

MINUTES

**AMITY BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Joseph Abbatiello, Julie Altman, William Blake, Sue Cohen, Diane Crocco, Rita Gedansky, Philip Grande, James Horwitz, Thomas Hurley, Angela McNabola

**AMITY BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:** Patricia Cardozo, Steven DeMaio, James Stirling

**Staff Members Present:** John Brady, Charles Britton, Richard Dellinger, Kevin Keller, Jack Levine, Marianne Lippard, Mary Raiola, Sheila Wycinowski

Also Present: Thomas Falcigno, Robert Schumann, other members of the Public

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A regular meeting of the Amity Regional Board of Education was held on Monday, August 8, 2011, at 6:30 p.m., in the Presentation Room at the District Offices.

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.

Mr. Blake performed the ceremonial swearing in of James Horwitz, a new member of the Board, replacing Susan Jacobs. Mr. Blake congratulated and welcomed Mr. Horwitz.

3. **Approval of Minutes**

- a. Regular Board of Education Meeting, June 13, 2011

*Motion to approve the minutes as presented (Ms. Gedansky, 2d Ms. Crocco).*

*Discussion: none.*

*Vote in favor unanimous.*

***Motion passed.***

*Motion to amend the agenda to add consideration of Superintendent's recommendation for Director of Counseling (Ms. Crocco, 2d Mr. Hurley).*

*Vote in favor unanimous.*

***Motion passed.***

4. **Director of Counseling**

Dr. Brady said that he would typically have the Board interview a candidate for the position of Director of Counseling, but he would like to fill the vacancy quickly. In the past, the administration had difficulty finding a qualified candidate. Dr. Brady said that he believes that Robert Schumann is an excellent candidate for the position. Mr. Schumann has worked at Wilton High School, where he developed an internship program, for the last five years.

*Motion to accept the Superintendent's recommendation to hire Robert Schumann as Director of Counseling (Mr. Grande, 2d Mr. Hurley).*

*Discussion:* Mr. Horwitz asked for more information about the job description. A large number of Amity High School graduates go to the University of Connecticut. Sometimes counselors don't use creativity when advising students.

Mr. Schumann told the Board about his professional experience. He counsels students about college, currently advising 50 seniors a year. He also establishes connections with admissions offices. He added that he is very familiar with Naviance. He noted that at any high school, a large number of students apply to their state's flagship university. As a counselor, he encourages students to look beyond a Top 10 list.

Mr. Grande said that the High School has been working on developing a master schedule. He asked whether Mr. Schumann has experience with the new schedule Amity will be using. Mr. Schumann said that the new schedule will be new to him as well.

*Vote in favor unanimous.*

*Motion passed.*

## **5. Principals' Reports on Summer Work and Opening of School**

Bethany campus: Richard Dellinger said that much work is being done to prepare the school for the students' return. There are three custodians working to clean and wax floors. There have been some staffing changes. Dr. Dellinger said that he was pleased with the CMT results. There will be 30 students involved with the iPad pilot program. Parents of the selected students will be informed. Seventh and eighth graders will soon be receiving information about the start of school. Next week, counselors will be training in Naviance. New student registration will take place on Friday, August 19<sup>th</sup>. The PTO is organizing a luncheon for the teachers. Fall fundraisers are also planned.

Orange campus: Kathleen Fuller Cutler said that work is in progress to get the school facility ready for the beginning of school. Currently, work is being done on the floors. The school is moving to a rotating schedule this year. Bethany already piloted a rotating schedule. There are new team leaders and plans are to examine the new CMT results. Mailings are being prepared to go out to the students. Email will be used for most future mailings. Naviance leadership training will soon take place. The Orange Middle School is participating in the iPad pilot with a group of seventh graders, while the Bethany pilot involves eighth graders. She was pleased with the CMT results and is looking forward to having the students return from summer vacation. About 415-417 students are expected; Bethany will have about 400 students.

High School: Charles Britton reported that there has been a great deal of activity at the High School this summer. The new HVAC system is a great enhancement for the High School. The students performed very well on the CAPT tests and he thanked the Board for the support. Lights were replaced in the old section of the High School. Preparations are being made for security cameras to be installed. The cameras will help monitor the building. Any administrator can have access using an iPad, offering tremendous benefits. Students will be informed about the cameras. Cracked and loose tiles are being replaced and the school is being thoroughly cleaned. There were some new hires this summer. A retired physics teacher will return as a bench substitute.

Home communications have gone mostly paperless except with families who prefer receiving paper mailings. The system is saving resources, time and money.

Discussion: Ms. Altman asked why it has been difficult to recruit physics teachers. Dr. Brady said that it is a very difficult certification, so there aren't that many physics teachers to begin with.

**6. Information on School Start Times**

Mr. Blake said that information has been supplied to the Board regarding school start times. The research study was done in Minnesota. It is the position of the administration that students adjust. Dr. Brady noted that the transportation system serving the District is unique. There are financial considerations to altering start times. The financial impact of a change would be approximately \$1 million.

**7. Public Comment**

Pam Ruddell of Sunset Drive told the Board about her ex-husband's plans to register an unrelated student. Mr. Blake said that due to the sensitive nature of Ms. Ruddell's comments, he would suggest a letter be sent to Dr. Brady for the Board to read. Ms. Ruddell said that she was only offering background about her ex-husband's plans to register her daughter's teen-age friend from New Jersey. Mr. Blake said that the Board needs to comply with federal privacy laws in such situations and recommended the student not be discussed during Public Comment.

**8. Student Report**

Thomas Falcigno said that at an upcoming event on August 26<sup>th</sup>, Amity Link Crew will be welcoming students. There will be ice breakers and students will have an opportunity to get to know each other better. He also thanked all those involved in creating the new eight period schedule.

**9. Discussion and Possible Action on Nurses' Contract**

*Motion to enter Executive Session at 7:30 p.m. for the purpose of discussion of the Nurses' Contract (Ms. McNabola, 2d Mr. Grande).*

*(Executive Session ended at 8:00 p.m.)*

*Motion to approve the Nurses' Contract (Ms. McNabola, 2d Mr. Grande).*

*Vote in favor unanimous.*

***Motion passed.***

**10. Information on 2010 CMT/CAPT Results**

Dr. Brady thanked the administrative team for using a systematic approach to preparing students for the tests. The results on the CMT/CAPT were positive. The scores show that students are moving beyond goal to advanced. Dr. Brady said that these standardized test results are the most publicly reported test results. A chart showing CAPT scores comparisons in the DRG was

provided to the Board. Study Island was used to help students. In reading, the District is at the top of the DRG. Improvements have been made in science. Dr. Britton said that Study Island is used to help students demonstrate skills. If further help is needed, a retired teacher works with students to ensure concepts are understood.

Discussion: Mr. Horwitz questioned how Amity would compare to schools in Fairfield County, such as New Canaan or Darien. Dr. Brady said that while comparisons with those communities were not made, he believes that Amity's scores would still compare favorably.

## **11. Announcements from the Board and Administration**

Mary Raiola, Director of Pupil Services, said that the administration is hoping to bring Unified Theater to Amity this year. Unified Theater is an original student produced show. The program is in about 40 school districts now. It is hoped that the production can take place in the spring. It is expected to be very beneficial for students.

Dr. Brady said that he recently met with Woodbridge town officials to explore the possibility of getting natural gas into the area. The cost of gas is much cheaper than heating oil. A study is being done to look at the cost of the conversion. The information being provided is preliminary.

## **12. Correspondence**

- a. Letter from the State Board of Education Regarding 2009-2010 District Annual Performance Reports and Determinations  
A letter from George A. Coleman, Acting Commissioner of Education, acknowledges the District's efforts in being one of 142 districts to be assigned to "Meets Requirements" in the areas used to make the determination for 2009-10.

## **13. Superintendent's Report**

### **a. Personnel Report**

The Board reviewed Dr. Brady's memo dated August 8, 2011 showing a number of new hires at the High School, one new hire at the Middle School in Bethany and no new hires at the Middle School in Orange. There were a number of resignations at the High School, including three coaches, a physics teacher, Spanish teacher and associate principal.

## **14. Chairman's Report**

### Committee Reports

1. ACES: There was no report.
2. CABA: There was no report.
3. Curriculum: There was no report.
4. Facilities
  - a. Information on HVAC Project at Amity High School

Mr. Grande said that the HVAC project ended up being larger than anticipated. The updated final cost is \$237,000. The High School will have a unit that can handle all needs. The work should be getting underway soon.

Mr. Hurley asked whether the students will be affected. Mr. Grande said that students will be directed to other labs.

5. Finance

a. Discussion and Possible Action on Award of Contracts over \$35,000

*Motion to award a three-year service contract to Siemens, as the sole source vendor, for the price of \$21,380.00 in 2011-2012; \$22,021.00 in 2012-2013; and \$22,682.00 in 2013-2014 (Ms. McNabola, 2d Ms. Crocco).*

*Discussion:* none.

*Vote in favor unanimous.*

***Motion passed.***

b. Discussion and Possible Action on Recommendation to Sell Certain Assets on eBay and Transfer Revenue from Sales to Reserve for Capital and Nonrecurring Expenditures Fund for Purchase of New Equipment

*Discussion:* Dr. Brady said that teachers have proposed selling used equipment on eBay in an effort to acquire equipment that is better suited to their needs. Dr. Brady said that he thought that the idea was worth pursuing.

*Motion to authorize the Superintendent of Schools to sell items on eBay and transfer the revenue from the sales to Reserve for Capital and Non-Recurring Expenditures fund for the purpose of purchasing equipment for the Media, Fine and Performing Arts Department. The Director of Finance and Administration shall report the equipment sold, revenue received, equipment purchased and cost of new equipment to the Amity Finance Committee and Amity Board of Education (Mr. Grande, 2d Ms. McNabola).*

*Discussion:* Mr. Hurley said that he did not agree with the idea of departments controlling assets. Dr. Brady said that equipment will not be sold unless the purchase price is sufficient to make selling the equipment worthwhile.

*Motion to amend the motion to separate the sale and transfer of funds (Mr. Hurley, no second).*

***Motion to amend failed.***

*Vote in favor of original motion:* Joseph Abbatiello, Julie Altman, William Blake, Sue Cohen, Diane Crocco, Rita Gedansky, Philip Grande, James Horwitz, Angela McNabola

*Vote Opposed:* none.

*Abstain:* Thomas Hurley

***Motion passed.***

c. Discussion of Monthly Financial Statements

- a. Fiscal Year 2010-2011
- b. Fiscal Year 2011-2012

There were no questions.

d. Director of Finance and Administration Approved Transfers Under \$3,000

- a. Fiscal Year 2010-2011
- b. Fiscal Year 2011-2012

There were no questions.

- e. Discussion and Possible Action on Budget Transfers of \$3,000 or More
  - a. Fiscal Year 2010-2011
  - b. Fiscal Year 2011-2012

In a memo to the Superintendent dated July 27, 2011, Mr. Levine recommended the Amity Finance Committee and Board of Education approve a number of budget transfers of over \$3,000.

Dr. Brady noted said that a solar based system is planned, which would result in savings over the long term. What is spent in 2010-2011 will be received as a credit in 2011-2012.

*Motion to increase the appropriation for the replacement of the Field House water heater from \$31,000 to \$42,600, or \$11,600 (Mr. Grande, 2d Ms. Crocco).*

*Discussion:* It was noted that a backup system is expensive to run if the solar part isn't working.

*Vote in favor unanimous.*

***Motion passed.***

Mr. Levine noted that security cameras are being installed at the High School. Bid prices were lower than projected.

*Motion to decrease the appropriation for the purchase and installation of security cameras at Amity High School from \$30,000 to \$19,875, or \$10,125 (Ms. McNabola, 2<sup>nd</sup> Mr. Hurley).*

*Discussion:* Mr. Levine said that the Board is being asked to change the amount appropriated. The money can be returned to the towns or designated for another area.

*Motion to amend the motion to designate the \$10,125 for the roof account (Mr. Hurley, 2d Mr. Grande).*

*Vote in favor of amendment:* Thomas Hurley

***Motion failed.***

*Vote in favor of original motion:* Joseph Abbatiello, Julie Altman, William Blake, Sue Cohen, Diane Crocco, Rita Gedansky, Philip Grande, James Horwitz, Angela McNabola

*Vote Opposed:* Thomas Hurley

***Motion passed.***

Mr. Levine's memo also discussed designating available 2010-2011 yearend funds for a Black Box Theatre. The Drama program will be providing a gift of \$5,000 for the Black Box Theatre. The Superintendent would like to match this amount from the yearend balance. The cost is approximately \$250,000.

*Motion to make the following budget transfer to Reserve for Capital Non-Recurring Expenditures for the purpose of designating \$5,000 for the Black Box Theatre (Mr. Horwitz, 2d Ms. Gedansky).*

<u>ACCOUNT NUMBER</u>	<u>ACCOUNT NAME</u>	<u>FROM</u>	<u>TO</u>
T.B.D.	Accounts to be determined	\$5,000	
Fund 17	Capital Reserve Fund		\$5,000

*Discussion:* Mr. Hurley said that the Board has never voted on the Black Box Theatre. Mr. Grande said people in the community are willing to donate money toward the Black Box Theatre. It is basically a savings account. Mr. Hurley said that the District is struggling financially. Dr. Brady said that the Black Box Theatre was voted on by the Board.

*Vote in favor:* Joseph Abbatiello, Julie Altman, William Blake, Sue Cohen, Diane Crocco, Rita Gedansky, Philip Grande, James Horwitz, Angela McNabola

*Vote Opposed:* Thomas Hurley

***Motion passed.***

The Facilities Committee has recommended that the remaining yearend balance be transferred into Reserve for Capital Non-Recurring Expenditures Fund for use for the High School roof restoration project. The estimated cost of the project is \$1.4 million and it is in the Five-Year Capital Improvement Forecast for facilities. Mr. Levine said that with these funds, less money would need to be borrowed.

*Motion to make the following budget transfer to Reserve for Capital Non-Recurring Expenditures for the purpose of designating the remaining 2010-2011 yearend balance and 2009-2010 unspent encumbrances for the Amity High School roof restoration project. The amount shall be \$265,000, plus or minus; depending on what the remaining unspent yearend balance is (Mr. Grande, 2d Ms. McNabola).*

<u>ACCOUNT NUMBER</u>	<u>ACCOUNT NAME</u>	<u>FROM</u>	<u>TO</u>
T.B.D.	Accounts to be determined	\$265,000	
Fund 17	Capital Reserve Fund		\$265,000

*Vote in favor:* Joseph Abbatiello, Julie Altman, William Blake, Sue Cohen, Diane Crocco, Rita Gedansky, Philip Grande, James Horwitz, Angela McNabola

*Vote Opposed:* Thomas Hurley

***Motion passed.***

In another memo to the Superintendent dated July 27, 2011, Mr. Levine recommended a server replacement. The e-mail server is scheduled to be replaced in the 2012-2013 school year. The e-mail database has more than doubled in the past year due to a paperless environment. There has been a significant increase in e-mail communications with parents due to the iParent system. Quick growth has resulted in problems. A replacement server is needed as soon as possible.

*Motion to make the following budget transfer of \$12,650 to purchase the replacement server (Mr. Hurley, 2d Mr. Horwitz).*

<u>ACCOUNT NUMBER</u>	<u>ACCOUNT NAME</u>	<u>FROM</u>	<u>TO</u>
05-14-2350-5690	Other Supplies	\$12,650	
05-14-2350-5731	Equipment – Replacement		\$12,650

*Vote in favor unanimous.*

***Motion passed.***

f. Update on Financial Operations

a. Information on Deposit Policy for Custodial Credit Risk

Mr. Levine said that Bank of America received a “Rating Watch Negative” from Fitch; “Negative” from Standard & Poor’s. Terry Lumas, Finance Manager, is in the process of setting up new bank accounts for payroll and accounts payables with People’s United Bank. The Cafeteria Fund, Student and Special Revenue Accounts, Grants, and Construction Accounts will stay at Bank of America. The other accounts will be moved as well.

6. Policy

a. Second Reading – Policy #1331 – Naming of Amity Regional District #5 Facilities

*Motion to adopt policy as amended (Ms. McNabola, 2d Ms. Crocco).*

*Vote in favor unanimous.*

***Motion passed.***

b. First Reading on New Bylaw Creating Position of Deputy Treasurer

7. Personnel

a. Discussion and Possible Action on Nurses’ Contract (see #9 Executive Session)

**15. Executive Session – Superintendent’s Evaluation**

The Board entered Executive Session at 9:22 p.m.

**16. Items for the Next Agenda**

**17. Adjournment**

*Motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:26 p.m. (Mr. Hurley, 2d Ms. Cohen).*

*Approval unanimous.*

***Motion passed; meeting adjourned.***



Respectfully submitted,

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Rita Gedansky, secretary  
Marianne Lippard, recording clerk

Attachments/References:

- Minutes: Regular Board Meeting, June 2011
- Memos: Jack Levine to John Brady (7/20/11) re...Deposit Policy for Custodial Credit Risk  
Jack Levine to John Brady (7/27/11) re...Budget Transfers of \$3,000 or More FY2010/11  
Jack Levine to John Brady (7/27/11) re...Budget Transfers of \$3,000 or More FY2011/12  
Jack Levine to John Brady (7/20/11) re...Sell Certain Assets on eBay  
Jack Levine to John Brady (7/28/11) re...Award of Contracts over \$35,000  
George A. Coleman to Superintendents of Schools (7/18/11) re...District Performance  
John Brady to Board of Education (8/8/11) re...Personnel Report  
John Brady to Board of Education (7/15/11) re...School Start Times
- Reports: Board of Education Presentation CMT / CAPT Results  
Amity Regional School District No. 5 Year-to-Date Budget Report (8/3/11)  
Amity Regional School District No. 5 Budget Transfers 2010-2011  
Amity Regional School District No. 5 Revenues and Expenditures FY 2011/12  
Amity Regional School District No. 5 Revenues and Expenditures FY 2010/11  
Amity Regional School District No. 5 Budget Transfers 2011/12  
Amity Regional School District No. 5 Executive Summary Second Quarter 2011
- Misc.: Bylaws of the Board: Deputy Treasurer, Naming of Amity School Facilities