

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, James Stirling

**AMITY BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:** Joseph Abbatiello

**Staff Members Present:** John Brady, Charles Britton, Kathleen Fuller-Cutler, Richard Dellinger, Deb DeMeo, Jack Levine, Marianne Lippard, Mary Raiola, Sheila Wycinowski

Also Present: 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, October 17, 2011, at 6:30 p.m., in the cafeteria at Amity Regional High School.

1. **Call to Order:** William Blake called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m.

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

3. **Approval of Minutes**

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

*Motion to approve the minutes as presented* (Mr. Hurley, 2d Ms. McNabola).

*Discussion:* none

*Vote in favor:* Julie Altman, Patricia Cardozo, Sue Cohen, Diane Crocco, Steven DeMaio, Rita Gedansky, Philip Grande, James Horwitz, Thomas Hurley, Angela McNabola

*Vote opposed:* none

*Abstain:* James Stirling

*Motion to add to the agenda a discussion of the Superintendent's contract after Public Comment* (Mr. Hurley, 2d Ms. Gedansky).

*Vote in favor unanimous.*

***Motion passed.***

*Motion to move Recommendation for Naming of Athletic Facility to follow the Student Report* (Mr. Grande, 2d Ms. Cohen).

*Vote in favor unanimous.*

***Motion passed.***

4. **Acceptance of Gift**

Dr. Brady said that the class of 1961 has offered a gift. At a recent class reunion, the class of 1961 attained a fund balance of \$3,422. The reunion committee would like to donate the funds to

the Howard and Marjorie Brooks Scholarship Fund. Mr. Brooks served as Amity superintendent in the 1960s. Vincent DiMauro of the class of 1961 told the Board that the donation had been increased to \$3,500, so that a round figure could be offered. The scholarship will be in the Brooks family name. Mr. Blake expressed appreciation on behalf of the Board.

*Motion to accept with gratitude the gift of \$3,500 for the Howard and Marjorie Brooks Scholarship Fund (Mr. Hurley, 2d Ms. Cardozo).*

*Vote in favor unanimous.*

*Motion passed.*

**5. Recognition of Career and Technical Education Teachers and Students**

Dr. Brady said that he tries to balance recognition of students, noting that he often says that there is something for everyone at Amity. Recently, students in the District earned recognition for accomplishments in Career and Technical Education. Amity earned #1 ranking for the 2011 Career and Technical Education Assessment for Computer Information Systems and Nutrition, Food Production and Services. Dr. Brady praised the teachers for their work. Certificates were distributed to students.

For Computer Information, the Board recognized students Daniel Centore, Jason Chernecky, Paige Forcier, Joseph Stein, Michael Wenke, Liam Williams, and Michael Zuo.

In Nutrition, Food Production and Services, the Board recognized students Megan Aconfora, Elizabeth Burgess, Anthony DiMatteo, Stephanie Foster, Jonathan Friedman, Gilbert Guo, Jenny Heyman, Katherine Holden, Rachel Holden, Rachel Itzler, Cameron Luth, Rashmi Pashankar, Ivan Peng, Jonah Schwartz, Nicholas Tudino, Nina Waskiewicz, and Janey Yang.

**6. Recognition of National Merit Scholar Program Semi-Finalists and Commended Students**

Students were recognized for their achievements in the National Merit Scholarship Program. The Board recognized semi-finalists Allison Giebisch, Sarah Giovanniello, Adam Kelley, Anupriya Nagarathnam, Clark Shurtleff, Erica Wivagg, Zi Zi Yu, and Ming Zhao. Commended students recognized included Wei Wei Bi, Avery Chen, Scott DellaTorre, Rahul Dey, Martin Forstrom, Giovanni Iaboni, Eric Jiang, Michelle Johnson, Elaine Lettick, Sharon Lin, Robert Schwartz, Katie Shelnitz, Rachel Simon, Joseph Stein, Zelun Wang, Michael Wenke, and Ammar Zafar.

**7. Information on 2011 Facilities Report**

Mr. Saisa was not present to discuss the report. The 2011 Facilities Report will be discussed at the next meeting of the full Board.

**8. Principals' Reports**

Orange campus: Kathleen Fuller-Cutler said that there has been a great deal of activity going on at the school during the last month. A very productive PTO meeting was held and there was a fabulous school breakfast. The school year got started with a character education program with

many engaging activities. The students learned about what it means to be a good citizen. Ms. Gibbons spoke to students about new bullying legislation. Students put a great deal of effort into the Student Council elections. Many students created posters and campaign speeches were recorded. There is excitement for the new Student Council. School fundraising is taking place and the school's first fire drill went well. Recently, Stephanie Bodeen, author of *The Compound* spoke to students about editing and revising their work. Naviance has been implemented and there will eventually be a sixth grade component. Over 1,000 books were collected and donated to Baltimore inner city students. The school will begin distributing iPads to some students as part of the pilot program. Board members are invited to come see the students using the technology in class.

Bethany campus: Richard Dellinger said that the students at the Middle School in Bethany did a great job reading over the summer, with 99 percent of students reading over 1,000 pages during the vacation. There is an incredible reading culture. The information was forwarded to the State. There are 100 student athletes taking part in soccer, cross country and volleyball. Fall sports are going well. The Bethany campus also took part in character education, with much of the focus on bullying. Students are encouraged to sit with different students. Students have expressed interest in decorating lockers for Halloween. Stephanie Bodeen did a great job inspiring students. Seventh graders went on a field trip to the Connecticut Science Center. The school crisis team met about lockdown. Ipads will be distributed soon. A presentation about green architecture is also planned. Eighth graders are getting ready to do the mile run.

High School: Charles Britton said that mid-marks were recorded and were made available electronically. Only those parents requesting paper copies received them. Families are encouraged to use the iParent system. A total of 241 students in the Junior Class will be recognized as CAPT scholars. Those juniors also took the PSAT, also the National Merit Scholar qualifying test, and all were able to take it in school. Reports are expected in mid-December. The Music Department entered an idea to the Pepsi Idea Challenge and won some money. Dr. Britton congratulated the Music Department for their work on that project. He also recognized Mr. Mengold, Ms. Davis and others for their work with unified sports, which pairs kids together. He added that Mr. Mengold did a fantastic job organizing the event. Financial Aid Night will take place on Thursday, October 20<sup>th</sup>. The event is open to the community and will be helpful for making sense of financial aid forms. Security cameras installed at the High School are a good addition, but have had one negative side effect: bringing smokers inside the bathrooms. In an attempt to improve the situation, some of the bathrooms were locked. Students would rather have the bathrooms available to them, even if they have to deal with the second-hand smoke, as it takes them out of class longer if they have to walk a distance. Smoke detectors will be installed in the bathrooms. Detectors resistant to tampering are being examined.

*Discussion:* Julie Altman said that 105 sophomores are taking the PSATs. She said this is a concern because they are likely missing some of the coursework that they will be tested on.

Dr. Britton said that as long as students have taken geometry, he encourages them to take the test. The junior year results are what will count.

## 9. Student Report

Thomas Falcigno said that a tailgate on October 28<sup>th</sup> is open to all freshmen. The Amity National Honor Society is co-sponsoring a blood drive. A peer tutoring program is starting. The Amity Music Department is working on the show Music in Motion. The Theater Department will be producing *Almost, Maine*. Bracelets to benefit breast cancer research will soon be sold. Thomas outlined a plan to help students by reducing the burden of parking fees. His plan would charge students \$25 per school quarter, rather than \$100 for the year. He said that he conducted some research and found that Amity has one of the highest parking fees in the area. Other schools that he contacted charged \$25 or less.

*Discussion:* Ms. Altman said that Thomas seems to have some good ideas and suggested he take up the bathroom problem. Thomas said that he has been discussing ways to fix the problem.

## 10. Recommendation for Naming of Athletic Facility

Mr. Grande asked the Board to consider a memo dated September 22, 2011 concerning the Facilities Committee's recommendation for naming of the athletic facility. On September 21, 2011, the Committee met to discuss recommendations regarding the naming of the football athletic facility. The recommendations came forward in order to honor former teacher and coach William Johnson and public address announcer Stanley Gedansky. The recommendations were to name the facility the William E. Sim Athletic Facility, name the football field the William Johnson Football Field, and name the press box the Stanley Gedansky Press Box.

*Motion to rename the football athletic facility the Dr. William E. Sim Athletic Facility, name the football field the William "Bill" Johnson football field, name the press box the Stanley Gedansky Press Box and direct that the graduation invitation states that the ceremony will take place at the "William E. Sim Athletic Facility." (Ms. Cardozo, 2d Ms. Cohen).*

*Discussion:* Dr. Brady said that Dr. Sim's son, Greg Sim, was comfortable with the recommendation.

*Vote in favor:* Julie Altman, Patricia Cardozo, Sue Cohen, Diane Crocco, Steven DeMaio, Philip Grande, James Horwitz, Thomas Hurley, Angela McNabola, James Stirling

*Vote opposed:* none

*Abstain:* Rita Gedansky

Mr. Grande said that the Committee agreed that it would be good for students to learn more about the history of the school and who these facilities were named after. He thanked members of the public for their input. Dr. Brady said that the Link Crew can be involved so that new students could learn more about the people who have helped shape the High School.

Mr. Mengold said that three bronze plaques will be put near the Field House. The families of each of the men will be invited to the Thanksgiving football game. Dr. Brady said that perhaps members of the Board could attend on that day. There is usually good attendance for that game.

**11. Public Comment**

(7:38 p.m.) No members of the public spoke.

The Board entered Executive Session at 7:39 p.m. to discuss the Superintendent's Contract and returned to regular session at 7:45 p.m.

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

Dr. Brady announced that on June 30, 2012 he will retire from public education. At that time, he will have been superintendent at Amity for eight years. He described Amity as one of the finest school districts. He said that he would like to thank everyone. It has been an excellent experience.

Dr. Brady said that he and Mr. Levine will be interviewed for a CNN segment on healthy air quality. Also, Dr. Brady noted that the District has an unusually large number of twins and triplets and it appears that Amity has exceeded the official record in the *Guinness Book of World Records*. The students are in the process of providing the documentation for this record.

**13. Correspondence**

The Superintendent said that he received a letter requesting naming something at Amity in honor of Eric Soufrine, an Amity graduate who enlisted in the Army last year and died in the line of duty. A scholarship was recommended in honor of Eric.

**14. Superintendent's Report**

a. Personnel Report

There were no new hires, resignations or retirements recorded.

b. Budget Calendar

Dr. Brady noted one change in the Budget Calendar. The January 30<sup>th</sup> date was changed to January 25<sup>th</sup>.

c. AYP

Regarding Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), Connecticut will be applying for a waiver of the requirements. At the middle schools, special education didn't make AYP in some areas. He hopes the waiver will help.

d. Makeup Days

- Dr. Brady said efforts are made to schedule makeup days to have the least impact on families. A minimum day of school is proposed for Friday, March 30<sup>th</sup>, which is a planned professional development day. Professional development would occur once students are dismissed. At this point, Dr. Brady said that it would be worthwhile to wait and see how the weather turns out and hope for a mild winter. Parents have asked that February vacation be used for makeup days, rather than April vacation. Unfortunately, since it is still winter, February is not the preferred choice, as there is heightened potential for school cancellation at that time. Also, a break in the cycle of the cold and flu season is welcome because student absenteeism is at its height in February.
- e. Sikorsky STEM Challenge  
Amity Regional High School has been selected by Sikorsky to participate in the 2011-2012 Sikorsky STEM Challenge. The competition provides students with the opportunity to apply the lessons of the classroom to the technical problems faced in a real engineering workplace. Dr. Brady noted that Amity was one of five schools invited to participate.
  - f. October Enrollment Report  
Dr. Brady pointed out that the report shows how the town's commitments are based. Orange has 49.7 percent of the enrollment. A more detailed analysis will be provided at the November meeting. The next two years appear to be stable. Looking ahead to the future, there will be 500 fewer students in the District.
  - g. Update of Emergency Alert Systems  
A number of products have been considered. Dr. Brady looking into emergency alert systems that Amity could use to notify parents/guardians in the event of emergencies when the high school is without power. Amity could purchase an alert system for about \$3,000 per year with unlimited messaging. The system would provide messaging to phone, fax and e-mail. Channels 3, 8 and 30 offer a free alert system to anyone who registers. These systems will notify parents/guardians of emergency messages emanating from Amity free of charge. The Superintendent recommended bypassing the commercial products, since the listserver is reliable with the exception of the loss of power. He added that the community should also be encouraged to enlist in the free systems offered by the media outlets.

## **15. Chairman's Report**

- a. Committee Reports
  1. ACES – There was no report.
  2. CABE – There is a convention coming up next month on Friday, November 18<sup>th</sup>. Some Board members are going. Mr. Levine will discuss budgets.
  3. Curriculum – Ms. Altman said that the Committee will meet soon.
  4. Facilities – Committee work was discussed above in item #10.
  5. Finance
    - a. Presentation of Revised Report on Reserve for Capital and Nonrecurring Expenditures

Mr. Levine noted that the report was contained in the packet distributed to the Board. There is \$357,793.63 set aside for roof restoration.

- b. Discussion of Monthly Financial Statements
- c. Director of Finance and Administration Approved Transfers Under \$3,000
- d. Discussion and Possible Action on Budget Transfers

*Motion to make the following budget transfer of \$3,793 from the Tuition account to the Contingency Account and motion to transfer \$20,735 to pay for a Speech and Language Pathologist substitute for a teacher on a leave of absence (Mr. Stirling, 2d Ms. McNabola).*

<u>Account Number</u>	<u>Account Name</u>	<u>From</u>	<u>To</u>
04-12-6117-5560	Tuition	\$3,793	
05-15-0000-5850	Contingency Account		\$3,793

<u>Account Number</u>	<u>Account Name</u>	<u>From</u>	<u>To</u>
05-15-1026-5111	Certified Salaries	\$20,735	
04-12-2150-5330	Other Professional & Tech. Services		\$20,735

*Vote in favor unanimous.*

***Motion passed.***

Mr. Levine said that approval was needed to restore \$3,793 to the Contingency Account. ECA does not have 27 students. There are 26 students attending ECA.

*Discussion:* Mr. Grande asked Dr. Brady if 26 students is the new benchmark. Dr. Brady said that he plans to look at the student attendance in ECA for three years and come up with an average.

- e. Update on Financial Operations  
Mr. Levine noted that the audit showed one fundraiser where the money wasn't deposited in a timely manner. The Finance Office had already contacted the Principal and Advisor regarding the late deposit at the time the deposit was received. Everything else looked good.

6. Policy

- a. First Reading – Anti-Bullying Policy  
Mr. Hurley said that the State dictates that a safe school climate coordinator is needed in order to comply with bullying legislation. The new rules are aimed to make bystanders speak up. Safe school climate committees are required.

Mr. Blake said the new policy covers off premises bullying. Dr. Brady said it is specific to cyber bullying.

Mr. Horwitz asked if the proposed policy was a model plan or something devised by the administration. Dr. Brady said that the law got started in Massachusetts, where there had been suicides related to bullying. The policy was written to comply with the new legislation.

Ms. Altman said that the Policy Committee looked at the Anti-Bullying Policy.

Mr. Hurley noted that unrelated to the bullying policy, James Leahy from the Orange Finance Committee has asked for 50 percent representation on the Amity Finance Committee. He said it is up to the Board to decide whether to change the policy.

Mr. Blake said that Board members could let him or Dr. Brady know if they are interested in Mr. Leahy's request.

b. Discussion and Possible Action to Elect Vice Treasurer

Dr. Brady said that a Vice Treasurer is needed, as the Treasurer isn't running for re-election, so the Vice Treasurer would soon serve the role of Treasurer. Mr. Hurley was suggested. Mr. Hurley said that he would consider it, but it could pose a problem for his employer. The topic will be put on the next agenda.

7. Personnel

a. Discussion and Possible Acton on Paraprofessionals' Contract

*Motion to approve the paraprofessional contract with a term of one year with a wage increase retroactive to July 1, 2011 (Ms. Cardozo, 2d Ms. Cohen).*

*Vote in favor unanimous.*

***Motion passed.***

**16. Items for the Next Agenda**

Election of Vice Treasurer

**17. Adjournment**

*Motion to adjourn at 8:28 p.m. (Mr. Hurley, 2d Mr. DeMaio).*

*Vote in favor unanimous.*

***Motion passed. Meeting adjourned.***

Respectfully submitted,

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Rita Gedansky, secretary  
Marianne Lippard, recording clerk





Attachments/References:

- Minutes: Regular Board Meeting, 9/12/11  
Board of Education Finance Committee, 9/12/11  
Board of Education Facilities Committee, 9/21/11
- Memos: John Brady to Members of the Board of Education (9/21/11) re...Make-Up School Days  
John Brady to Members of the Board of Education (9/19/11) re...Parent/Guardian Alert Systems  
John Brady to Members of the Board of Education (9/22/11) re...Paraprofessionals Contract  
John Brady to Board of Education and Finance Committee (10/11/11) re...October 1 Enrollment Report  
John Brady to Members of the Board of Education (9/26/11) re...Acceptance of Gift  
John Brady to Members of the Board of Education (10/17/11) re...Personnel Report  
John Brady to Members of the Board of Education (9/22/11) re...Facilities' Committee Recommendation for Naming of Athletic Facility
- Letters: John Brady to Cynthia Toscano (10/3/11) re...Scholarships  
Kip Lockhart to John Brady (9/20/11) re...Local 1303-221 of Council 4 AFSCME  
Christine Gernelli to Amity Regional High School re...Sikorsky STEM Challenge
- Reports: Amity Regional School District No. 5 Revenue and Expenditures by Category Financial Analysis for the Fiscal Year 2011-2012  
Amity Regional School District No. 5 Budget Transfers 2011-2012  
Amity Regional School District No. 5 Revenues and Expenditures for Fiscal Year 2011-2012  
Amity Regional School District No. 5 Audit Status Report June 30, 2011
- Misc.: 2012-2013 Budget Calendar  
Policy on Bullying