

## REGULAR Meeting of the Amherst-Pelham Regional School Committee

November 10, 2015

Library, Amherst Regional High School

### IN ATTENDANCE:

Trevor Baptiste, Chair

Katherine Appy

Vira Douangmany-Cage

Phoebe Hazzard

Rick Hood

Stephen Sullivan (arr. 6:04 p.m.)

Kathleen Traphagen

Josiah Vasquez

### ABSENT:

Kip Fonsh

Dan Robb

Maria Geryk, Superintendent

Mike Morris, Assistant Superintendent

Sean Mangano, Finance Director

Kathy Mazur, Human Resources Director

Faye Brady, Student Services Director

JoAnn Smith, Student Services Administrator

Mark Jackson, ARHS Principal

Marisa Mendonsa, ARMS Principal

Jean Fay, APEA President

Community members & Press

Kimberly Stender, Recorder

### 1. Welcome

6:02 p.m.

Mr. Baptiste called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m. and reviewed the agenda. Ms. Appy made a motion to approve the minutes from October 13, 2015. Ms. Hazzard seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

### 2. Announcements & Public Comment

6:04 p.m.

Mr. Hood thanked Amherst Media for taping all school committee and town meetings and events during this extremely busy season. Mr. Baptiste explained the parameters of public comment and allowed community members to speak for 3.5 minutes. He reminded all speakers to be respectful and not mention ARPS employees specifically. Katie Ledowski (community member) thanked Ms. Douangmany-Cage and Ms. Traphagen for their dedicated work on the Culture, Community & School Culture committee of the School Equity Task Force. She read a statement regarding the Institutional Review Board (IRB) process and racial inequity and requested that the school committee adopt this policy. Jean Fay (APEA President) read a statement regarding educator participation in the consolidation and re-configuration conversations. Vince O'Connor (community member) spoke about discipline disparity, 7-12 consolidation, and the potential financial responsibility of Greenfield Community College and Amherst tax payers. Peter Demling (ARPS parent) spoke about the need for a collaborative change in the process regarding teacher voice and new practices. He recommended an annual survey in which educators are anonymously polled. Mr. Sullivan thanked Mr. Jackson for his attendance at school events and meetings. He also thanked all school staff for helping students during afterschool activities, athletics and clubs. Mr. Sullivan read an *Amherst Bulletin* article about the commitment of ARMS teacher Jennifer Welborn regarding middle school girls and STEM.

### 3. Superintendent's Update

6:22 p.m.

Ms. Geryk invited all to attend the upcoming Amherst Together event in the ARHS Auditorium on Monday, November 16. *Conversations with Jimmy* begins at 6:00 p.m. and will feature guest speakers, food prepared by the ARHS Culinary Arts students, the ARHS jazz ensemble and a film. Ms. Geryk announced that Greenfield Community College will offer four free courses to ARHS students and community members beginning in January 2016. Ms. Douangmany-Cage inquired if payment from GCC to use ARMS had been established. Mr. Hood replied that at this point no lease had been signed but rather a licensing agreement was being considered. He explained a licensing agreement provides more power than a lease agreement and that rent would be acquired based on cost per square foot.

#### 4. New & Continuing Business

6:26 p.m.

##### A. 7-12 Consolidation Update

Ms. Mazur thanked those who attended the Hurricane Re-Visioning Summit on November 7. She reported that it was successful and the feedback would be extremely valuable. She expects to share the comprehensive MOPC report in December with the school committee and community. Mr. Morris added that plans for building layout and space re-configuration will be available soon. He received input from librarians, special education instructors, guidance counselors and administrators. Ms. Mazur provided the Enrollment Update at this time. She stated that in 2016-2017, enrolment in Grades 7-12 is expected to be less than 1,400 with 50 students enrolled at SEC. By 2021, enrollment is expected to be 1,219 students in Grades 7-12. Ms. Traphagen asked why there is a 100 student decline for the 2016-2017 academic year. Ms. Mazur explained that the Class of 2015 graduated 285 students and the current 9<sup>th</sup> Grade has 217 students which accounts for the decreasing student population. Mr. Hood commented that the MOPC facilitated sessions at the Summit were well-constructed and challenged participants to think deeply on this topic. Ms. Mazur stated that the poll responses taken at each table were much different than the community survey. Mr. Hood added that this process would be time-consuming and perhaps the vote scheduled in January would be delayed. Ms. Geryk suggested that another survey be conducted in January and that the vote occur in March. Mr. Morris suggested that the Elementary Program and 7-12 Consolidation proposals be compared side-by-side because they impact both Amherst and the Region. The PreK-12 conversation is essential as plans revolving around the timeline are intertwined. Ms. Traphagen thought it helpful if the community understood the architectural terms being used in the process (ex. swing space). Ms. Douangmany-Cage reminded the group that the Wildwood Building Committee is ultimately responsible for the MSBA-funded project. She would like the public to be fully aware that the school committee recommends if a school should be closed and also determines grade configuration. Mr. Baptiste wanted to know if a plan involving socialization of Grade 7-12 students was being created. Ms. Mazur stated that guidance counselors, librarians and educators would be involved in preparing 7<sup>th</sup> graders to enter a 7-12 school. Ms. Douangmany-Cage inquired about the role of consultant David Stephen in the Wildwood School Building Project and the 7-12 Consolidation plan. Ms. Geryk explained Mr. Stephen's qualifications and national experience with these types of projects and 21st Century Learning models. Ms. Hazzard added that her favorite part of the Summit was the ARHS student facilitator expressing the enthusiasm older students would have for mentoring younger students through a consolidation process. She encouraged the school committee, community, and administration to actively include student voices in the conversation. Mr. Hood reminded the group that the 7-12 Consolidation plan began as a cost-saving conversation because the State could not keep up with inflation.

##### B. Draft Regional Agreement

6:47 p.m.

Ms. Geryk suggested that more public forums be planned in each community. Mr. Baptiste thought the Pelham forum was well-attended and that all facts were presented. Mr. Fonsh will report on the Leverett forum and Mr. Sullivan will report on the Shutesbury forum at the December 15, 2015 meeting.

##### C. FY16 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter Budget Update

6:51 p.m.

***DOCUMENT: Amherst-Pelham Regional School District Fiscal year 2016 Quarter One***

Mr. Mangano reviewed the document and explained payroll accounts and expense accounts. He stated that based on the financials the district is projected to end the fiscal year on track. Ms. Douangmany-Cage asked for an update on the Teaching and Learning Curriculum Director. Ms. Geryk stated that this person is on leave and a replacement will not be hired. Curriculum work is being handled internally. Ms. Douangmany-Cage asked how David Stephen was being paid as a consultant and Ms. Geryk replied he was paid through the budget's consultant line.

##### D. FY17 Budget Guidance

6:56 p.m.

***DOCUMENTS: FY2016 Fee Review and Proposed Changes for FY2017; Fund 2950 Athletic Revolving; Amherst-Pelham Regional School District Capital Budget 11/10/15; Amherst-Pelham Regional School District Ten Year Capital Plan Proposed 11/10/15***

Mr. Mangano reviewed the documents and asked for questions from committee members. Ms. Douangmany-Cage asked Mr. Mangano to explain the athletics cost sharing portion of the report. Mr. Sullivan inquired about transportation costs and athletics. Mr. Mangano explained that most buses used to transport student athletes and coaches to off-site games and meets were a mix of ARPS and contracted bus companies. In some cases, vans are used to transport small numbers of athletes. Ms. Traphagen was concerned about the equity implication for raising athletics fees. Mr. Mangano explained three alternatives: 1). Add funds to appropriated budget to offset costs of fees; 2). Cut less popular teams to save money; 3). Create a new fee structure. Mr. Jackson added that the athletic director never turns away a student who wants to play a sport but cannot afford the fees. He always finds money so that all students can participate on a team. Ms. Traphagen asked what is the value placed upon the school community in terms of athletics. Mr. Baptiste thought athletics should be a priority. Ms. Douangmany-Cage added that many parents/guardians pay out of pocket for extra equipment (mouth guards, pads, shoes, etc) and asked about equity for all families. Ms. Appy explained the role of the Hurricane Booster Club and praised them for their commitment and dedication over the years. Mr. Hood inquired about sponsor advertising and signage to fund athletics. Mr. Mangano reported that this was strong for a year but interest fell off and that the athletics program relies on in-kind donations. Mr. Baptiste suggested the consultant fee line in the budget could be used for athletics fees. Ms. Appy cautioned this idea and reminded the committee to be mindful of one-time costs versus annual costs. Ms. Douangmany-Cage asked if the Booster Club money is a part of the budget. Mr. Mangano replied it was not and that all club or athletic fundraising money is placed in a student activity account (per club or team). Ms. Geryk reminded the committee to be mindful of broad priorities and adds/cuts regarding the budget. The committee votes the bottom line. Ms. Traphagen then asked about meal fees and why ARPS currently charges more per meal versus other districts. Mr. Mangano explained that these numbers are from 2015 and that other districts may choose to raise their fees too. Ms. Traphagen then asked why students in Grades 7-12 are less likely to sign up for free/reduced meals. Mr. Mangano explained that the State's direct certification lessens actual paperwork for economically disadvantaged families. This process was established 3-4 years ago. Mr. Mangano reviewed and explained the Capital Plan. Ms. Douangmany-Cage asked if the district can anticipate future expenses. Mr. Mangano replied that this is highly likely. Ms. Appy explained the role of the budget subcommittee. She stated that even with the potential consolidation, safety improvements must be made regardless. Projects such as auditorium seat repair could be postponed. Mr. Sullivan asked about surveillance cameras installed at ARMS and ARHS and if a policy is in place could the school committee review it. Mr. O'Connor inquired about athletic fees and if PE classes could be interchanged for the athletics program.

**E. Data Collection Policy**

**7:41 p.m.**

***DOCUMENTS: School Climate Data Collection and Analysis (Approved at the SETF meeting 4/8/15, for the Policy Subcommittee Review)(Updated based on discussion at a Policy Subcommittee meeting on May 4, 2015.); Proposed Statement for Tuesday Meeting; IRB Application Form Components***

Mr. Baptiste stated that this policy should be voted tonight even though a vote does not appear on the agenda. Ms. Appy stated that this process was convoluted and re-iterated that this is the only policy the Policy Subcommittee has reviewed since March 2015. Ms. Appy moved to accept the language change made by the School Committee from the June 2, 2015 meeting. The motion was seconded by Ms. Traphagen. Mr. Hood inquired as to what the committee was actually voting. Ms. Traphagen praised the SETF for their work. She explained that the goal is to empower and help the ARMS and ARHS communities understand the various climate dimensions at each school. After a brief discussion and edits to the policy, Ms. Appy offered to wordsmith the document before the committee voted and asked if the vote could be delayed until the December 15, 2015 meeting. Ms. Douangmany-Cage stated that this policy will ensure that community engagement occurs and how the information is used will be determined by school committee members. To clarify how the policy will be finalized,

Mr. Hood read the policy as presented with the following change to the final sentence and one additional sentence: *The Superintendent will involve stakeholders in the data collection, analysis and dissemination stages of the research within the framework of state and federal regulations and contractual obligations. Data and research will be presented on an annual basis.* Mr. Baptiste called for a vote to accept the changes to the policy and the committee approved unanimously.

**F. OML Letter**

**8:02 p.m.**

**DOCUMENT: *Open Meeting Law Complaint Response from the Attorney General (10/26/15)***

This agenda item was tabled at request of the Chair. The Attorney General's letter with findings regarding the OML complaint is attached to the minutes.

**G. International Student Travel**

**8:03 p.m.**

Mr. Baptiste recommended that travel be funded and that a committee be formed to select students who wish to travel as ambassadors from ARHS. He specifically would like to see students travel to West Africa and Kanagasaki. He would also like to see this travel placed as a high priority much like athletics. Ms. Douangmany-Cage asked how students pay for exchange trips. Mr. Jackson explained the history of student exchanges at ARHS (Russia, Guatemala, Spain, France, Germany) and that approximately 25 students participated on each trip. The Department of State fully funded a trip to Norway a few years ago. He stated that fundraising is a critical piece as travel was never approved on a budget line. Mr. Sullivan stated that Japanese students visit ARMS each year but ARHS had yet to send a delegation. Ms. Appy added that a small group of ARMS and ARHS staff and representatives from the Town of Amherst travelled to Kanagasaki in October 2015.

**H. Accept Gifts**

**8:12 p.m.**

**DOCUMENT: *Memo from ARPS Treasurer Mary Wallace (11/5/15)***

Ms. Douangmany-Cage moved to accept the regional gift from Abida Adnan in the amount of \$500.00 to support the Student Activity Dance Program. Ms. Appy seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

**5. School Committee Planning**

**8:14 p.m.**

Ms. Appy asked that a Policy Subcommittee meeting be scheduled for Monday, November 23, 2015 at 5:00 p.m. She will bring a list of all policies which must be reviewed to the meeting. Mr. Mangano asked for another member to sit on the Budget Subcommittee and Mr. Sullivan volunteered to do so. Ms. Douangmany-Cage inquired about the status of the solar contract and Mr. Mangano replied that a contract had not yet been signed. Mr. Hood asked that survey data and trends be added to a future agenda. Ms. Douangmany-Cage recently attended that MASC meeting and reported that vendors are available to create and provide surveys to schools. Mr. Baptiste asked that she compile a list of vendors to discuss at an upcoming meeting. Ms. Geryk explained that the University of Chicago is scheduled do this work based on the 5Essentials. She invited the Chairs to discuss this and the level of data for the purpose of negotiated contracts. Ms. Appy hoped staff from the University of Chicago could speak to the school committee. Ms. Traphagen asked if the 5Essentials measuring instruments be shared and Ms. Geryk replied that they would. Mr. Sullivan asked that ARHS updates from Josiah Vasquez be on each agenda. He also requested that co-teaching and IMP implementation updates be included on a future agenda. Mr. Morris indicated that the majority of 9<sup>th</sup> Grade students are enrolled in IMP. Ms. Appy reported that she and Ms. Douangmany-Cage met with the Student Advisory Council and the meeting went very well. Ms. Douangmany-Cage asked if her expenses from the MASC conference be covered by the district and Ms. Geryk said they would be covered

**6. Adjournment**

**8:32 p.m.**

Ms. Traphagen motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:32 p.m. Ms. Douangmany-Cage seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,  
Kimberly Stender

