

**Regular Meeting of the Amherst-Pelham & Regional School Committee**  
**Thursday, February 25, 2016**  
**Library, Amherst Regional High School**

**IN ATTENDANCE**

Trevor Baptiste, Chair

Katherine Appy

Vira Douangmany-Cage (arr. 6:30 p.m.)

Kip Fonsh

Phoebe Hazzard

Rick Hood (via Skype)

Emily Marriott

Stephen Sullivan

Kathleen Traphagen

Maria Geryk, Superintendent

Mike Morris, Assistant Superintendent

Kathy Mazur, Human Resources Director

Sean Mangano, Finance Director

Mark Jackson, Principal ARHS

Miki Gromacki, Assistant Principal ARHS

Marisa Mendonsa, Principal ARMS

Community & Press

Kimberly Stender, Recorder

**ABSENT**

Josiah Vasquez

**1. Call to Order**

**6:02 p.m.**

Mr. Baptiste called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m. He reviewed the agenda. Ms. Appy suggested that the 2016-2017 Calendar (Item G) be removed from the agenda. Mr. Fonsh moved to approve the minutes from January, 26 2016. Ms. Appy seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

**2. Announcements & Public Comment**

**6:04 p.m.**

Vince O'Connor (community member) submitted a written note which suggested that funding be allocated from Amherst College and UMASS to support the Regional budget. Mr. Fonsh requested a moment of silence to honor former ARPS employees, William Ames and Judy Brick. Ms. Geryk encouraged all members to attend the Four Town meeting on Saturday, February 27, 2016 from 9:00 a.m-11:00 a.m. in the ARMS Library. Tom Crossman (Board Vice-President of the Amherst Boys & Girls Club) suggested that space in ARMS be made available to the Amherst Boys & Girls Club for their burgeoning programs and enrollment .

**3. Superintendent's Update**

**6:13 p.m.**

Ms. Mazur reported that the 7-12 Consolidation process was moving forward with the creation of three committees to examine logistics, vocational opportunities and building re-purposing plans. Teachers, administrators and community members would be invited to participate on these committees.

**4. New & Continuing Business**

**A. FY 16 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter Update**

**6:19 p.m.**

***DOCUMENT: APRSD Fiscal Year 2016 Quarter Two***

Mr. Mangano reviewed and explained the document and answered a question from Mr. Fonsh regarding per pupil costs and declining enrollments due to charter/choice.

**B. FY 17 Budget Hearing**

**6:26 p.m.**

***DOCUMENTS: ARPSD FY17 Budget Additions/Reductions to Level Services Budget; Amherst, Pelham & Regional Schools Proposed Budget (2/25/16); Amherst Pelham Regional School District FY17 Budget Hearing***

Mr. Magano reviewed and explained all documents as well as assessment methods, taxable property method, capital budget requests, level services, revenue budget, contracted services, additions/adjustments and reductions, OPEB and the Facilities revolving fund regarding LSSE and GCC partnerships. Ms. Appy, Mr. Baptiste and Mr. Fonsh applauded Mr. Mangano for creating a compromise assessment method which will be further discussed at the Four Town meeting. Ms. Traphagen inquired about STEAM programing at ARMS. Ms. Geryk explained that details will be presented at a future meeting. Ms. Medonsa spoke to the configuration of teams at ARMS and added that conversations with staff and the Parent Advisory Council will continue. Ms. Geryk re-iterated that the Media and Climate Communications Specialist position will continue through the end of the three-year contract with the Town of Amherst. Larry Kelley (community member) inquired about the amount of annual funding Amherst College provides to the ARPS Family Center.

**C. Athletics & Lunch Fees****7:05 p.m.*****DOCUMENT: Athletic Revolving Fund***

Mr. Mangano reviewed the reasons for the increases to athletic and lunch fees. He explained the 3% athletics fee increase as well as the increase from \$2.75/lunch to \$3.00/lunch and a 10-cent increase for milk. Ms. Appy moved to adopt the fee increases as proposed. Ms. Hazzard seconded the motion. A discussion followed pertaining to food vendor negotiations and contracts. Mr. Mangano reported that UMASS Dining Services provided feedback and suggestions to improve the current food program. Mr. Mangano also answered questions regarding the athletic program, revolving funds, contracted services, booster clubs, individual team fundraising, athletic fees and access for all students who wish to participate. Ms. Appy reminded the committee that this conversation occurs each year and the Athletic Director ensures that every student who wants to participate on a team may do so no matter the family's financial situation. Mr. Fonsh implored the community to step up and support athletics. Ms. Douangmany-Cage suggested that local business become athletic sponsors. Mr. Jackson spoke to the generosity of parents/guardians who provide additional funding throughout the year. Ms. Hazzard would like to see demographic data regarding athletic participation. Mr. Baptiste called for a vote. The motion passed with three objections (Douangmany-Cage, Fonsh, Sullivan).

**D. Regionalization Agreement****7:38 p.m.**

Mr. Baptiste stated that because all four towns were not currently in favor of this proposal that the committee agree to re-visit this topic in 2017. Ms. Appy (speaking as a former Amherst RAWG member) agreed that this delay would be best as the Amherst community has other major topics with which to contend (Amherst Elementary School Building Project and 7-12 Consolidation). Mr. Fonsh moved to postpone the vote on Regionalization until the first Regional School Committee meeting of January 2017. Ms. Appy seconded. A lengthy discussion pertaining to timeline, options and the impact of the Grades 7-12 Consolidation followed. Mr. Fonsh expressed concern that this topic has many complexities and a greater clarity of the issues must be provided to all community members before a vote is taken. He suggested that the committee resume closer examination of Regionalization prior to the proposed vote in January 2017. Mr. Sullivan stated that Shutesbury is prepared to vote no on the two questions pertaining to Regionalization. Mr. Baptiste called for a vote and the motion passed with two oppositions (Douangmany-Cage and Sullivan).

**E. Potential UMASS Funding****7:59 p.m.**

Mr. Baptiste acknowledged that UMASS could be strategic partner for ARPS. He suggested that a task force be formed to examine ways in which ARPS can collaborate with UMASS to create a strategic partnership. Mr. Fonsh suggested that the Chair research successful models public schools utilize in other university towns and report back to the committee. Mr. Baptiste suggested that ARPS brand itself globally to make it more attractive to higher ed partnerships.

**F. MCAS Opt-Out Resolution****8:18 p.m.**

Ms. Appy explained the proposed resolution as it pertains to the Region. She presented a draft and offered to revise and wordsmith. She read the draft as follows: *Proposed Resolution from the Regional School Committee Given concerns we have heard, the Regional School Committee seeks to reassure our community of the following: Students, in consultation with their families, have the right to opt-out of high-stakes tests. Open dialogue between educators, students, and their parents is a foundational belief of this school system. Students, with their families, who choose to exercise their right to opt-out of high-stakes tests, as has been the belief and practice in Amherst Schools, will not be subject to any form of negative consequences. Similarly, educators who are involved in discussions about this issue with their students or with parents, in class, in parent-teacher conferences, in community meetings or other social or professional settings, as has been the belief and practice in Amherst schools, shall not be subject to any form of retribution by anyone in the Amherst Public Schools. We are pleased to reaffirm that free speech is a fundamental right of all who are part of our educational community, and ask that the Superintendent affirm this resolution and distribute it to educators, parents and students.* Mr. Sullivan was quick to point out that only ARMS would be impacted as 10<sup>th</sup> Graders are required to pass the MCAS in order to graduate. A discussion followed pertaining to the potential ramifications of opting-out (graduation requirement, slipping from a Level 2 school to Level 3 school, state and/or district retribution, MTA influence, teacher/family feedback). Members agreed that the topic be re-visited at the March 8, 2016 meeting.

**G. Accept Gifts**

**8:47 p.m.**

**H. DOCUMENT: Memo from ARPS Treasurer Mary Wallace (2/22/16)**

Ms. Hazzard moved to accept the Regional gifts from the Anthony Reynolds Sr. Memorial Fund , Inc. in the amount of \$500.00 to support the Anthony Reynolds Sr. Scholarship fund; ARPS PGO in the amount of \$1,000.00 to support the Guidance Office snacks and incentive program; AEF in the amount of \$3,750.00 to support the SEC Cultivating Our Future Program; and AEF in the amount of \$4, 275.00 to support the ARMS Diversity and Access to Music program. Ms. Appy seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

**5. School Committee Planning**

**8:48 p.m.**

The following topics will be included on the March 8, 2016 agenda: 7-12 Consolidation Update, FY 17 Budget Vote, Capital Plan Vote, 2016-2017 School Calendar Discussion/Vote, MCAS Opt-Out Resolution, Human Resources Hiring Plan, Violence in the Workplace Policy – 2nd Read/Vote, Weapons in the Workplace Policy - 1<sup>st</sup> Read/Potential Vote, Use of Cameras for Safety & Security – 1<sup>st</sup> Read and Later Start Time. Mr. Sullivan asked that the ARMS Indigenous Peoples Day Resolution be discussed. Ms. Appy expressed deep gratitude for the partnership, initiative, development, events and media/public relations work Kimberly Stender accomplished in her role as Community Liaison since 2010. Ms. Stender explained that her position was eliminated in the recent budget cuts and although this transition is bittersweet she anticipates much success as the executive assistant to the Vice Provost of international Programs at the University of Massachusetts. She thanked the community for the opportunity to develop programs which support all ARPS students, staff and families.

**6. Adjournment**

**8:56 p.m.**

Ms. Appy moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:56 p.m. Ms. Traphagen seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,  
Kimberly Stender