

AMITY REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 5

*Bethany Orange Woodbridge
25 Newton Road, Woodbridge, Connecticut 06525*

*Dr. Jennifer P. Byars
Superintendent of Schools*

AMITY REGIONAL BOARD OF EDUCATION REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

**Monday, March 11 2024, 6:30 pm
25 Newton Road, Woodbridge, CT**

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Cathy Bradley, Paul Davis, Carla Eichler, Sean Hartshorn, Dr. Karunakaran, Christina Levere-D’Addio, Dana Lombardi, Michael McDonough, Dr. Carol Oladele (attending via phone), Patrick Reed, Donna Schlank and Donna Schuster (arrived at 6:35)

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT

Andrea Hubbard

STUDENT BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Sam Bae and Sophia Messina

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT

Dr. Jennifer Byars, Theresa Lumas, Frank Purcaro

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Davis called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

MOTION BY Sean Hartshorn, SECOND BY Michael McDonough to add agenda item #13 Personnel Issue Executive Session and move agenda item 13 and 14 to items 14 and 15 respectively.

VOTES IN FAVOR, 11 (Bradley, Davis, Eichler, Hartshorn, Dr. Karunakaran, Levere-D’Addio, Lombardi, McDonough, Reed, Schlank, Schuster)

ABSTAIN, 1 (Dr. Oladele)

MOTION CARRIES

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a. Regular Board of Education Meeting – February 12, 2024

MOTION by Michael McDonough, SECOND by Dr. Karunakaran to approve February 12, 2024, minutes as submitted

VOTES IN FAVOR, 12 (UNANIMOUS)

MOTION CARRIES

b. Special Board of Education Meeting- February 26, 2024

MOTION by Carla Eichler, SECOND by Michael McDonough to approve February 26, 2024, minutes as submitted

VOTES IN FAVOR, 12 (UNANIMOUS)

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MOTION CARRIES

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c. Special Board of Education Meeting- March 04, 2024

MOTION by Sean Hartshorn, SECOND by Michael McDonough to approve March 04, 2024, minutes with suggested edits.

VOTES IN FAVOR, 10 (Bradley, Davis, Hartshorn, Levere-D’Addio, Lombardi, McDonough, Dr. Oladele, Reed, Schlank, Schuster)

ABSTAIN, 2 (Eichler, Dr. Karunakaran)

MOTION CARRIES

4. STUDENT REPORT

a. Monthly Report

Presented by Student Representatives Sam Bae and Sophia Messina

5. 3 A’s (Academics, Arts, Athletics) AND POG (Portrait of the Graduate) FOCUS PRESENTATION

a. ARHS Spartan Academy Apiary, Mr. Todd Rainey and Mr. Sean Malloy

[The Spartan Academy Apiary](#)

6. SUPERINTENDENT’S UPDATE ON THE PROPOSED 2024-2025 BUDGET

Presented by Amity Region 5 Superintendent of Schools Dr. Jennifer Byars

[Superintendents Budget BOE Presentation March 2024.pdf](#)

7. PUBLIC COMMENT

a. Public Comment will be limited to the topics of 1) the 2024-2025 Budget and 2) levels in middle school classes.

Topic: Levels in middle school classes.

Woodbridge Parent:

Speaker questions the transparency of FOIA requests, impact versus intention, class size in relation to the impact of un-leveling, the data to justify un-leveling.

Orange parent:

Speaker questions Amity’s decision to pursue un-leveling, Amity’s COVID 19 policies, books in the LMC, guest speakers, annual budgets, Amity school rankings. The speaker suggests the possibility that Amity will lose its best and brightest to private school.

Woodbridge Parent:

Speaker addressed the budget, urged the community to investigate the DEI position, suggested that CRT is reverse discrimination. He stated that students do not know what DEI is and urges Amity to allow students to “figure it out on their own”.

Parent (town not mentioned):

Speaker states that he is confused about un-leveling. Speaker suggests that students are afraid to attend BOE

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meetings. Speaker reiterates that he is confused about un-leveling. Speaker suggests the Board should do a better job of explaining the purpose of un-leveling to eliminate confusion amongst the parents and students.

Bethany Resident:

Speaker states that we need to trust professional educators to do what is best for public education. Speaker urges the public to trust those they have been hired to serve public education.

Bethany Parent

Speaker states that he is a teacher in New Haven and shares a personal experience that is unique to his teaching experience. Speaker stresses the difficulty of differentiating in the classroom effectively and his concerns over un-leveling.

Woodbridge Parent:

Member of the Woodbridge Ad Hoc Committee on DEI. Comment was stopped due to being off topic.

Woodbridge Parent

Speaker addresses un-leveling, voices concern if we un-level the classes that students with IEPs will be left out and they will feel worse about themselves.

Student (town not mentioned):

Student voiced concern over un-leveling, the possible social, emotional and academic impact un-leveling would have on students.

Parent (town not mentioned)

Speaker identifies himself as a High School educator, dept chair with young children at home. Speaker urges the community to trust the educators. Speaker suggests that the decision to un-level was likely not malicious nor made on the fly and urges the community to support the decisions made by the board of education.

Topic: Budget

Orange Resident

Speaker addressed the budget and shared budget data and said that he wanted to be sure the community was familiar with the data for consideration.

Orange Parent:

Speaker stressed he enjoyed and appreciated the public forums as opposed to public comment. Speaker addressed the budget and suggested that the conversation should be framed around the narrative "how would this help make Amity better?".

8. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ON THE BOARD OF EDUCATION 2024-2025 BUDGET

Motion 1:

MOTION BY Patrick Reed, SECOND BY Dr. Karunakaran to approve the Superintendent's Proposed Budget for fiscal year 2024- 25, in the gross amount of \$56,544,652 and the net amount of \$55,360,025, a 3.65% increase over the 2023-2024 budget.

VOTES IN FAVOR, 5 (Davis, Eichler, Dr. Karunakaran, Reed, Schlank)

VOTES AGAINST, 7 (Bradley, Levere-D'Addio, Hartshorn, Lombardi, McDonough, Dr. Oladele, Schuster)

MOTION FAILS

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MOTION BY Sean Hartshorn, SECOND BY Cathy Bradley to amend the Superintendent's Proposed Budget for fiscal year 2024- 25, in the gross amount of \$56,115,667 and the net amount of \$54,931,040, a 2.86% increase over the 2023-2024 budget.

VOTES IN FAVOR, 4 (Bradley, Hartshorn, Lombardi, McDonough)

ABSTAIN, 1 (Levere-D'Addio)

VOTES AGAINST, 7 (Davis, Eichler, Dr. Karunakaran, Dr. Oladele, Reed, Schlank, Schuster)

MOTION FAILS

MOTION BY Patrick Reed, SECOND BY Carla Eichler to amend the Superintendent's Proposed Budget for fiscal year 2024- 25, in the gross amount of \$56,456,652 and the net amount of \$55,272,025, a 3.49% increase over the 2023-2024 budget.

VOTES IN FAVOR, 8 (Davis, Eichler, Dr. Karunakaran, Levere-D'Addio, Dr. Oladele, Reed, Schlank, Schuster)

VOTES AGAINST, 4 (Bradley, Hartshorn, Lombardi, McDonough)

MOTION CARRIES

MOTION BY Patrick Reed, SECOND BY Sean Hartshorn to approve the Explanatory text that reads:

[Explanatory Text:](#)

Move to authorize Amity Regional School District No. 5 to prepare an Explanatory Text for the Budget Referendum Question: BE IT RESOLVED, that the Secretary of the Board of Education of Amity Regional School District No. 5 is authorized to prepare, print, and distribute a concise explanatory text of the budget referendum question which, by vote of the member towns, which text shall not advocate either the approval or disapproval of the question and shall otherwise be prepared in accordance with Connecticut General Statutes Section 9-369b.

VOTES IN FAVOR, 12 (UNANIMOUS)

MOTION CARRIES

Important Budget Dates:

Monday, April 8, 2024 -Public Hearing

Monday, May 6, 2024 -Annual Meeting

Tuesday, May 7, 2024- Referendum

9. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

a. Personnel Report

b. Superintendent Report

10. CORRESPONDENCE

Presented by Amity Board of Education Secretary Mrs. Cathy Bradley

11. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

a. Committee Reports

1. ACES

2. CABE

3. Communications

4. Curriculum

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- 5. District Health and Safety
- 6. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Executive Committee
- 7. District Technology
 - a. Monthly Report
- 8. Facilities
 - a. Monthly Report
- 9. Finance
 - a. Discussion of Fourth Quarter 2023 Review of Amity Pension, Sick and Severance and OPEB accounts including redistribution of pension allocation
 - b. Special Education Update
 - c. Discussion of Monthly Financial Statements
 - d. Director of Finance and Administration Approved Transfers Under \$3,000
 - e. Discussion and Possible Action on Transfers over \$3,000

MOTION BY Patrick Reed, SECOND BY Michael McDonough to approve the budget transfer for the cost of occupational and physical therapies services, homebound instruction and other support services.

ACCOUNT NUMBER	ACCOUNT NAME	FROM	TO
04-12-6111-5560	Tuition – Vo-Ag/Tech	\$56,602	
04-13-2130-5330	Prof Technical Services – OT/PT		\$30,602
04-15-1204-5111	Salaries - Certified	\$5,000	
	Prof Technical Services –		
04-13-2130-5330	Homebound		\$5,000
04-13-2190-5330	Prof Tech Services-PPS		\$26,000

VOTES IN FAVOR, 12 (UNANIMOUS)

MOTION CARRIES

- f. Other
- 10. Policy
 - a. Second Read
 - 1. Policy 5141.6 - Crisis Prevention/Response
 - 2. Policy 5142.1 - Relations with Non-Custodial Parents
 - 3. Policy 5142.2 - Safety: Student Dismissal Precautions

MOTION BY Cathy Bradley, SECOND BY Michael McDonough to postpone Policy 5141.6- Crisis Prevention/Response until the April meeting and to approve Policy 5142.1 - Relations with Non-Custodial Parents and Policy 5142.2 Safety: Student Dismissal Precautions as submitted.

VOTES IN FAVOR, 12 (UNANIMOUS)

MOTION CARRIES

- 11. Personnel

12. NEW BUSINESS

13. Personnel Issue Executive Session

MOTION BY Michael McDonough, SECOND BY SEAN HARTSHORN to enter executive session.

VOTES IN FAVOR, 11 (UNANIMOUS)

MOTION CARRIES

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The Board enters Executive Session at 9:47 p.m.

The Board exits Executive Session at 9:59 p.m.

14. ITEMS FOR THE NEXT AGENDA – Due to Chairperson by March 29, 2024

15. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned, without objection, at 9:59 p.m by Chairperson Davis.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Zaleski

Lisa Zaleski

BOE Recording Secretary