any later contamination came from the field. If PFAS chemicals are later found in our well, this lack of transparency around the question of what chemicals are being used on the field will conveniently allow you to use the same “we didn’t know” defense that FieldTurf is counting on. This is also true if our student athletes start developing cancers and other PFAS-related illnesses in increased numbers. By not knowing what you’re exposing us to, you may think you have plausible deniability, just like FieldTurf. However, when you knowingly make the choice to avoid transparency and fail to ask hard, intelligent questions about the chemicals you are introducing into our environment, you are accepting culpability for those potential later ills. How can you in good consciousness conclude it is an acceptable risk to expose the children and the community to unknown chemicals?

Since you have opted to go artificial, you and FieldTurf need to be completely transparent about what you’re planning to dump in our backyards. If the FieldTurf products are as safe as they say, independent testing will lay the matter to rest. Science is truth after all, and presumably nothing to be afraid of. If the products are actually safe, we can all rest easier. Your responsibilities to the community mean you do not have the option to acquiesce to special interests and circumstance. You have an obligation to the community to install a safe product and insure the facts can be backed up by hard science. We have an independent university lab, long experienced in testing artificial turf, willing to do the testing on the turf samples. We request you provide a complete list of the chemicals involved in the entire manufacturing process of the artificial turf, a sample of the artificial turf for testing before installation and a sample of the artificial turf from the field as it is being installed to insure the two samples are the same.

Regards,

Catherine Abigail Scott
Thomas R. Raich