

MINUTES

AMITY BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: William Blake, Christopher Browe, Patricia Cardozo, Sue Cohen, Steven DeMaio, Rita Gedansky, James Horwitz, Thomas Hurley, Tracey Lane Russo, James Stirling

AMITY BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: Julie Altman, Diane Crocco, John A. Grasso, Jr.

Staff Members Present: Charles Britton, Richard Dellinger, Kathleen Fuller Cutler, Jack Levine, Marianne Lippard, Marie McPadden, Paul Mengold, Michael Nast, Mary Raiola, Jim Saisa

Also Present: Patrick Dudley; other members of the Public

A regular meeting of the Amity Regional Board of Education was held on Monday, October 21, 2013, at 6:30 p.m., in the Media Center at Amity Middle School, Bethany Campus.

1. **Call to Order:** William Blake called the meeting to order at 6:39 p.m.
2. **Pledge of Allegiance** was recited by those present.
3. **Approval of Minutes**
 - a. Regular BOE Meeting, September 9, 2013
Motion to approve the minutes as presented (Mr. Hurley, 2d Ms. Gedansky).
Vote in favor unanimous. **Motion passed.**
4. **Update/PowerSchool**

Mr. Nast said that the implementation of Powerschool is a crucial initiative for the team. We are looking to transfer data. By December, we would like to have everyone trained. An aggressive timeline has been set. It's a lot of work and a big transition. At each Board meeting, there will be an update. We will have one employee at Central Office dedicated to focusing on Powerschool. Mr. Nast added that we are on target with implementation and staff members are currently taking part in online training. Powerschool is supposed to be easier to use for both teachers and parents than the current program. Dr. Britton noted that implementation involves ensuring that fields match up perfectly within the program.
5. **Report on Adult and Continuing Education**

Mr. Nast noted that at this point, enrollment is declining. We are exploring the reasons for the decline. Adult education offers excellent opportunities,

particularly for senior citizens. Registrations are down and the course offerings are down. This past year, we lost \$26,000, so we aren't making money on this program, although we should be.

Ms. Russo noted that it is hard to understand the reasons for the declining enrollment.

Mr. Levine said that the program isn't charged for electricity. Occasionally, a custodian is paid for service for a Sunday class. We only charge a \$3,000 stipend for an administrative assistant who helps with the program.

The summer theater program costs between \$700 and \$800 per student. Not many students are participating. A survey was conducted and the community members seem to prefer taking classes during the day. Mr. Nast said that he has 179 responses to the online survey at this point. There were 80 different recommendations for classes to offer.

Mr. Nast noted that adult education programs seem to be popular in some other communities, such as Milford and Hamden. We might want to see what is offered in other communities.

Mr. Hurley noted that when we saw that we were losing money, steps were taken to see that we could break even. Now we are seeing a significant decline in enrollment. The changes that were made probably were not good.

Mr. Blake said that people may be choosing to spend their time differently. There are many choices now that weren't always available. While the brochure and registration are online, many people still prefer to receive a brochure at home.

Mr. Stirling noted that the program should be self-supporting.

Mr. Nast agreed. He noted that the surveys are in the packets. Answers to the questions tended to be random. The director of the program receives a stipend and only has one class hour to work on this.

Mr. Blake questioned whether the secretary's time is built into the cost of the program. Mr. Nash said that it is not.

Ms. Russo said that it might make sense to reach out to other towns to collaborate and see what they've been doing.

Ms. Cohen posed the question of whether we should go forward this semester even though there might be a loss.

Mr. Nast said that we could stop and look at what we're doing, but it would be hard to stop and then have to start from scratch. If we stop, we could lose everything that has been built up.

Mr. Levine noted that there is \$93,000 in the reserve fund. Mr. Blake noted that the adult education program is funded through the end of the fiscal year. In the next five months, we will decide how to proceed.

Ms. Cohen noted that if the theater program is self-supporting, she would like to see it run.

6. Discussion and Possible Action on 2014 Board of Education Meeting Calendar

Motion to approve the 2014 Board of Education Meeting Calendar (Mr. Hurley, 2d Mr. Horwitz).

Vote in favor unanimous.

Motion passed.

7. Public Comment

No members of the public addressed the Board.

8. Student Report

Patrick Dudley, student government representative, said that PLAN testing recently took place. During testing, the freshmen took part in an event coordinated by the Link Crew. An American Red Cross blood drive, coordinated by the National Honor Society, will take place on Monday, October 28th. In order to participate, students must be at least 17 years old and meet height and weight requirements. The National Art Honor Society is planning an event on Thursday, November 21st to benefit a local soup kitchen. Preparations for Music in Motion are underway. Tickets will be \$10.00. Patrick noted that the Girls' Volleyball team celebrated a victory over the weekend.

9. Superintendent's Report

a. District Goals

Mr. Nast noted that the areas that are highlighted are the changes that have been made for the 2012/2014 cycle. The goals continue along the same path, which makes sense during this transition period.

Motion to accept the goals (Mr. Hurley, 2d Ms. Gedansky).

Discussion: Enrollment was discussed. Ms. Russo noted that this is an important issue to address. Mr. Nast said that he would like to get a date. Mr. Levine noted that enrollment data will be available soon. Dr. Brady felt that we should wait for a new superintendent. The process starts in December.

Vote in favor unanimous.

Motion passed.

b. Update – Evaluation Model

Mr. Nast said that work on the new evaluation model continues. The feedback from a recent staff development workshop was very positive. We

are asking for a great deal from our staff. The styles and priorities have shifted. Part of the evaluation process has to do with student success on standardized tests.

Ms. Fuller-Cutler said that the energy is focused and we have the opportunity to look at the data and think about the goal setting process.

Mr. DeMaio said that it sounds like the workshop was a huge success. He asked if there are any more planned.

Mr. Nast said that nothing has been set up yet. This is about eliminating and alleviating anxiety about the evaluation process. The creativity is being lost. It's not helpful to have teachers feel intense pressure every day.

Dr. McPadden said that this is somewhat like building the plan while flying the plane. Districts were allowed to apply for a waiver. Districts can administer the CMT or the other test, or both. At the high school level, districts can administer the CAPT in tenth grade, or the CAPT and another assessment test. We sent in the waiver form on October 15th. We have full support from the teacher evaluation committee. We have applied to take the new online test. Test results will not be tied into the teacher evaluation. Training took place over the summer.

Ms. Cohen noted that the waiver is helping the State and the districts.

It was noted that the results will be available in mid-November. Tenth graders are tested in science with the CAPT.

Mr. Blake noted that Amity students do very well on standardized tests and go on to succeed.

c. 2014-2015 Budget Update

Mr. Nast said that the budget process has been started. The administration is looking at the numbers and the facilities. Some items that have been removed from the budget every year will probably be returning. Our insurance costs are higher at this point.

d. Financial Report

This was discussed under 9C.

e. Recognitions – Student/Staff

Dr. McPadden was nominated by CAPSS for special recognition.

f. Update – Facilities

In terms of the facilities, we need to ensure that we are solving any existing environmental problems. The police chief will be touring the High School and more cameras may be needed.

g. Personnel Report

It was noted that Orange Middle School Assistant Principal Vi Gibbons is retiring as of December 30, 2013, but she will stay until June. Mr. Hurley said that Ms. Gibbons will be missed.

h. Other

At the next meeting, we will tour the Black Box Theater. By December, we should have our air handler. The lockers at the middle school in Bethany are in place.

10. Chairman's Report

a. Committee Reports

1. ACES – Sue Cohen noted that Gred Edmondson is retiring. Regional coordinated calendars are being proposed.
2. CABE – Mr. Stirling provided a number of dates for events in November. He recommended that interested Board members contact Karen Wade.
3. Curriculum – The next meeting will take place on Thursday, November 7, 2013.
4. Facilities – No meeting is scheduled at this time.
5. Finance

a. Distribution of October 1 Enrollment Report

The report shows that there are 18 additional students in Bethany and 18 less in Orange; Woodbridge has two more students. Ms. Cohen noted that there are a large number of houses for sale in Orange. Mr. Stirling said that it would be interesting to see a study.

b. Discussion and Possible Action on Designating Interim Superintendent as Authorized Signer of ED-099 Agreement for Child Nutrition Programs

Mr. Nast noted that this action is needed so that the District can get grants.

Move to authorize Michael R. Nast, Interim Superintendent of Schools, to sign on behalf of the Amity Regional School District No. 5, as an Authorized Signer of the ED-099 Agreement for Child Nutrition Programs (Mr. Stirling, 2d Mr. Hurley).

Vote in favor unanimous.

Motion passed.

c. Update on Contract of \$35,000 or More

Mr. Levine said that the bid for the air handler came in significantly more than what had been projected.

d. Discussion of Monthly Financial Statements

Mr. Levine noted that the insurance claims have been quite high, higher than last year. An analysis showed that nearly \$100,000 relates to one person. Terry Lumas said that money can be taken out of the OPEB Trust and that will help with the reserve. We are watching the claims. Mr. Stirling noted that there will be good and bad months.

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

There was no discussion.

f. Discussion and Possible Action on Budget Transfers of \$3,000 or More

In a 10/7/13 memo from Mr. Levine to Mr. Nast, four budget transfers are recommended.

Motion to approve budget transfers, combining the first three items listed in the memo dated 10/7/13 (Mr. Stirling, 2d Ms. Russo).

Discussion:

Mr. Nast and Mr. Levine noted that the indoor air quality at the Middle School in Orange was tested. Staff had been concerned about the air quality and it was important to show that the school building was safe. More than \$7,500 was spent on these tests. Dehumidifiers also helped improve the air quality at the school, as did the change in the weather.

Vote in favor unanimous.

Motion passed.

Indoor Air Quality Issues at Orange Middle School

Over the Labor Day weekend and the Opening Day of school, we had extreme humidity. During the first week of school, Principal Kathleen Fuller-Cutler reported that there was mold in the Nurse's Office and a white, 'dust' material in the computer lab. Upon visual inspection, we noticed mold growth under the lab tables, cork bulletin board, and other areas. For health and safety reasons, Fuss & O'Neill performed air quality testing at a total cost of \$7,680. In addition, we purchased dehumidifiers for \$3,087.33.

Due to the successful over seeding, fertilizing, and aerating of Stadium Field and the really wet spring, the field is in great shape and the re-sodding won't be necessary. The budget of \$15,000 for the re-sodding won't be used. We would like to use a portion of these funds to cover the costs of the air quality testing and dehumidifiers.

Mr. Levine noted that the dehumidifiers and the change in the weather have really helped.

Move to recommend making the following budget transfer to cover the costs of the air quality testing and purchase of dehumidifiers (Mr. Stirling, 2d Mr. Browe).

<u>Account Number</u>	<u>Account Name</u>	<u>From</u>	<u>To</u>
05-14-2600-5720	Improvement to Sites	\$10,767	
05-14-2600-5420	Repairs, Maint. & Cleaning		\$7,680
02-14-2600-5613	Maint./Custodial Supplies		\$3,087

Vote in favor unanimous.

Motion passed.

Special Education Transportation

A budget transfer is needed to cover the cost of special education transportation.

Move to make the following budget transfer to cover the costs of special education transportation (Mr. Stirling, 2d Mr. Browe):

<u>Account Number</u>	<u>Account Name</u>	<u>From</u>	<u>To</u>
04-12-6110-5510	Pupil Transportation	\$12,425	
05-14-2700-5512	Pupil Transportation		\$12,425

Vote in favor unanimous.

Motion passed.

ACES Consortium Membership

ACES Consortium membership is July 1, 2013 through June 30, 2014. The pricing for participation was not released by ACES until summer 2013. Last year, due to the lateness of planning by the consortium, we requested a budget transfer to cover the funds of participation. After participating for the past two years, we were unsure of the direction of the consortium and whether or not the focus would change for the 2013-2014 school year. The focus has changed to include workshops for English Language Arts (ELA) and math, but also for science and social studies teachers this year. Although we are anxious to continue our membership, the fees have increased significantly. We were able to have twelve participants last year. This year, due to the increase in cost participation, we will secure four slots. We would like to cover the costs for the ACES Consortium membership with curriculum writing money left over from summer 2013.

Move to make the following budget transfer to cover the participation fee for ACES Consortium membership from July 1, 2013 through June 30, 2014 (Mr. Stirling, 2d Mr. Browe):

<u>Account Number</u>	<u>Account Name</u>	<u>From</u>	<u>To</u>
05-13-2212-5111	Certified Salaries	\$8,000	
05-13-2212-5322	Instruct. Pgm. Improvemnt.		\$8,000

Discussion:

Vote in favor unanimous.

Motion passed.

Netting Systems for Baseball/Softball Fields

Last fiscal year, we bid and awarded the purchase and installation of netting systems for the baseball and softball fields at the High School for \$28,770.75 (including 225 feet of netting for the baseball field and 40 feet of netting for

the softball field) to The Frankson Fence Company of North Haven, CT. Athletic Director Paul Mengold initially thought 40 feet would be sufficient for the softball field; however, two incidents of a ball going out of the playing area beyond 40 feet, caused him to recommend the purchase of an additional 40 feet of netting for the softball field at a cost of \$4,990 (negotiated down from \$5,895). The additional costs would be paid out of the Athletic Department's budget by reducing the amount designated for repairs to the fencing and backstops of existing fields by \$3,000; reducing the amount of repairs to the portable lights by \$1,000; and reducing the amount of stone dust for the softball and baseball practice areas by \$1,000.

Move to make the following budget transfer of \$4,990 to purchase an additional 40 feet of netting from The Frankson Fence Company (Mr. Stirling, 2d Mr. Browe):

<u>Account Number</u>	<u>Account Name</u>	<u>From</u>	<u>To</u>
03-11-3202-5420	Repairs – Maint. & Cleaning	\$4,990	
03-14-2600-5720	Improvements to Sites		\$4,990

Discussion:

Ms. Cohen noted that there would be a lot of liability without the additional netting.

Mr. Horwitz said that people are told not to park close to the fields. He would rather see this money go towards something to benefit the students. Signs, common sense, ropes, and cones can accomplish the same objective.

Mr. Mengold said that he is concerned about spectators at the tennis courts. Someone can get hit; no one has yet.

Ms. Russo said that with parking spaces available near the field, it is almost like an invitation for someone to park in the area.

Mr. Hurley questioned how the quantity of netting was determined.

Mr. Mengold said that he felt this quantity would offer appropriate protection.

Vote in favor: Christopher Browe, Patricia Cardozo, Sue Cohen, Steven DeMaio, Rita Gedansky, Thomas Hurley, Tracey Lane Russo, James Stirling

Vote opposed: James Horwitz

Abstain: none

Motion passed.

g. Discussion and Possible Action on New Funding Request

In a 10/4/13 memo from Mr. Levine to Mr. Nast, an evaluation of the Orange Middle School HVAC system is recommended. Mr. Levine

recommends hiring vanZelm Engineers for the evaluation. The study would look into the causes of humidity issues and propose modifications to the operation of the HVAC systems to solve the problem.

Move to make the following budget transfer of \$12,000 to pay vanZelm Engineers of Farmington, CT, to provide engineering services to evaluate the HVAC systems at Orange Middle School (Ms. Cohen, 2d Ms. Gedansky):

<u>Account Number</u>	<u>Account Name</u>	<u>From</u>	<u>To</u>
05-15-0000-5850	Contingency Account	\$12,000	
05-14-2310-5330	Other Prof. & Tech. Svcs.		\$12,000

Discussion: Mr. Nast said that he would like to pursue the study to prevent future problems, as there will be humid days. Mr. Stirling noted that this expenditure was approved unanimously by the Amity Finance Committee.

Vote in favor unanimous.

Motion passed.

h. Presentation of Amity Audit Status Report

Mr. Levine reported that the superintendent's code was submitted late. This will be noted on the audit report. This will not have any effect on the report itself. He apologized for the error.

i. Update on Facilities Projects

There was nothing new to report at this time.

6. Policy – There is no meeting planned at this time.

7. Personnel – A meeting took place to begin the process with an administrator.

11. Items for the Next Agenda

Mr. Blake noted that members of the Board could contact him or Mr. Nast with any additions to the agenda.

12. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:36 p.m. (Ms. Gedansky, 2d Mr. Stirling).

Motion passed; meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Marianne Lippard, recording clerk
Rita Gedansky, secretary

References/Attachments:

Minutes:

Amity Finance Committee, September 9, 2013
Board of Education, September 9, 2013

Reports:

Amity Regional School District No. 5 Revenues and Expenditures
for FY 2013-2014
Amity Regional School District No. 5, Year-to-Date Budget
Report, 10/2/13

Memos:

Amity Regional School District No. 5 Budget Transfers
Jack B. Levine to Michael R. Nast (9/27/13) re: ED-099
Agreement for Child Nutrition Programs
Jack B. Levine to Michael R. Nast (10/4/13) re: New Funding
Requests for Fiscal Year
Jack B. Levine to Michael R. Nast (10/7/13) re: Budget Transfers
of \$3,000 or More for Fiscal Year 2013-2014
Jack B. Levine to Michael Nast (10/3/13) re: Award of Contracts
of \$35,000 or More