

MINUTES

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:** Mr. William Blake, Mr. Christopher Browe, Ms. Patricia Cardozo, Ms. Sue Cohen, Mr. Steven DeMaio, Ms. Rita Gedansky, Mr. James Horwitz, Mr. Thomas Hurley, Ms. Sheila McCreven, Ms. Tracy Lane Russo and Mr. James Stirling.

**BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:** Ms. Diane Crocco and Mr. John Grasso, Jr.

**Staff members present:** Mr. Charles Dumais, Mr. Jack Levine, Ms. Terry Lumas, Dr. Marie McPadden, Dr. Charles Britton, Dr. Richard Dellinger, Ms. Mary Raiola, Mr. Jim Saisa, Mr. Sean DeRosa, Ms. Kathleen Fuller-Cutler and audio-visual technical staff,

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

A regular meeting of the Amity Regional Board of Education (BOE) was held on Monday, December 08, 2014 at 6:40 pm in the cafeteria at Amity Regional High School.

1. **Call to Order:** Chairman William Blake called the meeting to order at 5:35 pm.
2. **Pledge of Allegiance** was recited by those present.
3. **Approval of minutes.**
  - A. Regular BOE meeting, December 08, 2014

***A motion was made by Ms Cohen, seconded by Ms. Gedansky,, to accept the minutes as submitted***

Correction to Item 6.1 - The \$1,000 gift is only to Amity Middle School, Bethany rather than Amity Middle School (Minutes stated A grant of \$1,000.00 from the Jamie Hulley Arts Foundation to Amity Middle School for the drama and arts.)

Spelling correction needed for staff members present - Ms. Mary **Raiola**, Ms. **Fielosh**

***Chairman Blake called the motion that the minutes be approved with corrections.***

***Vote unanimous with one abstention (Ms. Cardozo)***

***Motion carried***

{NOTE: Corrections were made and the minutes for December 08, 2014 were resubmitted}

4. **Public comment** - none
5. **Student Report** – Mr. Grotheer reported on recent activities at Amity High School including academic, art, music, social, and athletic events. Several board members had specific questions that were answered by Mr. Grotheer.
6. **Correspondence** – Mr. Dumais presented some comments that were posted on the website to the Policy Committee for their consideration and as feedback.
7. **Presentation and discussion of Superintendent’s proposed 2015-2016 budget** – Mr. Dumais gave his presentation of the proposed budget (enclosed). The budget process is several weeks ahead of schedule and the timeline is as follows:
 

February 02, 2015	Finance Committee meeting, (in Orange)
February 09, 2015	Board of Education meeting, (Orange)
March 09, 2015	Finance Committee and Board of Education meetings
April 06, 2015	Public budget hearing
May 05, 2015	Annual public budget meeting
May 06, 2015	Referendum

Several Board members asked questions and discussed the average daily membership and funds carried over and/or refunded to the towns. Ms. Cohen reminded everyone of the need to care for the buildings and not skimp on what is really needed. Mr. Stirling asked what it would cost to make the budget a 0% increase. Mr. Dumais stated the dollar amount is \$1,000,000.00; specific cuts are more complex and facilities, technology and staffing are the only places that cuts can be made to get \$1,000,000.00. Mr. Hurley spoke about a contingency fund and asked what percentage other regions have. Mr. Blake summed up the Board's responsibility - to maintain the level of excellence and do it at a reasonable cost. Mr. Demaio asked if it is possible to look at hiring new teachers rather than sending special education students out. He also asked about putting insurance out to bid rather than staying with Anthem. Mr. Levine answered that there were hard negotiations with Anthem that resulted in a 0% increase. Mr. Browe asked about Amity's average enrollment increase. Mr. Dumais answered and talked about the DRG. Mr. Hurley commented about additional cost of certain mandates. Mr. Blake summed up by saying that the budget discussion has been started and will follow the timeline as outlined.

Mr. Hurley asked if the Board could move to Personnel, #9A 7a and b at this point because a board member needs to leave. Mr. Blake said that the Board would do so.

## **9. Chairman's report**

### **A. Committee Reports**

#### **7. Personnel**

- a. Discussion of tentative agreement with teachers' bargaining unit. The Board will move to Executive Session, inviting Mr. Dumais to stay.

**The Board moved into Executive Session at 8:15 pm. The Board returned from Executive Session at 8:37 pm**

- b. Possible vote on tentative agreement with teachers' bargaining unit.

**Motion by Mr. Hurley, second by Ms. Cardozo to approve the tentative agreement with the Amity Education Association.**

Ms. Russo thanked Mr. Dumais for his leadership and teachers for their willingness to negotiate. Mr. Blake stated that he is very happy to have this new 3-year agreement in place.

***Vote unanimous***

***Motion carried***

**Motion by Mr. Hurley, second by Mr. Browe to authorize Mr. Blake to sign the above contract.**

***Vote unanimous***

***Motion carried***

Mr. Blake requested that the Board move back to the regular agenda, #8 Superintendent's report. (note that Ms. Lane-Russo was not present for the remainder of the Board meeting.)

## **8. Superintendent's report**

**A. Personnel Report** – (enclosed) Mr. Dumais reported on personnel changes.

**B. Other** – Mr. Dumais gave an update on various topics as on his enclosed report.

**9. Chairman's Report****A. Committee Reports**

1. **ACES** – Ms. Cohen reported on the ACES regional calendar for 2016-2017 which ACES desires the members to approve; however, the Amity Board has not seen the calendar. Mr. Dumais explained some of the parameters of the calendar choices. The 2015-2016 draft calendar for Amity will be ready for the February 2015 meeting. Mr. Blake feels that 2016-2017 is too far to plan and the Board will support Ms. Cohen in voting as she sees fit at the ACES meeting.
2. **CABE** – Mr. Stirling reported that the legislative breakfast was “iced out”.
3. **Curriculum** – Mr. Browe reported on the Curriculum Committee meeting; math texts, graphic novel and economics books were approved by the Committee. All the books have robust online tools and come with a 6-year subscription to the online service.
4. **Facilities** – Ms. Cardozo reported that the Facilities Committee met last month at the Bethany Middle School to go over the 5-year plan with Mr. Saisa. The Committee had the opportunity to see the current medial center and the proposed renovations drawn up by a parent volunteer who is an architect.
  - a. **Facilities Department – Monthly report (December, enclosed)**
  - b. **Presentation of CABE Award for Facilities Annual Report** - Mr. Dumais presented the award for Mr. Saisa's report.
5. **Finance** – Budget presentation took place, which was only thing on the agenda.
6. **Policy** –

***Motion by Mr. Hurley, second by Mr. Browe to amend the agenda and add items 6e and 6ff.***

***Vote unanimous***

***Motion passed***

- a. Second reading and possible vote – Policy 6146.1 GPA reporting

***Motion by Mr. Hurley, second by Mr. DeMaio to approve policy 6146.1***

There was a lengthy discussion regarding whether or not this policy should be approved. Mr. Browe was concerned that the public did not have enough notification; the Board heard this evening from Mr. Grotheer that the students have heard about this and are wondering what is happening. Mr. Browe asked whether or not this change will be retroactive, before this year. There was a question as to whether this affects students who have already completed their college application. Dr. Britton answered this question and explained why Amity has a 20-point QPA system versus GPA (17.5 out of possible 20 versus 3.4 out of a possible 4). Mr. Browe questioned the normalization of the GPA and stated that the students are losing points. He does not like that this change is software-driven (PowerSchool cannot calculate on a 20-point scale). Mr. DeMaio questioned whether making this change in the summer would be better. Mr. Dumais explained that making the change in summer might be worse for those applying to college. Dr. Britton said that this would be complicated and difficult. The problem was identified last summer after the switch to PowerSchool. Mr. Hurley stated that it is highly unlikely that any student is going to be adversely affected by this change. Ms. McCreven stated that the Board needs to be sure that they have a full understanding of the policy before they approve it. Mr. Hurley stated that the Policy Committee has had two presentations regarding this policy and he is in favor of passing the policy. Ms. Cardozo stated that she would like a better understanding of what is being voted on and is not in favor of passing this now. Mr. Stirling stated that he will not vote in favor. Mr. Browe stated that he spoke with 4 senior students, none of whom knew anything about this and this concerns him.

Motion by Mr. Browe, second by Ms. Cardozo, to table the motion.

***Vote 7 in favor, 2 against (Mr. Hurley and Ms. Cohen)***

***Motion passed***

***Motion to approve policy 6146.1 tabled.***

- b. Second reading and possible vote - 5131.911 - bullying and teen dating violence (enclosed)

***Motion by Mr. Hurley, second by Ms. Cohen to approve policy 5131.911, bullying and teen dating violence.***

***Vote unanimous***

***Motion carried***

- c. First reading – policy 0521, discrimination (enclosed)

Mr. Hurley read aloud the policy section that needed to be changed to comply with the law.

- d. First reading – policy 3541 transportation policy (enclosed)

Mr. Dumais explained that this policy needs to be updated regarding description of students so that they were consistent (grades versus age) and eligibility for out-of-town transportation. State statute requires that transportation be provided to vocational-agricultural and technical schools; the legal references were also updated.

- e. First reading - 3453.1, unexpended class funds

A correction is needed in of the number of the policy – there was a transposition in the number, 3435.1.

- f. First reading - 3524.1, hazardous materials

There are updated restrictions for hazardous materials in different age groups.

Mr. Hurley stated that the policies are already on the website and public comment is invited either on the website or at the meetings. He requested that if Board members forward any comments they have to him so they can be discussed at the next policy meeting.

**10. Items for next agenda** – Please forward any items for the next agenda to Mr. Dumais or Mr. Blake.

**11. Adjournment**

***Motion was made by Mr. Browe, second by Ms. McCreven to adjourn at 9:50 p.m.***

***Vote unanimous***

***Motion carried***

Respectfully submitted,

Ruth E. Natzel, Recording Clerk

Thomas Hurley, Secretary