

REGULAR Meeting of the Amherst-Pelham Regional School Committee

Tuesday, January 12, 2016

Library, Amherst Regional High School

IN ATTENDANCE

Trevor Baptiste, Chair
Vira Douangmany-Cage (arr. 6:30 p.m.)
Kip Fonsh
Rick Hood
Emily Marriott
Josiah Vasquez (arr. 7:00 p.m.)

Maria Geryk, Superintendent
Mike Morris, Assistant Superintendent
Kathy Mazur, Human Resources Director
Sean Mangano, Finance Director
Rachel Bowen, Human Resources Asst Director
Faye Brady, Student Services Director
Mark Jackson, Amherst Regional HS Principal
Jane Mudie, ARHS Mathematics Dept Head
Community & Press

Kimberly Stender, Recorder

ABSENT

Katherine Appy
Phoebe Hazzard
Stephen Sullivan
Kathleen Traphagen

At 6:20 p.m. a quorum was not available for Executive Session so the Chair decided that an informal conversation regarding the 7-12 Consolidation Update could occur. Ms. Mazur reported that she was preparing a report for the January 26, 2016 Regional School Committee meeting. In the meantime, she is scheduled to meet with ARMS and ARHS staff on January 13, 2016 to discuss the five options and the financial situation. In addition, on January 14, 2016 Ms. Mazur will meet with members from the Parent Guardian Organizations and Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC) as well as some teachers. Ms. Mazur will create and distribute a follow-up survey to staff, students and community members in late January or early February. She will also meet with elementary parents/guardians to explain the five options and the financial situation. Ms. Geryk stated that the challenge is that administrators can predict that the financial gap will widen and that the conversation amongst the four towns must involve multiple strategies. Mr. Baptiste added that the schools must be re-branded to regain public confidence. At 6:30 p.m. Ms. Douangmany-Cage arrived and quorum was available. Mr. Baptiste decided to end the informal discussion at 6:35 p.m. and enter into Executive Session according to MGL Chapter 30A, Section 21 (a)(3) to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the public body and the Chair so declares. A roll call vote was taken by members present and it was unanimously agreed to enter into Executive Session.

1. Welcome & Call to Order

7:00 p.m.

Mr. Baptiste called the meeting to order at 7 p.m. and reviewed the agenda. He decided to strike the 7-12 Consolidation item from the agenda as this information was informally discussed prior to Executive Session. Mr. Fonsh moved to approve the minutes from December 15, 2015. Mr. Hood seconded and the motion passed with one abstention (Marriott).

2. Announcements & Public Comment

7:03 p.m.

There were no announcements. Vince O'Connor (community member) spoke to the current agreement between the Town of Amherst and the University of Massachusetts. He believes the University should provide funding for the 5-10 students in the regional schools who reside in UMASS housing. He estimates that \$40,000.00-\$60,000.00 should be given to the district by UMASS to cover the cost of the students. He recommended that the Superintendent and Chair visit the Chancellor to discuss this matter.

3. New & Continuing Business

7:05 p.m.

A. Interactive Mathematics Program (IMP)

Mr. Morris explained the transition to the Interactive Mathematics Program and introduced Ms. Mudie. Ms. Mudie reported the program's progress to date as well as the 3-year phase-in plan. She thanked the administration for their support and praised Bill Blatner for his math coaching skills. Ms. Mudie explained the IMP course enrollment, electives structure, summer PD, coaching model and on-going teacher collaboration. After the presentation, Mr. Fonsh asked if the semester model will simplify or complicate the collaboration factor. Ms. Mudie replied that it may be too early to comment on this. Mr. Hood thanked Ms. Mudie for her presentation and appreciates the work and involvement of the math faculty in the implementation decision process. Mr. Baptiste

also thanked Ms. Mudie for her work. He asked for clarification regarding the middle school flex program. Mr. Morris explained the flex program and how the math sequence progresses through high school.

B. FY 17 Budget Presentation and Assessment Method Update

7:20 p.m.

DOCUMENT: FY 17 Budget; Memo from Sean Mangano re: Regional Budget Fiscal Year 2017 Assessment Method (1/11/16)

Mr. Mangano distributed the budget binders and reviewed the materials. He focused on advanced placement courses, SAT results, graduation rates, and post-secondary education enrollment before addressing the actual budget. Mr. Baptiste stated that Massachusetts public schools were recently named the best in the nation and that SAT results of ARHS students are a remarkable achievement. Mr. Mangano provided the historical context regarding the assessment method and the conversations amongst the four towns. He explained the taxable property method. Mr. Mangano asked that all school committee members reach out to the finance committee and select boards in their respective towns. Mr. Fonsh thanked Mr. Mangano for his commitment to producing a sensible budget and for his continued monitoring and communication updates to the school committee. He advised the committee members about the gravity of the financial situation, the various assessment methods and the impact on the four communities. He hoped that goodwill amongst the towns could be restored. Mr. Hood recapped the January 8, 2016 meeting and believes that the four towns should do what is right and fair. Mr. Hood requested that program cuts be released to the public one week prior to the February 23, 2016 public budget hearing. Mr. Baptiste urged that UMASS be brought into this conversation as a partner not as an adversary. Mr. Hood reiterated his belief that state aid has not kept up with inflation.

C. Regional Agreement

8:07 p.m.

Mr. Baptiste asked for updates from each town. Mr. Fonsh replied that the select board and finance committees have actively participated in the conversations with the other towns. They are hopeful the Regional School Committee will vote to move this to town meeting. Ms. Marriott reported that a subcommittee was formed by the Pelham School Committee to create an information packet for community members. The committee will vote on regionalization at their February 3, 2016 meeting. Mr. Hood reported that this topic was not discussed at the last Amherst School Committee meeting. Ms. Douangmany-Cage inquired about the school committee structure if Regionalization occurred.

D. Violence in the Workplace

8:10 p.m.

DOCUMENT: Amherst Public Schools, Pelham Elementary School, and Amherst-Pelham Regional School District Policy Manual Personnel: Violence in the Workplace

Mr. Fonsh suggested that this topic be tabled until it can be discussed with the Weapons in the Workplace policy. Mr. Baptiste agreed to this request.

E. Accept Gifts

8:11 p.m.

Mr. Fonsh moved to accept the regional gifts from Cornerstone Bank from Estate of Ann Louise Hyde to ARHS Library in the amount of \$65,490.86; Marshall and Annie Jones to the James Faison Scholarship Donation in the amount of \$250.00; Catherine Lodge to the ARHS Pathways to Independent Program in the amount of \$1,000.00; and Margo Mace to the Ted Madden Scholarship in the amount of \$100.00. Mr. Hood seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

4. School Committee Business

8:13 p.m.

Ms. Geryk and Mr. Baptiste will confer about topics for the January 26, 2016 agenda.

5. Adjournment

8:16 p.m.

Mr. Fonsh moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:16 p.m. Mr. Hood seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Kimberly Stender