

AMITY REGIONAL BOARD OF EDUCATION REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Monday, March 10, 2025 6:30 pm
25 Newton Road, Woodbridge, CT
Lecture Hall

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Cathy Bradley, Paul Davis, Carla Eichler (virtual), Sean Hartshorn, Andrea Hubbard, Dr. Karunakaran, Christina Levere-D'Addio, Dana Lombardi, Michael McDonough, Dr. Carol Oladele, Patrick Reed, Donna Schlank and Donna Schuster* (arrived at 6:43 p.m.)

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT

STUDENT BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Sophia Messina and Janet Fan

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT

Dr. Jennifer Byars, Dr. Shannan Carlson, Theresa Lumas, Thomas Brant

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Davis called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Led by Amity Board of Education Chair Paul Davis

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a. Board of Education Special Meeting – February 24, 2025

MOTION by Michael McDonough, SECOND by Cathy Bradley to approve February 24, 2025 minutes with suggested edits.

VOTES IN FAVOR, 9 (Bradley, Davis, Hartshorn, Hubbard, Levere-D'Addio, Lombardi, McDonough, Dr. Oladele, Reed)

ABSTAIN, 3 (Eichler, Dr. Karunakaran, Schlank)

MOTION CARRIES

4. CORRESPONDENCE

Presented by Amity Board of Education Secretary Mrs. Cathy Bradley

5. PUBLIC COMMENT

Woodbridge Resident:

Spoke in support of DEI. Speaker shared her belief that DEI is about respect, celebrating differences and building community.

Bethany Resident:

Spoke in support of DEI and voiced approval of Board policy on Transgender and Non-Conforming Youth, the BOE core values, and Increasing Educator Diversity Plan.

Woodbridge Parent:

Spoke against DEI and the potential for federal funding to be withheld if DEI initiatives continue.

Woodbridge Parent:

Spoke against DEI and the potential for federal funding to be withheld if DEI initiatives continue.

Bethany Parent:

Spoke in support of DEI. Speaker spoke on the issue of equality and provided a timeline of racial discrimination in America which resulted in a lack of equal access to quality education.

Amity Parent (town not provided):

Spoke in support of DEI. Addressed the letter written by the ROTC and Executive Order 13985. Speaker addressed the unconstitutionality of Executive Order 13985.

Amity Parent (town not provided):

Spoke against DEI. The Speaker raised concerns about books in the library, tampon dispensers in bathrooms, and the topic of Spartan Seminar lessons.

Orange Parent:

Spoke against DEI. The speaker defined DEI as reverse discrimination. The speaker urged the district to focus on academics and to adhere to Executive Order 13985. The speaker raised concerns over the potential loss of federal funding and the impact that would have on town taxes and the budget.

Bethany Resident:

Spoke in regard to the Budget. The speaker suggested adding back into the budget the two cameras in each middle school library to better supervise students in those areas. Speaker addresses the amount of money Amity receives in federal funding.

Woodbridge Resident:

Spoke in regard to the Budget. Speaker addressed the impact of the budget specifically on the town of Woodbridge in comparison to the towns of Bethany and Orange.

Christina Levere-D'Addio stepped out at 7:10 p.m. and returned at 7:15 p.m.

Amity Parent (town not provided):

Spoke in favor of DEI. The speaker voiced her support for the education and experiences her children are receiving as part of the Amity school district and community.

6. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

- a. Committee Reports
 - 1. **ACES**
 - 2. **CABE**
 - 3. **Communications**
 - 4. **District Health and Safety**
 - 5. **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Executive Committee**
 - 6. **District Technology**
 - a. Monthly Report
 - 7. **Facilities**
 - a. Monthly Report
 - 8. **Finance**

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

- i. Investment Consultants**
- ii. Auditors**
- iii. Insurance Consultants**
- iv. Fire Suppression System**

MOTION by Dr. Karunakaran, SECOND by Michael McDonough to:

Award a 2-year contract extension to Mahoney, Sabol & Company, LLC of Glastonbury, for auditing services. The proposed 2-year contract extension price is \$41,000 in year 1, and \$43,000 in year 2.

Extend the contract for 2 years, to Fiducient Advisors of Glastonbury for investment consulting services. The extended contract price is \$24,586 in year 1 and \$25,324 in year 2.

Extend the contract with Brown & Brown of Connecticut, Inc, for health insurance consulting services for 2 years. The proposed 2-year extended contract price is \$30,000 in year 1, and \$30,000 in year 2.

Award the contract with W&M Fire Protection for the installation of a fire suppression system at ARHS for \$56,800.

VOTES IN FAVOR, 12 (Davis, Eichler, Hartshorn, Hubbard, Dr. Karunakaran, Levere-D'Addio, Lombardi, McDonough, Dr. Oladele, Reed, Schlank, Schuster)

ABSTAIN, 1 (Bradey)

MOTION CARRIES

b. Discussion of Monthly Financial Statements

i. Special Education Update

Presented by Amity Region 5 Director of Finance Theresa Lumas

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

Presented by Amity Region 5 Director of Finance Theresa Lumas

d. Discussion and Possible Action on Budget Transfers over \$3,000

MOTION by Cathy Bradley, SECOND by Andrea Hubbard to approve this transfer for storage for specialized equipment.

ACCOUNT NUMBER	ACCOUNT NAME	FROM	TO
04-12-6111-5560	Tuition – Vo-Ag/Vo-Tech	\$11,000	
04-13-2190-5690	Other Supplies		\$11,000

VOTES IN FAVOR, 13 (UNANIMOUS)

MOTION CARRIES

e. Other

i. Food Service Update

Presented by Amity Region 5 Director of Finance Theresa Lumas

9. **Policy**

a. Second Reads

- i. Policy 5144.4 - Physical Exercise and Discipline of Students
- ii. Policy 5145.111 - Students/Probation/Police/Courts

MOTION by Sean Hartshorn, SECOND by Cathy Bradley to approve, with suggested edits, Policy 5144.4 Physical Exercise and Discipline of Students and Policy 5145.111 Students/ Probation/ Police/ Courts

VOTES IN FAVOR, 13 (UNANIMOUS)

MOTION CARRIES

10. **Personnel**

a. Personnel Report

Presented by Amity Region 5 Superintendent of Schools Dr. Jennifer Byars

7. **DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ON THE BOARD OF EDUCATION 2025-2026 BUDGET**

Presented by Amity Region 5 Superintendent of Schools Dr. Jennifer Byars

MOTION by Dr. Karunakaran, SECOND by Donna Schlank to approve the Superintendent's Proposed Budget for fiscal year 2025-2026, in the gross amount of \$58,193,999 and the net amount of \$56,920,803, a 3.08% increase over the 2024-25 budget.

MOTION by Donna Schuster, SECOND by Dr. Karunakaran to amend the motion to remove the student parking fee and to remove the allocation for field replacement.

VOTES IN FAVOR, 3 (Levere-D'Addio, Dr. Oladele, Schuster)

VOTES OPPOSED, 10 (Bradley, Eichler, Hubbard, Dr. Karunakaran, Davis, Hartshorn, Lombardi, McDonough, Reed, Schlank)

MOTION FAILS

MOTION by Dr. Oladele, SECOND by Donna Schuster to amend the motion to remove the allocation for field replacement.

VOTES IN FAVOR, 7 (Bradley, Hartshorn, Levere-D'Addio, Lombardi, McDonough, Dr. Oladele, Schuster)

ABSTAINED, 1 (Hubbard)

VOTES OPPOSED, 5 (Eichler, Dr. Karunakaran, Davis, Reed, Schlank)

MOTION CARRIES

Dr. Karunakaran stepped out from 8:11 p.m. and returned at 8:16 p.m.

MOTION by Sean Hartshorn, SECOND by Michael McDonough amend the motion to remove \$50,000 from infrastructure (technology) contingency.

VOTES IN FAVOR, 11 (Bradley, Davis, Hartshorn, Hubbard, Levere-D'Addio, Lombardi, McDonough, Dr. Oladele, Reed, Schlank, Schuster)

VOTES OPPOSED, 2 (Eichler, Dr. Karunakaran)

MOTION CARRIES

MOTION by Dr. Karunakaran, SECOND by Donna Schlank to approve the Superintendent's Proposed Budget for fiscal year 2025-2026, in the gross amount of \$58,108,999 and the net amount of \$56,835,803, a 2.93%

increase over the 2024-25 budget.

VOTES IN FAVOR, 8 (Davis, Eichler, Hubbard, Dr. Karunakaran, Dr. Oladele, Reed, Schlank, Schuster)

VOTES OPPOSED, 5 (Bradley, Levere-D'Addio, Hartshorn, Lombardi, McDonough)

MOTION CARRIES

MOTION by Sean Hartshorn, SECOND by Michael McDonough to authorize Amity Regional School District No. 5 to prepare an Explanatory Text for the Budget Referendum Question: BE IT RESOLVED, that the Secretary of the Board of Education of Amity Regional School District No. 5 is authorized to prepare, print, and distribute a concise explanatory text of the budget referendum question which, by vote of the member towns, which text shall not advocate either the approval or disapproval of the question and shall otherwise be prepared in accordance with Connecticut General Statutes Section 9-369b.

VOTES IN FAVOR, 13 (UNANIMOUS)

MOTION CARRIES

IMPORTANT BUDGET DATES

Monday, April 7, 2025 – Public Hearing

Monday, May 5, 2025 – Annual Meeting

Tuesday, May 6, 2025 – Referendum

8. NEW BUSINESS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

9. EXECUTIVE SESSION - UPDATE ON HIGH SCHOOL HOMELAND SECURITY AUDIT

Carla Eichler left the meeting at 8:24 p.m.

MOTION by Andrea Hubbard, SECOND Dana Lombardi to enter Executive Session and to invite Dr. Byars, Mr. Martoni, Mr. Brant, Mr. DeRosa and Mrs. Lumas.

VOTES IN FAVOR, 12 (UNANIMOUS)

MOTION CARRIES

The Board enters Executive Session at 8:26 p.m.

The Board exits Executive Session at 8:58 p.m.

10. ITEMS FOR THE NEXT REGULAR MEETING AGENDA – Due to Chairperson by March 31, 2025

11. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Sean Hartshorn to adjourn meeting at 8:58 p.m.

Chairperson Davis adjourned the meeting, without objection, at 8:59 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Zaleski

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BOE Recording Secretary