

Minutes

AMITY BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

William Blake, Julie Altman, Christopher Browe, Patricia Cardozo, Sue Cohen, Diane Crocco, Steven DeMaio, Rita Gedansky, John Grasso, Jr., James Horwitz, Thomas Hurley, Tracey Russo, James Stirling

AMITY BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: None

Staff Members Present: John Brady, Jack Levine, Paula Cofrancesco, Mary Raiola, Kathi Fuller-Cutler, Richard Dellinger, Charles Britton, Robert Cole, Jason Tracy, Deborah DeMeo

Also Present: Thomas Falcigno, Jim Zeoli, other members of the public

A meeting of the Amity Board of Education was held at 6:30 p.m. on Monday, April 9, 2012, in the Presentation Room of the District Offices. No quorum in attendance.

1. **Call to Order:** William Blake called the meeting to order at 6:33 p.m.
2. **Pledge of Allegiance** was recited by those present.
3. **Approval of Minutes:**
 - a. Regular Board Meeting – February 13, 2012 – Previously approved – Dr. Brady noted that there had been one correction. *Motion to approve as revised:* Rita Gedansky; 2nd James Stirling
Discussion: None
Vote in Favor – Unanimous ***Motion passed.***
 - b. Regular Board Meeting – March 12, 2012 –
Motion to approve: Diane Crocco; 2nd Sue Cohen
Discussion: Sue Cohen – Correction to spelling of Patty Logiocco’s name (2c’s); Thomas Hurley – Comments regarding motions to discuss suspension of policy and naming of auditorium should be removed; Mr. Hurley said minutes should be revised to reflect fact that motion to waive naming policy and name auditorium should have had 9 votes instead of 7.
William Blake – acknowledged Mr.Hurley’s comments, but noted that the March minutes could not be revised in that manner as that was something that had occurred and was on record, and they should not be changed; Mr. Hurley’s comments will be added to the March 12th minutes.

b. - cont'd

Vote in Favor of Revised Minutes: Julie Altman, Christopher Browe, Patricia Cardozo, Diane Crocco, Steven DeMaio, Rita Gedansky, John Grasso, Jr., James Horwitz, Thomas Hurley, Tracey Russo, James Stirling.

Vote Opposed: None

Abstain: Sue Cohen

Motion passed.

c. District Meeting, Public Hearing – April 2, 2012 –

Motion to Approve: James Stirling; 2nd Sue Cohen

Discussion: None

Vote in Favor: Christopher Browe, Patricia Cardozo, Sue Cohen, Diane Crocco, Steven DeMaio, Rita Gedansky, James Horwitz, Thomas Hurley, Tracey Russo, James Stirling

Vote Opposed: None

Abstain: Julie Altman, John Grasso, Jr.

Motion passed.

d. Public District Budget Hearing – April 2, 2012 –

Motion to Approve: James Stirling; 2nd Sue Cohen

Discussion: None

Vote in Favor: Christopher Browe, Patricia Cardozo, Sue Cohen, Diane Crocco, Steven DeMaio, Rita Gedansky, James Horwitz, Thomas Hurley, Tracey Russo, James Stirling

Vote Opposed: None

Abstain: Julie Altman, John Grasso, Jr.

Motion passed.

e. Special Board of Education Meeting – April 2, 2012 –

Motion to Approve: Dianne Crocco; 2nd Patricia Cardozo

Discussion: None

Vote in Favor: Christopher Browe, Patricia Cardozo, Sue Cohen, Diane Crocco, Steven DeMaio, Rita Gedansky, James Horwitz, Thomas Hurley, Tracey Russo, James Stirling

Vote Opposed: None

Abstain: Julie Altman, John Grasso, Jr.

Motion passed.

4. Discussion and Possible Action to Refer Possible Revision in Policy on Drug Sniffing Dogs in the Schools to the Policy Committee

Discussion: Request by Steven DeMaio to have this item on agenda after having attended a school workshop. Concern not using the dogs; concern about sniffing the students/classrooms. Students know dogs can't sniff them. Dr. Brady – concern about changing the nature of the school atmosphere. We have students who are fearful of dogs. Dr. Charles Britton presented administration's position – administration comfortable with

current policy. Grateful to have policy – helps to deter students – gives them leverage and flexibility to conduct the types of searches that help them deter and catch students. Tracey Russo expressed concern that we stay consistent with current case law and then leave it up to administration. James Stirling is generally not in favor of bringing dogs into the classroom. It can create an uncomfortable environment. However, he noted that some board members wanted to send the policy back to the policy committee. He would reluctantly abide by that. He would hope that the outcome was no change. He noted that the policy committee needs to weigh the sentiment of the administration very strongly. Bob Cole noted that the administration has a plan that will work under the current policy. Bill Blake noted that this proposal is not coming from the administration. Board needs to be concerned about policies and look to the administration to implement and manage the schools. He is concerned that it looks like board members are getting too involved and that they know better. That is the reason he has been hesitant to bring this forward. But he indicated that since there was enough of an interest he would bring it forward. At this point Mr. Blake directed his comments to a parent in the audience who had addressed the Board at the March meeting. He allowed Mr. David Guzowski to make public comment at this time.

No motion needed. Chair will refer to Policy Committee.

5. Discussion and Action on Setting Graduation Date – June 22, 2012

Dr. Brady noted that Amity had used seven (7) snow days, but was able to make up two (2) of them bringing the last day of school to June 22, 2012. The Board must set the graduation date after April 1st.

Motion to approve graduation date of June 22, 2012: Diane Crocco; 2nd Tom Hurley

Discussion: Sue Cohen asked what day of the week. It is a Friday. Graduation ceremony will start at 4pm. Done before sundown.

Vote: Unanimous

Motion passed.

6. Discussion and Possible Action to Authorize the Superintendent to Commit Amity to Pursue Cablecasting on Educational Channel 78 for the Town of Orange

Dr. Brady highlighted Amity's current situation with broadcasting and noted the possible expansion with Orange. He introduced Mr. Ron Davis, the Chair of Cable Advisory Council (CAC). Mr. Davis is responsible for programming in the Town of Orange on E-TV Channel 78 and has agreed to work with Amity to have Amity be the central broadcasting location for both Orange and Woodbridge. Once Amity commits to this, Amity becomes eligible for a portion of a CAC grant. CAC has a board that determines the amount schools receive. Funding from the grant would help offset costs for programming and equipment. OGAT is separate from CAC. Several board members, Dr. Brady and Dr. Britton noted all the possibilities with the expansion of broadcasting: athletic events, concerts, extracurricular activities, Veterans' Day programs/activities, sending public announcements, board meetings, Superintendent/administrator interviews, etc.

(6.-Cont'd)

Motion to authorize the Superintendent to commit Amity to pursue cablecasting on ETV-78 for the Town of Orange: Thomas Hurley; 2nd John Grasso, Jr.

Discussion: None

Vote: Unanimous

Motion passed.

7. **Student Report:** Thomas Falcigno – **Food Drive** – Over 8,000 items donated to the CT Food Bank. **Voter Registration** – On Wednesday, 3-28-12, Registrars of Voters from Bethany, Orange and Woodbridge visited senior English classes and registered over 300 students. **Spring Concert** – Thank you to all who performed for nearly a packed house. **College Fair** – Held April 4, 2012 – over 150 colleges, universities and technical schools participated. Thank you to the PTSA for providing dinner and refreshments for the representatives. **Junior Prom** – Will be held Saturday, May 5th instead of the 4th to accommodate those students planning to take the SAT on the morning of the 5th. Tickets go on sale 4-9 thru 4-29. The cost is \$48 and only be available online thru MyPaymentsPlus. **National World Language Honor Society** – Induction ceremony held Wednesday, March 28th – Latin Honor Society – 14 new members, French Honor Society – 11 new members, Spanish Honor Society – 26 new members, Chinese Honor Society – 8 new members. Congratulations to all. **Auditorium Naming** – Student Government shared its opinion – At its March meeting lengthy discussion – two conclusions: student government unanimously voted on a resolution stating that something in this school should be named after Dr. Brady, however, the student government would like to make sure that all possible options have been considered before the Board decides to name the auditorium after Dr. Brady.

8. **Public Comment**

Jim Zeoli, 1st Selectman from Town of Orange: Noted that he had a few people contact him (today) regarding the dog sniffing issue. There are people who have concerns about dogs. He enjoys being part of the audience instead of sitting at the table because you get to witness how transparency in government stifles good dialogue, because you can't sometimes say everything that needs to be said. Complimented the high school staff on the plan they have in place for handling the drug issue and stated that we need to trust the administration. Orange pleased with having the government access (ETV78). Thanked Ron Davis. Good program. There will be some funding expenses – but it's worth it. It offers something new to the students. It's a great teaching tool. Thanked the Board for all their hard work. New board members from Orange even though they've only been on the Board for a short time and may be on the learning curve, they do have a right to speak.

9. **Announcements from the Board and Administration**

Delegation to China leaving on Friday, April 13, 2012 (Kathi Fuller-Cutler and Richard Dellinger)

10. Discussion and Possible Action on Waiver of Policy Regarding Naming of Auditorium

William Blake reviewed the previous action from March regarding the waiver of policy. He noted that after the meeting Mr. Hurley had indicated that he thought there were some problems in proceeding that way. Specifically, with regard to sections 9314, 9325.3 of the Board By-Laws, which indicate in an order to suspend a by-law it requires either a two-thirds vote of all members of the Board if there has been no written notice given. If written notice has been given, then a majority vote of the Board is sufficient. 9325.3 refers to adding an item which is not listed on the agenda, and that indicates that it requires a two-thirds vote of members of the Board for new business to be considered and acted upon. Mr. Blake noted that he did not want there to be any impropriety in the naming of the auditorium. The current agenda does list that the Board will discuss and take possible action on the waiver of policy with regard to the naming of the auditorium. Mr. Blake asked if Mr. Hurley thought there were any other policies that might be implicated with regard to this issue. Mr. Hurley indicated 1331 – specifies the process; taking it from the Facilities Committee to two separate meetings for Board discussion. Mr. Blake indicated possible ambiguity in policy 1331 and noted that somewhere down the road they may have to take a look at it.

Mr. Blake asked if there was a motion to waive compliance with by-laws 9314, 9324.3 and 1331 in so far as we are considering the naming of the auditorium.

Motion to waive compliance with by-laws 9314, 9324.3 and 1331 in so far as we are considering the naming of the auditorium: James Hurley; 2nd Sue Cohen

Discussion: Mr. Hurley discussed procedure and the appropriateness of naming parts of the building to a specific person. Sue Cohen questioned what happens when a Committee does not agree on bringing an item forward to the Board for a vote. Bill Blake noted that it is usually the Superintendent who handles the clearing of naming recognitions, but since Dr. Brady was the person being recognized, he took it upon himself to contact the 1st selectmen and the administration. There has been extensive support demonstrated in support of this recognition. Tracey Russo concerned that it be done right.

Vote in favor: James Stirling, Diane Crocco, Rita Gedansky, Sue Cohen, Patricia Cardozo, James Horwitz, Julie Altman

Vote Opposed: Thomas Hurley, Tracey Russo, Steven DeMaio, Christopher Browe,

Abstain: John Grasso, Jr.

Motion passed.

11. Discussion and Possible Action on Naming of Auditorium

Motion by Christopher Browe to move Item #12 up before #11 – it directly impacts the decision of #11; 2nd Tracey Russo

Discussion: No Discussion

Vote in favor of moving #12 before #11: Unanimous

(Item #11 moved after #12 below)

12. Correspondence (moved before Item #11)

a. Letter from Dr. John J. Brady

Discussion: Dr. Brady read his letter.

11. Discussion and Possible Action on Naming of Auditorium

Motion to name the auditorium after Dr. Brady: Patricia Cardozo; 2nd Diane Crocco

Discussion: James Stirling – his general opinion is that we should not name any part of a building after an employee – Dr. Brady has raised the bar of excellence for everyone – but having the sense of the community, it is evident that this is something they want to do to recognize the excellence of Dr. Brady and give something back to him; He noted he would vote in favor. Mr. Grasso seconded Mr. Stirling’s sentiments and applauded Dr. Brady for the fine job he is doing. Tracey Russo prefers that this be unanimous; saying it is an unusual set of circumstances – as the school system does not want Dr. Brady to leave, strong community support and the Board support Dr. Brady, and it is an honor he has earned. Ms. Russo’s only wish all along is that it was done properly in accordance with the rules of the Board. Christopher Browe – Dr. Brady more than professional in every instance and has raised the bar of what we are to expect in a superintendent. Concerned about the nature of Dr. Brady’s letter in that in the future the honor could go away because it has not been properly vetted to withstand the test of time. Mr. Hurley – Make it clear to the audience that we have policies for reason – this is a new policy and to find an exception the first time thru is not a general thing that the Board does. Wished the Board had more time to hear about other naming options (District Offices, etc), but it appears that this is what is wanted (the auditorium).

Vote in favor of naming auditorium for Dr. John J. Brady: Unanimous **Motion passed.**
Standing ovation by Board, staff and public.

13. Superintendent’s Report – Just personnel report

14. Chairman’s Report:

a. Committee Reports:

1. ACES – None

2. CABB – Meeting in Hartford recently reviewing education legislation; Meeting in November – workshops on negotiations, educational issues, facilities, policies – all encouraged to attend

3. Curriculum – Julie Altman – Meeting set for Monday, April 23rd – 5:30pm – Discussion of Technology Plan (ACES)

4. Facilities - None

5. Finance –

5.a Dr. Brady asked to withdraw 5.a (Discussion and Possible Action on Proposed Fund Balance Policy (First Read)) as the Finance Committee did not have a quorum and could not take any action on this. In addition, there was a

(5.a – cont'd)

request from Joseph Nuzzo (Orange BOF rep) and from Jim Leahy that this item be postponed until next month's agenda as they would like a chance to take a look at it.

5.b – Monthly Financial Statements – Dr. Brady – noted a change in Special Education expenditures; State made changes – increased revenue and decreased expenses can effect end-of-year balances. Does not impact next year's budget. Thomas Hurley – questioned if there is a plan for any surplus. Dr. Brady listed some options; has to be designated before July 1. Some discussion ensued on maintaining a quality system when budget increases have over the past few years been getting smaller.

5.c – Dir. of Finance & Admin. Approved Transfers Under \$3,000 – no discussion

5.d – Discussion and Possible Action on Budget Transfers – Jack noted bills for legal fees have exceeded budget.

Motion by Christopher Browe to transfer \$12,000 to pay for legal expenses; 2nd Patricia Cardozo

Discussion: None

Vote to approve transfer: Unanimous

Motion passed.

5.3 – Discussion and Possible Action on New Funding Requests –

Motion to make a budget transfer of \$5,000 to purchase a robot, software, carrying case, warranty and support (Other funding of \$3,200 to come from other sources): Christopher Browe; 2nd Rita Gedansky

Discussion: Thomas Hurley – this is a career path. We need to be training the work force for these types of jobs. It's these types of programs that help. We certainly seem to have enough students who are interested. It is well worth supporting. Low cost investment for what the students are learning. Sue Cohen – This is extremely exciting – Concern: How it's being presented and can Orange be included. Dr. Brady – it is currently planned as an after-school program. There is interest in Orange for duplicating the program. It will be pursued. The ultimate goal will be to have it as part of the curriculum. See this as a pilot project right now. Bill Blake noted that the other funding was coming from Dr. Dellinger's budget and a generous PTO contribution. Right now there is only one person trained to run this program.

Vote on Motion: Unanimous

Motion passed.

Motion to transfer from the Contingency Account to Equipment-New the amount of \$15,514 to cover expenses to get Amity started with ETV-Channel 78 to include the Town of Orange: James Stirling; 2nd John Grasso, Jr.

Discussion: None

Vote: Unanimous

Motion passed.

6. Policy – Already discussed under Dog Sniffing item.
7. Personnel – Mr. Blake – Regarding Superintendent’s search – will be receiving candidates later in week. Making progress and hope to have a candidate in place by the start of the next school year.

15. Items for Next Agenda –

Tracey Russo suggestion to the Chairman or Dr. Brady to set up a committee or some kind of proactive response to the declining enrollment that we anticipate coming down the road given the impact on teachers, etc. James Stirling indicated that it is an issue being faced by many school systems across the State. Bill Blake agreed that it was something that would need to be looked at. Dr. Brady indicated that he would have a folder for the next Superintendent containing information on this.

Christopher Browe – Storage bins – question as to the number of them.

16. Motion to adjourn: Thomas Hurley; 2nd James Horwitz

Vote: Unanimous

Time: 8:40p.m.

Motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,

Paula Cofrancesco, Recording Clerk