

MINUTES

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Mr. William Blake, Mr. Christopher Browe, Ms. Sue Cohen, Ms. Diane Crocco, Mr. Steven DeMaio, Ms. Rita Gedansky, Mr. John Grasso, Jr., Mr. Thomas Hurley, Ms. Sheila McCreven, and Mr. James Stirling.

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: Ms. Patricia Cardozo, Mr. James Horwitz and Ms. Tracy Lane Russo

Staff members present: Mr. Charles Dumais, Mr. Jack Levine, Dr. Marie McPadden, Ms. Terry Lumas, Dr. Richard Dellinger, Ms. Sara Frank, Ms. Raiola, Ms. Edwards and Ms. Fielosh.

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 6:30 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. **Recognition of Ms. Sara Frank , recipient of Connecticut Association of Schools (CAS) Recognition of Excellence**
Mr. Dumais read the nomination of Sara Frank for the CAS award who teaches art at Amity Middle School Bethany. Dr. Dellinger presented Ms. Frank with the plaque commemorating her award.
4. **Recognition of and presentation by Summer Sidekicks program** – Ms. Raiola introduced Ms. Lynn Edwards and Ms. Vicki Fielosh who developed the Summer Sidekicks program to help students. A short video was presented about the program. The students listed below have all volunteered for 2 or more years in the Sidekicks program for a total of 1,200 hours. Nick Huntsingo, Abby Chamberlain, Catilin Perrone, Julia Wilde, Matthew Schmidt, Lauren, Calin and Emily Shea.

Chairman Blake commended the students for their achievements and thanked the family and friends in attendance for coming. Mr. Blake stated the Board would take a short break at 6:55 pm. The Board reconvened at 7:05 pm

5. **Approval of minutes.**
A. Regular BOE meeting, November 10, 2014

A motion was made by Mr. Hurley, seconded by Ms. Crocco, to accept the minutes as submitted.

Corrections needed to be made to the minutes as follows:

Sheila McCreven's name needs to be added to the attendance list.

Time of call to order for the meeting should be 6:34 p.m., not 5:34 p.m.

Executive session should note that Mr. Dumais was invited to stay for the session.

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

Vote unanimous with one abstention (Mr. DeMaio)

Motion carried

{NOTE: Corrections were made and the minutes for November 10, 2014 were resubmitted}

6. **Possible action on acceptance of donations.** Mr. Dumais recommended that the Board accept two donations:
 1. A grant of \$1,000.00 from the Jamie Hulley Arts Foundation to Amity Middle School, Bethany for the drama and arts.
 2. A gift of \$13,310.00 to the Amity Board of Education from Mr. and Mrs. Flamenhaft for the purchase of new sound equipment.

Mr. Levine and Mr. Dumais recommended that the Board accept both of these gifts and in the case of the second gift, waiving the bidding requirement. The Finance Committee recommends accepting this gift and waiving the bidding requirement.

Motion made by Mr. Hurley, second by Ms. Cohen to accept the gift of \$1,000 from the Jamie Hulley Arts Foundation and the gift of \$13,310.00 from Alan and Carol Flaumenhaft with deep gratitude and authorize the purchase of new sound equipment from Full Compass Systems. Further, the Amity Board of Education waives the bidding requirement for the purchase of the sound equipment.

A question regarding the reason for waiving the bidding requirement was asked and satisfactorily answered.

Vote unanimous

Motion carried

Mr. Blake expressed thanks from the Board to the Flaumenhafts and Jamie Hulley Arts Foundation.

7. Public comment

Ms. Cohen spoke about the production she attended "New York" and complimented Mr. Kennedy and the whole production. Amity can be proud of these students.

Mr. Browe spoke about the concert at Amity Middle School in Bethany. Concert brought to light the fact that there is only one string bass at the high school and one has just been purchased. More will be needed because there are more string players coming up. Support needed for orchestra and band programs.

- 8. Student Report** – Student report was given by George Grotheer. Fall play "New York" concluded this morning. Mr. Grotheer was in the cast and it has been judged an enormous success. The cast took a field trip to NYC, met the playwright and went to the 9-11 Memorial and the 9-11 Museum. Winter Concert will be held on December 10th. A mock car crash hosted on November 18th followed by a guest speaker sponsored by Students Against Destructive Decisions Club. Amity High School participated in the Real World Challenge. The annual Spirit week was held in November.

Chairman Blake requested that the Board to move to item #11, #5A., auditors report.

Motion by Mr. Hurley, second by Ms. Crocco to move to item #11, #5A.

Vote unanimous

Motion carried

11. 5. Finance

- a. Discussion and Possible Action on Audited Financial Statements

1. Review of Audited Financial Statements by Auditors

Ms. Hawkins, Ms. Backhaus and Ms. Thomas presented the report to the Board. The audit was clean, with no material deficiencies or weaknesses.

Mr. Blake directed that the Board return to the regular agenda, #9.

9. Correspondence - None

10. Superintendent's report

- A. Personnel Report** – (attached) new hire and 2 retirees.

B. Other – United Illuminating – report on 2 separate issues, advancing the fuel cell project as well as MicroGrid. A walk-through took place with three developers this week who will be submitting bids to provide the fuel cell. Updates will be forthcoming as we go into the budget season.

Monthly facilities update – (report attached) There was a recent water backup problem at the high school but damage was kept to a minimum with excellent management by Mr. Saisa and the facilities team.

Mr. Dumais requested a time to meet with the Board to discuss his own performance and he will be sending a form out to Board members to use in their evaluation of him. The form will contain goals and professional standards. He further suggestion that the Board consider a self-evaluation using CABE's tool for that at that time.

Budget update – The goal of the budget team is to be fiscally responsible and supportive of programs. Mr. Dumais spoke about the current process and how it differs from past years. A team process has been implemented that has shown good results in terms of teamwork and cost savings.

Assessment of students versus perception of students. Steps are being taken to develop a strategy for addressing the actual assessment of students rather than the perception.

Graduation rates recently released by the State of Connecticut. (see attached)

Update on goals:

Leadership - Seniors running their own planning and placement team (PPT) meetings. Assistant Director of Finance position provides additional leadership. Teachers doing in-services for their peers.

Personalization – information is being gathered and used to further personalize curriculum and grading. Instruction and curriculum – Recognition of teacher Sara Frank. English-language learners (ELL) program is growing. Universal assessments are being studied. Common Core training for adjunct staff is being studied.

Security – NIMS (National Incident Management System) training will take place. Custodians have been equipped with radios. Alert Solutions was successfully tested and then used.

Anti-Defamation League was at the high school for some assemblies and workshops for students.

Jack Levine and Jim Saisa arranged for a company called RoVic (Hillyard-RoVic) to evaluate custodial operations, etc.

11. Chairman's Report

A. Committee Reports

1. **ACES** – none. Summer pilot program will take place, more information will be forthcoming.
2. **CABE** – Ms. McCreven reported on the recent conference. There was much discussion regarding a parent's right to opt students out of testing and the big changes in the Connecticut State Department of Education. Many of the presentation documents are available online. Jack Levine made an excellent presentation at the conference.
3. **Curriculum** – Did not meet. The Committee is awaiting the receipt of text books.
4. **Facilities** – Did not meet. Upcoming meeting on December 16, 2014. The agenda will include design issues at the two middle schools and looking at the 5-year capital plan and how to fit it into the budget process.

The 5-year technology plan is being developed and will come before a Board subcommittee.

5. Finance

2. Discussion and Possible Action to Accept Annual Financial Statements

Motion by Mr. Stirling, second by Ms. Crocco to accept the audit statements as presented.

Vote unanimous

Motion carried

3. Discussion and Possible Action to Return Funds to Member Towns

Motion made by Mr. Stirling, second by Ms. Gedansky to accept the Annual Financial Statements for the period ending June 30, 2014, and authorize the Superintendent of Schools to return to the Member Towns a balance of \$62,660, as follows:

Town of Bethany	\$12,559
Town of Orange	\$31,290
Town of Woodbridge	<u>\$18,811</u>
Total	\$62,660

Discussion followed regarding funds being returned to the towns and where they came from.

Vote unanimous

Motion carried

- b. Discussion and Possible Action on Composite Investment Policy Statements for pension, Sick & Severance and OPEB Trust - This was acted on by the Finance Committee. Information is included in the packet. Mr. Levine explained that this was presented in November after a presentation by Mr. Goss.

Mr. Hurley recused himself from this discussion and vote.

Motion made by Ms. Crocco, second by Ms. Gedansky to adopt the three composite investment strategies as in the accompanying finance packet.

Vote unanimous

Motion carried

- c. Presentation and Discussion of Superintendent's Update of 2015-2016 Budget
This was covered by Mr. Dumais under 10.B

- d. Discussion and Possible Action on Contracts of \$35,000 or More - Mr. Levine recommended that the Amity Finance Committee and Board of Education approve a budget transfer to pay special education expenditures.

Motion by Ms. McCreven, second by Ms. Crocco to make a budget transfer of \$45,000 to pay special education expenses from account number 04-12-6130-5560 Tuition Expense to account number 04-12-6110-5560 Tuition Expense.

Mr. Levine spoke about the project of getting all printers on the same program; the cost is higher but the savings are greater. The new two-year contract requires a monthly base charge of \$2,980.02. The total annual base amount is \$35,760.24, or \$71,520.48 over the 24-month period. This includes supplies and service for an additional 59 printers from the original contract. The total number of devices will be 136. Mr. Levine recommends that the contract be awarded to Xerox.

Motion by Ms McCraven, second by Ms. Crocco to authorize the Superintendent of Schools to sign the Xerox contract for toner, maintenance kits and fusers, as well as service, for the District's printers, for the monthly charge of \$2,980.02 for the period of January 1, 2015 through December 31, 2016, inclusive. The District will pay \$0.019 per black and white print and \$0.160 per color print over and above the base volume. The Board's bidding requirement is waived.

Mr. Hurley questions the negotiation coming up for the copiers and questions bidding this as a package with the printers.

Vote unanimous

Motion carried

- e. Discussion of Monthly Financial Statements – no questions
- f. Director of Finance and Administration Approved Transfers Under \$3,000 – none.
- g. Discussion and Possible Action on Budget Transfers of \$3,000 or More – This was already covered, item #11, #3d.

6. Policy – Mr. Hurley presented two policies for a first reading. (enclosure). Mr. Hurley Stated that the committee is working toward a goal of presenting two policies at a time to the Board for their consideration.

- a. First Reading – Policy 5131.911 - bullying and teen dating violence

Discussion followed regarding what would be included or referenced in the student handbook and coordination of information dissemination electronically using InfoSnap. The handbook will contain a summary rather than the entire policy. Mr. Dumais has asked the principals of the two middle schools and the high school to coordinate student policies for the whole of grades 7 through 12 so there will be only one handbook. Any changes made to the handbook during the school year would be disseminated and need to be accepted by the student and/or parents.

- b. First Reading – Policy 6146.1 - change in method of calculation of GPA.

Discussion and questions followed regarding the change and whether or not it is necessary or beneficial for the students at Amity. The use of a 4-point scale is beneficial for students and there was very uneven weighting of the grades previously and this now incorporates all credit-bearing courses. This new calculation also meshes with the new software in use. Discussion followed regarding what current students should be putting on their college applications now, particularly the “common application”, a 4-point scale or 20-point scale. There will not be a negative impact for any student with this change. There was discussion of definitions of Advanced Placement (AP), level 1, level 2 and level 3 courses and the point decrement so that students are not punished or rewarded for taking more difficult or easier classes. Next Policy Committee meeting is on December 18, 2014.

Mr. Hurley requested that a public comment session added to the Policy Committee meeting agenda and the policies put on the website so that comments can be made and questions asked by parents and the public. Mr. Dumais noted that an email from the principal indicated that this policy change for GPA would be coming before the Board.

7. Personnel – negotiations continue with the teaching staff.

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

Mr. DeMaio requested a copy of the second part of the study. Mr. Dumais stated he will have a summary of that.

17. Adjournment

Motion was made by Mr. Hurley, second by Ms. Gedansky to adjourn at 8:00 p.m.

Vote unanimous

Motion carried

Respectfully submitted,

Ruth E. Natzel, Recording Clerk

Thomas Hurley, Secretary