

**Amherst School Committee  
Tuesday, February 25, 2014  
Library, Amherst Regional High School**

**In Attendance:**

Katherine Appy, Chair	Maria Geryk, Superintendent
Kathleen Traphagen	Kathy Mazur, Human Resources Director
Rick Hood	Mike Morris, Director of Assessment & Evaluation
Lawrence O'Brien (arrived @ 7:07)	Sean Mangano, Assistant Director of Finance
Amilcar Shabazz (arrived @ 7:10)	Faye Brady, Director of Student Services
	Michele Tesauro, Crocker Farm Principal
	Public and Press
	Debbie Westmoreland, Recorder

**1. Welcome 7:00 p.m.**

**A. Call to Order**—Ms. Appy called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and reviewed the agenda.

**B. Approve Minutes**—Ms. Traphagen moved to approve the minutes of February 4, 2014. Mr. Hood seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

**2. Public Comments None**

There were no public comments.

**3. Subcommittee Updates 7:05 p.m.**

**A. BCG**—Ms. Appy reported that the BCG will meet Thursday, February 27 at 8:15 a.m.

**B. JCPC**—Ms. Appy reported that JCPC met last week and reviewed the school districts' IT budget.

**C. RSDPB**—Ms. Appy reported that the RSDPB will meet at 10:30 a.m. (or immediately after) the Four Towns meeting on Saturday, March 1st.

**3. Superintendent's Update 7:05 p.m.**

**DOCUMENT: Superintendent's Updates, dated February 25, 2014**

Ms. Geryk distributed a memo outlining a number of upcoming events and then provided highlights on several, including:

- The upcoming seventh annual *Lights, Camera Youth Action!* Fundraiser to benefit Youth Action Coalition on Sunday March 23;
- The presentation of a check in the amount of \$750 from Amherst Lions Club to the Crocker Farm PGO, which were funds raised through the annual Ski and Snowboard sale;
- The Dr. Suess birthday celebration planned at Fort River School from 6:00-7:30 p.m. on February 27; and
- The first annual African American Read-In Day scheduled for 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. on Wednesday, February 26 at Wildwood.

Mike Morris then provided a brief update on PARCC testing in the district. He noted that grades three and five at Fort River will take the online math test and the Crocker Farm fourth grade and Wildwood sixth grade will take the pencil and paper literacy test. Mr. Morris explained that Fort River is the only school eligible to opt out of MCAS for students taking the PARCC assessment, so the district will be doing so. Kathy Mazur then provided an update on the Fort River Principal search. She noted that there will be a public forum on March 17 to meet the finalists. Mr. O'Brien expressed appreciation for the decision to opt out of the MCAS testing where possible for students who are taking the PARCC pilot test.

**4. New and Continuing Business 7:38 p.m.**

**A. School Choice Update**

**DOCUMENT: Amherst School District Enrollments as of February 25, 2014**

Ms. Mazur distributed and reviewed an updated enrollment report that reflects enrollment totals, including choice, as of February 25, 2014. She noted that the recommendation from administration is that the School Committee

vote to continue as a school choice district in 2014-2015. Ms. Mazur noted that she anticipates there will be school choice seats open in grades three, four, five, six and possibly kindergarten. The School Committee will be asked to vote at the next meeting in March. Mr. Shabazz noted that the first grade projection of 22 in one of the first grade classrooms would give him pause in voting to approve school choice. Ms. Mazur said that administration would not recommend opening at seats in first grade.

#### **B. FY14 Second Quarter Budget Update**

**DOCUMENTS:** *Amherst School Operating Budget FY2014 Second Quarter Report*

Mr. Mangano distributed and reviewed the highlights of the FY14 Second Quarter Budget Report. He noted that the district is on track to finish the year on budget at this time. Mr. O'Brien said he is pleased to see that additional funds were utilized for the after-school program.

#### **B. FY15 Budget Public Hearing**

**DOCUMENTS:** *FY15 Amherst Public Schools FY2015 Budget (Additions/Reductions); Amherst Public Schools FY15 Budget Additions/Reductions to Continuation Services Budget (page 31-2/25/14 for binder)*

Mr. Mangano distributed an updated additions/reductions document to the school committee for their budget information binder, noting that there are no changes to the figures. The only change is the addition of the FTE reflected in the additions. Mr. Morris then reviewed the highlights of the additions and reductions included in the proposed FY2015 budget. Ms. Geryk noted that a question was raised at the last meeting regarding whether the budget should include additional funding for band and orchestra since it is coming in at 1.8%, below the 2.7% increase target. She reported that her preference is not to add to the grade levels offering band and orchestra since it would not be financially sustainable going forward. There were no questions regarding the proposed budget.

#### **C. Advocacy Letter Regarding Increased State Funding**

**DOCUMENTS:** *Letter to Speaker of the House Robert A. DeLeo, dated February 24, 2014*

Ms. Appy reported that at the last BCG meeting the group learned that the Governor's Budget came out with lower funding than anticipated. Committee Chairs were asked to send a letter advocating for the House and Senate to increase the budget amount. Ms. Appy prepared a draft of such a letter for the School Committee's consideration. Mr. Hood made a motion to approve sending the letter to Speaker Robert A. DeLeo as written. Mr. O'Brien seconded and, after brief discussion, the motion was unanimously approved.

#### **D. Accept Gifts**

**DOCUMENT:** *Memo to the Amherst School Committee from Mary Wallace, District Treasurer, dated February 19, 2014*

Mr. O'Brien moved to accept a gift of \$25 from Gordon Graves for the Laurie Rabut Strings Scholarship. Mr. Hood seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

#### **5. School Committee Planning**

**7:45 p.m.**

**A. Calendar**—March 18 is the next Amherst School Committee meeting. Ms. Geryk will update the proposed topics for the meeting agenda.

#### **8. Adjournment**

**7:47 p.m.**

Mr. Hood moved to adjourn at 7:47 p.m. Ms. Traphagen seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Debbie Westmoreland