

MINUTES

AMITY BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

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

AMITY BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

Julie Altman, Steven DeMaio

Staff Members Present: John Brady, Charles Britton, Kathleen Fuller Cutler, Richard Dellinger, Kevin Keller, Jack Levine, Marianne Lippard, Terry Lumas, Paul Mengold, Rocco Palmieri, Jim Saisa, Sheila Wycinowski

Also Present: Les Burns, Thomas Falcigno, Jeff Kwolek; members of the Public; members of the Press

A regular meeting of the Amity Regional Board of Education was held on Monday, January 9, 2012, 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 6:32 p.m.

2. **Pledge of Allegiance** was recited by those present.

3. **Approval of Minutes**

a. Regular Board of Education Meeting, December 12, 2011

Motion to approve these minutes as presented (Mr. Hurley, 2d Ms. Gedansky).

Discussion: A few corrections were noted.

Vote in favor of approving the minutes as amended: Christopher Browe, Patricia Cardozo, Sue Cohen, Diane Crocco, Rita Gedansky, John A. Grasso, Jr., Thomas Hurley, Tracey Lane Russo, James Stirling

Vote opposed: none

Abstain: James Horwitz

Motion passed.

Motion to move the Student Report from Item #9 to Item #4 (Ms. Cohen, 2d Ms. Crocco).

Vote in favor unanimous.

Motion passed.

4. Student Report

Thomas Falcigno reported that auditions for the musical *Legally Blonde* were taking place during the week. The High School's Link Crew is planning activities. On behalf of the students, Thomas expressed support for the turf field being proposed. He thanked the Board for supporting athletics at Amity.

5. Discussion and Possible Action to Accept Audit of Year Ending June 30, 2011

Motion to accept the audit (Mr. Hurley, 2d Mr. Stirling).

Discussion:

Ron Howard of CCR gave a brief report. In regard to financial compliance, Mr. Howard said that the audit was clean all around. He said management at Amity was very helpful and efficient, making CCR's job easy.

Mr. Stirling said that he noticed that there were no internal control weaknesses. He asked if many districts have this.

Mr. Howard said that it is not the norm to have such a clean report.

Mr. Hurley said that the Board should thank Finance Manager Terry Lumas and Director of Finance and Administration Jack Levine.

Mr. Blake said that he agreed with Mr. Hurley's sentiments.

Vote in favor unanimous.

Motion passed.

6. Discussion and Possible Action to Support Community Fund Raising Efforts to Purchase and Install an Artificial Turf Field at Amity High School

A Facilities Committee meeting took place last week. The possibility of purchasing and installing a turf field was discussed. Jeff Kwolek said that he was approached by coaches and parents about the condition of fields at Amity.

Realizing that there is no financial support through the schools, a group has formed for the purpose of raising money for a turf field. The group would like to officially form a financial subcommittee, but Board approval is needed.

Mr. Mengold said that a feasibility survey was done five years ago. The field would be beneficial. Claims that the materials used for turf fields may be carcinogenic aren't proven. The current football field is quite muddy. Soccer teams can't use the field and physical education classes also have difficulty using the field. There are many positives associated with a turf field. The field could be rented and the maintenance savings would be about \$35,000 a year.

Dr. Brady noted that another benefit discussed would be a reduction in orthopedic injuries.

Mr. Blake asked if Mr. Kwolek is willing to undertake the fundraising, what the financial commitment would be. He noted that the Board would not be soliciting funds.

Ms. Russo questioned what the signs might look like if corporate sponsorships are secured.

Mr. Kwolek said that bronze plaques would be preferable. Nothing gaudy would be used.

Mr. Horwitz asked about the size of the turf field. He asked whether there are different quality fields and which is less likely to create risk.

Mr. Kwolek said that there is sufficient space for an appropriate sized football field.

Mr. Mengold said that some people feel that a sand/rubber combination results in fewer injuries than simply rubber. Mr. Mengold said that the field would have an eight-year warranty.

Motion to support fundraising activities and accept funds raised from such activities for the sole purpose of construction and installation of a turf athletic field at Amity Regional High School (Ms. Cohen, 2d Ms. Gedansky).

Vote in favor unanimous.

Motion passed.

7. Discussion and Possible Action to Amend the Budget Calendar

Dr. Brady noted that changes are being proposed because the Orange Board of Finance would like to review, comment, and provide input on the budget. The Amity Finance Committee vote will now take place on February 13, 2012.

Motion to amend the Budget Calendar (Mr. Stirling, 2d Mr. Hurley).

Vote in favor unanimous.

Motion passed.

8. Information on Enrollment Through 2017-2018

Dr. Brady noted that trends in student enrollment show a loss of over 300 students. A comprehensive enrollment study should take place, as these are fairly significant changes. A plan should be put in place going forward. The study would be the basis for future decisions regarding the District. A study should be conducted that would provide comprehensive and accurate data.

9. Principal's Reports

- a. Orange middle school: Ms. Fuller Cutler said that students gave a heartfelt performance at the Winter Concert. Students took part in character education and learned about taking control of their actions. The students were very engaged in the subject matter. They gained an understanding about why words matter.
- b. Bethany middle school: Dr. Dellinger said that the school recently held the annual Three Kings celebration featuring Spanish food. Students learned

about work going on in Rwanda. Funds are being collected for a trip to China and the school plans to Skype with students and teachers there. The iPad pilot is going well and a science teacher showed students how the lab work could be captured in iMovie. The Nature's Classroom parent meeting will take place tomorrow night. Students will be signing up for high school electives this week. An upcoming assembly is entitled, "Let's Get Real." Bullying is being discussed and kids are taking steps to report problems.

- c. High school: Dr. Britton said that work is being done on the accreditation study. Follow-up reports must be submitted to NEASC. An event is planned for juniors to teach about life after high school. A special PTSA meeting will take place to acquaint more parents about the association. A transition resource fair will be offered to parents of special needs students. The fair will be important for addressing the transition from high school to life after high school.

10. Student Report

Discussed in #4 above.

11. Public Comment

None.

12. Announcements from the Board and Administration

- a. CNN Program on Indoor Air Quality
Dr. Brady was approached to participate in a story for CNN. The network was looking for a district that had overcome problems. Dr. Brady participated in interviews for the program. The reporters traveled to Woodbridge and Bethany. A school in Pennsylvania experiencing significant water and air quality problems will be shown. Amity would be featured as a district that overcame problems. The programs will air on Saturday, January 14th and Sunday, January 15th at 8 p.m. and again at 11 p.m.

Mr. Hurley said that he would like to see if a copy of the program could be brought to the next meeting of the Board.

- b. Budget Presentation to Amity Finance Committee – January 23, 2012, 5:30 p.m.
Dr. Brady will present the budget to the Amity Finance Committee in two weeks.
- c. Budget Presentation to Board of Education – January 30, 2012, 6:30 p.m.
The planned presentation will take place on a Monday night.

13. Correspondence

John Grasso, Jr. mentioned that there was a letter from Philip Grande. Mr. Blake said that the Board was copied on the letter already and it will be attached to the minutes.

14. Superintendent's Report

a. Personnel Report

The report shows Constandino Gizzi was hired as a Building Equipment Maintainer – Electrician.

b. Discussion of District Meeting vs. Referendum for 2012-2013 Budget Vote

At a previous meeting, Dr. Brady proposed discussing with the three First Selectmen the possibility of holding a District Meeting rather than a referendum vote on the 2012-2013 Amity budget. Further information was requested about how other regional districts vote on budgets and what the voting patterns were in the three towns in terms of time. All but one of the regional districts use a referendum. The percentage of voters casting ballots in the 2011 Amity referendum was approximately 10 percent of registered voters in all three towns. There was no information on who votes at what times. While the voter turnout was low, conducting the vote at a District Meeting would almost certainly result in even lower participation. Dr. Brady said that he feels that the District should continue use of referendum voting.

15. Chairman's Report

a. Committee Reports

1. ACES: Ms. Cohen said that ACES has a new autism program that will be welcome in the area.
2. CABE: Mr. Blake said that the Board of Education will serve as the selection committee for the new superintendent. CABE was chosen after a number of search firms were interviewed. The first step in the process of choosing a new superintendent will be to gather community input through focus groups to determine what qualities community members would like to see in the next leader. Information gathered will be shared on the District website, since not everyone in the community can attend focus groups. Materials will also be available elsewhere. For information about the search, people can go to www.amityregion5.org and look for the superintendent search. The goal is to have a new superintendent in place at the start of the next school year. Mr. Blake noted that there is a lot going on with CABE at the state level. Mr. Stirling said that if anyone on the Board isn't getting information and e-mails from CABE to let him know.

3. Curriculum

a. Discussion and Possible Action on Chinese V / AP Chinese / Chinese Honors

Mr. Hurley noted that there was no quorum at the last meeting of the Curriculum Committee. Chinese has become a popular offering. Chinese V must be approved by the Board.

Motion to approve Chinese V (Mr. Browe, 2d Ms. Cardozo).

Discussion: Mr. Horwitz asked if it is possible to have an honors class that isn't locked into the AP.

Dr. Brady said that the advanced program is recognized by colleges nationwide. Data that colleges look for includes advanced placement coursework and SAT scores.

Mr. Horwitz mentioned that there appear to be disadvantages to the AP program. Mr. Horwitz said that the requirements are rigid, involving a 12-month cycle, rather than nine or 10-month cycle.

Dr. Brady said that he supports the program, as it is very rigorous. Students take AP courses for different reasons. Some use it to advance into new courses; others are able to be waived out of languages. The courses are voluntary.

Ms. Wycinowski said that AP courses involve national exams. The coursework prepared students for fall by having them do some work over the summer.

Vote in favor: Christopher Browe, Patricia Cardozo, Sue Cohen, Diane Crocco, Rita Gedansky, John A. Grasso, Jr., Thomas Hurley, Tracey Lane Russo, James Stirling

Vote opposed: James Horwitz

Motion passed.

Mr. Horwitz said that he is not opposed to offering Chinese V, just to making it an AP offering.

Dr. Brady said that he believes that AP courses help students get into colleges.

4. Facilities: Ms. Cardozo reported that another Facilities Committee meeting will be planned, as the Five-Year Capital Forecast needs to be discussed further.

5. Finance

- a. Discussion and Possible Action to Redesignate Funds from the Capital & Nonrecurring Account for Specified Capital Projects

Mr. Blake said that money was designated for the roof at the High School. Dr. Brady is asking the Board to reconsider, as there are a number of needs facing the District and the budget for next year already includes a 2.1 percent increase.

No action was taken. A number of questions have been raised. The concerns will be addressed through the budget process.

- b. Discussion of Monthly Financial Statements

There were no questions.

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

- d. Discussion and Possible Action on Budget Transfers

This budget request re-allocates funds to offset the cost of two bench subs for 50 days. These bench subs will be used to staff the Math CAPT Lab and Science CAPT Lab while the interns complete their student teaching. Staffing these labs with additional bench subs will allow the District to maintain tutoring, which is being used as part of RTI programming and CAPT prep remediation efforts. This tutoring

will be maintained during the critical January and February timeframe in the lead-up to the March CAPT administration.

Motion to make the following budget transfer of \$7,000 to pay two bench subs \$70 per day each for 50 days (Ms. Cardozo, 2d Mr. Horwitz):

Account Number	Account Name	From	To
03-11-1001-5611	Instructional Supplies	\$500	
03-11-1008-5611	Instructional Supplies	\$300	
03-11-1009-5611	Instructional Supplies	\$900	
03-11-1010-5611	Instructional Supplies	\$400	
03-11-1013-5611	Instructional Supplies	\$900	
03-11-1014-5611	Instructional Supplies	\$150	
03-13-2120-5611	Instructional Supplies	\$1,000	
03-14-2219-5611	Instructional Supplies	\$1,000	
03-13-2220-5611	Instructional Supplies	\$350	
03-11-2400-5550	Communications	\$1,500	
05-15-1026-5111	Certified Salaries		\$7,000

Discussion: Dr. Brady noted that the tutoring is working. Shifting funds is necessary in order to staff the labs.

Mr. Hurley noted that instructional supplies are being used.

Dr. Brady said that the teachers were not using these funds.

Vote in favor unanimous.

Motion passed.

A final payment to Day Pitney LLP of \$6,014 UNF needs to be made for professional services rendered in connection with the IRS audit of \$20,000,000 General Obligation Bonds and \$8,190,000 Bond Anticipation Notes. The IRS has notified the District of a “No-Change Determination” after completing their examination of Amity’s bonds.

Motion to make the following budget transfer of \$6,014 to pay Day Pitney LLP for professional services rendered in connection with an IRS audit of General Obligation Bonds and Bond Anticipation Notes (Ms. Cohen, 2d Ms. Crocco):

Account Number	Account Name	From	To
05-14-2510-5521	General Liability Insurance	\$6,014	
05-14-2310-5330	Other Professional & Tech. Svcs.		\$6,014

Vote in favor unanimous.

Motion passed.

e. Update on Financial Operations

6. Policy
7. Personnel: The Committee has been primarily involved with negotiations with teachers.

16. Update on Negotiations – Executive Session

Motion to enter Executive Session at 8:12 p.m. (Ms. Cohen, 2d Ms. Cardozo).

Vote in favor unanimous.

Motion passed.

The Board left Executive Session at 8:40 p.m.

17. Discussion and Possible Action on Agreement Between the Amity Regional Board of Education and the Amity Teacher’s Association

Motion to accept agreement between the Amity Regional Board of Education and the Amity Teacher’s Association (Mr. Hurley, 2d Mr. Browe).

Vote in favor unanimous.

Motion passed.

18. Items for the Next Agenda

19. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn at 8:42 p.m. (Mr. Hurley, 2d Ms. Cardozo).

Vote in favor unanimous.

Motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,

Rita Gedansky, secretary
Marianne Lippard, recording clerk

Attachments/References

- Minutes: Regular Board Meeting (12/12/11)
- Letters/Memos: John J. Brady to Amity Board of Education and Amity Finance Committee (1/4/12) re...Audited Financial Statements for the Year Ended 6/30/11
John J. Brady to Amity Board of Education (1/5/12) re...Community Fund Raising for Turf Field
John J. Brady to Amity Finance Committee and Board of Education (1/3/12) re...Proposal to Amend Budget Calendar
John J. Brady to Board of Education (11/14/10) re...Projected Enrollment through 2017-2018
John J. Brady to Board of Education (1/9/12) re...Personnel Report
John Brady to Amity Finance Committee and Amity Board of Education (1/4/12) re...Information on Budget Referendum Voting
John J. Brady to Amity Board of Education and Finance Committee (1/5/12) re...Redesignate Funds from the Capital & Nonrecurring Expenditures Account for Specified Capital Projects
Jack B. Levine to John J. Brady (1/4/12) re...Budget Transfers of \$3,000 or More for Fiscal Year 2011-2012
Philip Grande to Amity Finance Committee (1/9/12) re...Capital Projects
- Proposal: New Course / Unit or Course Modification: Chinese V
- Reports: Amity Regional District No. 5 Revenues and Expenditures for FY 2011-2012
Amity Regional District No. 5 – Budget Transfers 2011-2012