

MINUTES

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

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: James Horwitz, and Tracey Lane Russo.

Staff members present: Charles Dumais, Jack Levine, Dr. Dellinger, Dr. Britton, Dr. Marie McPaddon, Elena Serapiglia, Claudia Mirci, technical/video recording staff, other staff.

Also present: Ruth Natzel, R. J. Kaoud, and other members of the public.

A regular meeting of the Amity Regional Board of Education (BOE) was held on Monday, October 20, 2014 at 6:30 pm in the Media Center at Amity Middle School, Bethany Campus.

1. **Call to Order:** Chairman William Blake called the meeting to order at 6:39 pm.
2. **Pledge of Allegiance** was recited by those present.

Mr. Hurley made a motion to add an item to the agenda, which is the swearing in of Sheila McCreven, 2nd by Mr. Stirling.

Vote unanimous

Motion carried

Mr. Hurley made the motion to move item #10 on the agenda, information on the proposed Peru trip, to after the student report, second by Ms. Cardozo

Vote unanimous

Motion carried

Ms. Sheila McCreven was sworn in as a member of the Amity Board of Education by Chairman William Blake.

3. **Approval of minutes.**
 - A. Regular BOE meeting, September 08, 2014 -

Motion to approve the BOE minutes by Ms. Gedansky, second by Mr. Hurley.

Vote unanimous

Motion carried

- B. BOE Retreat, October 07, 2014.

Motion by Ms. Cohen to approve the minutes, second by Ms. Crocco.

Vote unanimous

Motion carried

4. **Public comment** – none

5. **Student Report** – R. J. Kaoud (filling in for George Grotheer) presented his Student Report. The student body is very proud of the recognition of Amity High School as a Blue Ribbon School. Juniors recently took the PSAT and sophomores took the Plan test; results will be available in 6 to 8 weeks. Music in Motion is in production with a theme of City Life. The Café Coffeehouse was a success. Sports – girls swimming and diving is 11-0 so far this season. Tailgating took place before the football game two weeks ago which was put on by the LINK crew.

Girl's soccer doing well. The Amity Math Team finished 3rd behind Hamden Hall and Choate in the Greater New Haven Math League. Science – Four students 1st overall out of 50 teams at Yale.

- 10. Information on proposed Peru trip** - Ms. Serapiglia (head of world languages at Amity High School) and Ms. Mirci presented information on a proposed trip to Peru, open to all students with preference given to Spanish language students. Mrs. Mirci is a Spanish teacher at Amity High and is from Peru. This trip emphasizes one of the missions of Amity students as lifelong learners. This would bring cultural awareness, help them to become effective world citizens and develop relationships with students in Lima. They would be able to use Spanish in a real-life setting. The Omega News Club is a nonprofit that works in Peru with high school students headed up by Ms Mirci's father. The student requirements are that they be an active member of Language Lovers Club, have good attendance and good citizenship. They also need two letters of recommendation, one each from a language teacher and from guidance. Ms Mirci answered questions from various board members regarding the trip. So far 35 to 40 students are interested; 18 to 20 will go on the trip with a maximum of 25. There will be three chaperones, Ms. Mirci, Ms. Serapiglia and Mrs. Reagan. Freshman to seniors are eligible. Ms. Mirci discussed the itinerary in detail which includes a high school, towns and villages, marketplaces, Machu Picchu, among other things.

Deposit and payment holds a student's place, then others will be wait-listed. Students on the waiting list will be first priority for next year's trip. The tour company is helping with fundraising ideas. Questions about safety were raised - Ms. Mirci and Ms. Serapiglia answered that students will be supervised at all time with only a very small amount of free time in the schedule and this will be in a controlled area. Since there is no male chaperone, a male bilingual guide may be requested. Mr. Blake asks for details about Omega News Group. This is a nonprofit that works with public and private high schools, 100 high schools in Lima, Ms. Mirci's father runs the program. Amity students submitted documents to Omega in Spanish and they were published on the website. Mr. Blake thanked Ms. Serapiglia and Ms. Mirci and wished them well.

- 6. Presentation – Alumni survey results** –Mr. Dumais contracted with Futuristics to do a survey of our graduates. Dr. Britton presented the results of the survey of the five most recent Amity graduating. Results are mostly positive, and there are some things can be improved. (see attached summary). Dr. Britton gave an oral presentation of the data from the survey and answered various questions from members of the Board regarding various reported statistics from the survey. The conclusion was that areas worthy of further discussion and investigation are:

- Discrepancies between feedback received by level
- Perception related to the use of varied assessments
- Perceptions related to ability to make informed consumer decisions
- Perceptions related to the school career center programming
- Perceptions related to smoking on campus
- Perceptions related to drug use – much discussion about this question.

There was further discussion about the validity of the survey data and future surveys; there was some feeling that some of the data was so vague as to be invalid. Board members are in favor of getting further data with a \$500.00 up-charge.

- 7. Presentation of Amity teacher evaluation plan** – Mr. Dumais stated that the State has allowed modifications to the teacher evaluation plan. (see attachment) The rubric for assessment of staff not in the class room such as psychologists, counselors, etc., was missing from plans all across the state. Dr. McPaddon stated that she is looking for Board approval for three key changes to the current plan:

1. Student surveys – (see pages 17-22 in packet). The survey used last year as good but there is another survey that the state has recommended and teachers and administrators thought this was better than what they were using.
2. Non-classroom review of practice (page 17-22) The State said that this must be added as part of the performance evaluation. Under the 4-domain rubric domains 2 and 4 have the changes.

3. Connecticut Common Core – This is a companion rubric to the original rubric. Counselors, psychologists and speech and language pathologists need to be evaluated. The revisions from the State just came last week.

Mr. Stirling asked how will administrators and staff will find the time to do these evaluations and if she perceived any shift in the culture of the staff? Dr. McPaddon answered that it's a challenge but they are doing it very well. She stated that she feels the culture among the staff is changing for the good.

8. Discussion and action on Amity teacher evaluation plan

Motion that Board of Education accept revisions to the 2014-2015 District Teacher Evaluation and Development Model outlined in the memo from Dr. McPaddon of October 16, 2014 by Mr. Hurley, 2nd by Ms. Cardozo.

Vote unanimous

Motion carried

9. Discussion and possible action on 2015 BOE meeting calendar.

Mr. Hurley moves to accept the BOE calendar for 2015, Mr. Stirling second.

Chris Browe asks that variation of meetings from 2nd Monday be considered in the future..

Vote unanimous

Motion carried

11. Discussion and possible action on goals/objectives

Goals and objectives were discussed at the BOE retreat – see attached. There was discussion of the school survey and how to glean further information. The document was modified to include an anecdotal report from the Superintendent.

Motion to approve the draft goals presented by Mr. Dumais with modifications by Ms. Cohen, 2nd by Mr. Hurley.

Mr. Browe asked about having quantification of “opportunities” (see page 2). Mr. Dumais reluctant to put this in because it's new and different than it has been done in the past and he wants to take advantage of however many opportunities there are rather than limit them by a number. Mr. Blake states that this will get more formal as and goals will be more tailored as time goes on. A standard item on the Superintendent's report for BOE meetings will be a report on the goals beginning very soon.

Vote unanimous

Motion carried

12. Correspondence - none

13. Superintendent's report

A. Personnel Report

Leann Brout has gone to ACES. There have been three coaching changes. (see attached).

- B. Other** – Dr. Britton returned from the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) visit at Joel Barlow. Mr. Dumais will be going for a visit as assistant chairman to Pittsfield, Massachusetts this coming Sunday.
- Progress on goals** – On the shortened day for professional development, the district focused on vertical articulation. The social studies group met for 7 – 12 scope and sequence review and noted that they had not been together since 2005. Physical education and health curriculum alignment 7-12, Speech and language pathologist and transition teachers have met. Twenty complimentary observers have been trained. There is some work to do regarding transcripts, there is a change to a 4-hour credit unit. Peru trip; Disney trip for performing arts.
- Security** – Mr. Dumais has met with police heads from all three member towns. Expanded camera access has been obtained. He met with an outside agency regarding school security and training for staff; ICS100 training is required for every school employee by July 1, 2015. Administrators will need to be trained at three levels of courses. We are looking at conducting a possible tabletop exercise for local emergency management.
- CABE** - Our calendar won a first prize and honorable mention for Jim Saisa's report. Four administrators been through Title IX training. Amity Regional High School was named a National Blue Ribbon School.

14. Chairman's Report

Mr. Blake is meeting with the chairmen of the Boards of Education of the member towns next week.

A. Committee Reports

1. **ACES** - none
2. **CABE** – Convention in November. Jack Levine will be a presenter on how to prepare school budgets.
3. **Curriculum** – none
4. **Facilities** - The minutes of the meeting are in the packet. No report yet from United Illuminating.
5. **Finance**
 - a. **Discussion of October 01, 2014 enrollment report.** – Allocation for the towns is now slightly different. Most stable part of enrollment predictions are K thru 8. There has been a slight decrease now but it is predicted that we will be back to the enrollment we have now in 5 or 6 years.
 - b. **Discussion of Superintendent's early thoughts on allocation of any potential Amity surplus funds.** See the minutes of the Finance Committee meeting. The goal is to have more information and to have it available sooner.
 - c. **Presentation and discussion of Superintendent's update of 2015-2016 budget.**
See the Superintendent's memo to the administrators regarding evaluating their budget needs and planning on a time line longer than one year. Negotiations are underway with the teacher's union. Medical reserve fund is at 22%. There was a cut to the OPEB trust. Technology needs will need to be considered. There were zero dollars included for site improvement and that will need to be evaluated.
 - d. **Discussion of OPEB trust funding and budget** – Bethany funds at approximately 20%, Orange and Woodbridge fund it at approximately 60% for their community schools. Scenario C (see attached) is the best one for the district and that does the least harm. Our money is better off in the reserve for health insurance because it can be used to pay claims for retirees or current employees; if it's in OPEB it must stay there. If you self-fund and if premiums and claims are equal for a number of years then the actuaries will change their recommendation for what should be put in OPEB. Mr. Levine states that the District is paying what we are supposed to.

Mr. Levine addresses the legal liability of the pension fund and the formula change for OPEB. Mr. Stirling stated that the Board has a financial obligation to pay for the current staff but not push the obligations down the road, so if the trust can be fully funded in the next 10 to 15 years then we will not be pushing that payment forward. Ms. McCreven asked how the Board can transition to be able to pay ahead. Mr. Levine stated that other districts are doing the same thing as Amity but it is difficult to assess the risk. Surplus funds could be moved at the discretion of the Superintendent. Mr. Hurley spoke about predictions, example of Detroit's pension plan – do we pay as we go or do we saddle the future? We are short this year by \$200,000. Ms. McCreven asked about administrative cost savings by being self-insured been factored into our contribution? Mr. Levine stated that the savings is about \$5,000,000 per year. Ms. McCreven asked if the claim numbers changed at all? Mr. Levine answered that there is no data on that because it was not tracked.

e. Discussion and possible action on contracts of \$35,000 or more.

1. Extending contract for transportation service.

Bus contracts connected but not coordinated on the same time line. We have a 2% annual increase in the contract. The Board would like to extend contract to 2020 and had asked Mr. Levine to get comparison information. See motion on Jack's memo. We can try to coordinate district services in 2018.

Motion by Mr. Hurley to recommend to the Amity Board of Education that the Superintendent of Schools be authorized to sign a contract for transportation services with each transportation owner-operators (contractor) which extends the current contract by three (3) years, terminating on June 30, 2020. The annual increase for regularly scheduled runs, late runs and special runs shall be 2.00% for 2015-2016, 2016-2017, 2017-2018, and 2019-2020. Further, recommend the Amity Board of Education waives the bidding requirement. Jack says that this could be difficult because of having to deal with all 3 member towns. Chip says conversation comes up frequently, very similar to the surplus, have the conversation early regarding going out to bid. Chip needs to do some work to see if the other districts are amenable and if this can be coordinated, 2nd by Ms. Crocco.

Ms. Cohen asked if we can get on the same schedule with the other districts? The big challenge is coordinating with all the districts. Ms. McCreven asked if Mr. Blake talk to the other chairs in the three towns about this and he agrees to speak to them. Mr. Stirling stated he prefers to see a contract that ends in 2019 so that they could all agree on the same endpoint and make it easier to agree to send this out to bid for due diligence, in spite of the fact that everyone likes the owner-operator system. We need to be able to prove this by sending it to bid so that we can prove we are getting the best deal. Mr. Blake thinks people are fine with this and that there is no need to amend the motion.

Vote unanimous

Motion carried

f. Discussion of monthly financial statements. No questions.

g. Director of Finance and Administration approved transfers under \$3,000 – No questions

h. Other

1. Superintendent's report on deposit policy for custodial credit risk.

Per Policy 3292.A Mr. Dumais is notifying the Board that we are consolidating accounts in one bank to save money.

2. Financial audit status report – Audit showed no issues identified, highly likely that we will get a 100% clean audit report for the 5th years in a row.

3. **Information on extension of electricity supply pricing.** Mr. Dumais has negotiated a rate of \$0.09770 kilowatt hour as authorized by the Board in May 2014, starting on December 24, 2014 and locked in through December 2016. This is a small savings from previous.
4. **Information on Fitch ratings update.** Amity Regional School District #5 has been rated AA+

6. **Policy** – Policy meeting scheduled for October 30th.

7. **Personnel** - Negotiations with the teachers union are underway. Mr. Dumais is trying to find a date for the personnel committee to meet.

15. **Items for next agenda** - please forward to Mr. Dumais or to Mr. Blake.

A Curriculum Committee meeting will take place this week at 5:15 pm at District offices.

16. **Adjournment**

Motion to adjourn made at 9:00 pm by Ms. Cohen, 2nd by Mr. Hurley.

Vote unanimous

Motion carried

Respectfully submitted,

Ruth E. Natzel, Recording Clerk

Thomas Hurley, Secretary