

MINUTES

**AMITY BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Julie Altman, William Blake, Patricia Cardozo, Sue Cohen, Diane Crocco, Steven DeMaio, Rita Gedansky, Philip Grande, James Horwitz, Thomas Hurley, Angela McNabola

**AMITY BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:** Joseph Abbatiello, James Stirling

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

Also Present: Peter Downhour, Thomas Falcigno, other members of the Public

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A regular meeting of the Amity Regional Board of Education was held on Monday, September 12, 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.
3. **Approval of Minutes**
  - a. Regular Board of Education Meeting, August 8, 2011  
*Motion to approve the minutes as presented* (Ms. Gedansky, 2d Mr. Grande).  
*Discussion:* Mr. Hurley noted the minutes inaccurately represented that he voted twice.  
*Vote in favor:* Julie Altman, Sue Cohen, Diane Crocco, Steven DeMaio, Rita Gedansky, Philip Grande, James Horwitz, Thomas Hurley, Angela McNabola  
*Vote opposed:* none  
*Abstain:* Patricia Cardozo ***Motion passed.***

4. **Presentation by United Illuminating to Recognize Amity's Energy Efficiency Project**

Dr. Brady introduced Mike Stein of United Illuminating and Rich Steeves of the Clean Energy Fund. Mr. Stein and Mr. Steeves presented a plaque to the Board. A lighting system at the High School reduces usage of kilowatts, saving Amity approximately \$120,000 annually. Jim Saisa said that Mike Stein worked to develop a plan for expected savings. The project qualified for zero percent financing and would result in a 1.6 year payback.

Mr. Steeves said that the savings will be worth \$5 million over the lifetime. The plaque recognizes Amity's commitment. Mr. Blake thanked those involved and said it is nice to know the project is turning out even better than planned.

**5. Discussion and Possible Action to Receive Gift of \$5,000 to Capital Nonrecurring Fund for Black Box Theater**

Dr. Brady said that the Drama Club wished to donate \$5,000 for a Black Box Theater for the High School. The only stipulation is that the money be returned to the Drama Club if the purchase of the Black Box Theater doesn't go forward. By accepting the gift, there will be \$5,000 set aside for the Black Box Theater. The total amount put aside for the Black Box Theater is \$15,000. The theater is expected to cost \$250,000.

Peter Downhour said that the Amity Drama Club, known as Amity Creative Theater, would like to improve the existing program. Recently, the club purchased a professional lighting board. Previously, the lights had to be rented. The lighting board was about \$10,000. The area above the booth was built out for spotlights.

*Motion to accept the gift of \$5,000 from the Drama Club to be used for the Black Box Theater (Mr. Grande, 2d Ms. McNabola).*

*Discussion:* Mr. Grande said that the Board welcomes donations as the Black Box Theater is very costly.

*Vote in favor unanimous.*

***Motion passed.***

**6. Public Comment (6:46 p.m.)**

George Taylor of Bethany, a retired teacher, said that he shared an office with Bill Johnson for years and feels that Mr. Johnson is an exceptional person and huge supporter of Amity. Mr. Taylor said he feels it very appropriate to name the football field in honor of his friend and former colleague. The Sim Athletic Complex can honor Mr. Johnson and others who made significant contributions.

(Public Comment concluded at 6:50 p.m.)

**7. Student Report**

Thomas Falcigno said that Club Day is scheduled for Thursday, September 22<sup>nd</sup>. The rain date is Friday, September 23<sup>rd</sup>. Student Government will hold its first meeting soon.

Mr. Blake asked how the new eight period schedule is working out. Tom said the students seem to prefer the new schedule compared with last year's schedule.

## **8. Discussion of Communication Tools During Emergencies**

Dr. Brady said that the District has an extensive Listserv with about 3,000 subscribers. Unfortunately, when the power was lost after Hurricane Irene, the Listserv couldn't be used to communicate with the Amity community.

The Listserv is free. It might make sense to get a messaging system. Emergency messages could be sent through text, e-mail, and phone. The system currently being examined is School Messenger. The cost is \$1.15 per student. Dr. Brady noted that with cell phones, messages can be received. For example, when the school start time was changed, he put a message through his cell phone and within minutes students at a field in back of the school had the information because they checked the Orange Patch through their cell phones.

Dr. Brady said that the Listserv has been adequate for the last five years and this is the first time that it couldn't be accessed. The Superintendent said that he would be meeting with superintendents in the three towns to discuss the topic further.

## **9. Report of Summer Facilities Work**

Mr. Saisa said that the meters will be used to compare savings data with the new lighting. During the month of August, 67,000 fewer kilowatt hours were used. He hopes to see a savings of \$120,000 a year. A report will be ready for the next meeting. A number of projects were completed during the summer. Tuff Deck supports were put in at the Middle Schools. The HVAC project is in progress, with preliminary piping and duct work having been completed. A solar panel has been installed at the Field House. A \$25,000 rebate is expected on that project. Security cameras have been installed at the High School.

Mr. Horwitz asked if signs were put up to let students know that there are security cameras. Mr. Saisa said that signs were put up.

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

### **a. Recommendation for Make Up Dates Ready for October Meeting**

Dr. Brady said that he would be talking to superintendents in the BOWA about make up days and would bring a plan to the Board.

Ms. Cohen asked if people were alerted to the possibility of the April vacation being used for make-up days. Dr. Brady said that they have.

Mr. Grande asked if Columbus Day or Election Day are being considered as possible make up days.

Dr. Brady said that April tends to be the most popular time for family vacations. He recommends having a potential plan in place should there be a lot of snow. If Election Day were chosen as a make-up day, the decision would need to be made at the next Board meeting.

Ms. Altman said that the delayed opening is creating challenges for faculty, since there is less time for material to be presented.

b. High School Campus under Surveillance of 22 Cameras

This item was discussed in #9 above.

c. iPad Pilot – Evaluation of Effectiveness

Dr. Brady said that data will be collected that will help determine what the new five-year technology plan will look like. The pilot will offer a scientific approach and a good basis for decision-making. Preliminary information shows that comprehension scores increased when an iPod was used versus traditional book chapters.

## 11. Correspondence

Dr. Brady said that he recently heard that two former Amity students, Sivan Battat and Jenny Liu, have been awarded prestigious scholarships. He wanted to recognize and congratulate the students on their achievement.

## 12. Principals' Reports

High School: Charles Britton said that the opening of school went well. The students completed one full cycle of the new rotating schedule and Back to School Night was held for freshmen. Back to School Night for sophomores and juniors would be held soon and Senior Parents Night is scheduled for Thursday, September 22<sup>nd</sup>. The Counseling Department is shifting to a paperless environment. Some college admissions procedures are entirely on-line and the department is ready to assist students. Fall sports competitions are beginning.

*Discussion:* Mr. Horwitz asked if any consideration had been given to having the Senior Parents Night in the spring of junior year. Dr. Britton said that the Counseling Department has traditionally held the event in the fall.

Bethany campus: Dr. Dellinger said that despite having a delayed opening due to the hurricane, the staff did a great job. So far, there are 378 students this year. About 200 students came out for fall sports. In recognition of 9/11, the school had a special ceremony by the flag pole outside. Back to School Night is scheduled to take place soon.

Orange campus: Vi Gibbons, assistant principal, gave the report. The new school year began with two separate assemblies for seventh and eighth graders. There are 390 students enrolled. Ms. Gibbons spoke to the students about new bullying legislation. The school is functioning on a rotating schedule. The teachers are adjusting and students are very comfortable with the schedule. Ms. Gibbons and Ms. Fuller Cutler spoke to the students on closed circuit TV about 9/11. The talk focused on the idea of connectedness. The first Student Council meeting will take place on Tuesday, September 20<sup>th</sup>. The iPad pilot will be getting started soon and teacher Meg Wilson will be assisting.

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

#### **a. Personnel Report**

The report contained in the packet distributed to the Board showed Daniel Martins, an assistant varsity Boys' Soccer coach, was hired.

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

#### **a. Committee Reports**

1. ACES: There was no report.
2. CABE: Dr. Brady said that a conference is coming up in November. Everyone on the Board is invited to attend.
3. Curriculum: Ms. Altman said that if anyone would like the committee to address anything, let her know.
4. Facilities
  - a. Consideration of Naming of Facilities – Football Stadium, September 21, 2011, 6:00 p.m., District Office Conference Room  
Dr. Brady said that he contacted the Sim family. Input is being sought through the Listserv.
5. Finance
  - a. Discussion of Proposed 2011-2012 Budget Calendar and Process  
Dr. Brady reviewed the budget calendar, which serves as a road map for the process. If additional meetings are needed, they can be added. On November 15<sup>th</sup>, there will be a meeting with the Technology Committee about the capital improvement forecast for technology. On November 17<sup>th</sup>, the Curriculum Committee and the Facilities Committee will meet to review the five year capital improvement forecast. The Superintendent presents his budget proposal to the Amity Finance Committee on January 23<sup>rd</sup>. Final adoption is after the district hearing in April. The referendum is in May.
  - b. Presentation of Annual Report for Reserve for Capital and Nonrecurring Expenditures Fund  
A memo regarding the Reserve Fund for Capital and Nonrecurring Expenditures was contained in the monthly packet sent to the Board. Mr. Levine noted that \$342,008.41 will be used for the High School roof restoration project. No money will be returned to the towns at the end of the year.
  - c. Discussion of Monthly Financial Statements  
There were no questions on the financial statements.

- d. Director of Finance and Administration Approved Transfers Under \$3,000  
For future meetings, scanned documents will be sent to the Board in a simpler format.
6. Policy
  - a. Second Reading – New Bylaw Creating Position of Deputy Treasurer  
*Motion to Approve the Bylaw Creating the Position of Deputy Treasurer* (Ms. Crocco, 2d Mr. Grande).  
*Vote in favor unanimous.* ***Motion passed.***
7. Personnel
  - a. Superintendent's Evaluation (Executive Session)  
The Board entered Executive Session at 7:45 p.m.

**15. Items for the Next Agenda**

**16. Adjournment**

*Motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:55 p.m. (Mr. Hurley, 2d Ms. Crocco).*

*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, August 8, 2011

Memos: Jack Levine to John Brady (9/1/11) re...Reserve Fund for Capital and Nonrecurring Expenditures  
John Brady to Members of the Board of Education (9/12/11)...Personnel Report

Reports: Amity Regional School District No. 5 Revenue and Expenditures for FY 2011-2012  
Amity Regional School District No. 5 Budget Transfers 2011-2012  
Amity Regional School District No. 5 Budget Transfers 2010-2011

Misc.: 2012-2013 Budget Calendar  
Bylaws of the Board, Deputy Treasurer