

Amherst-Pelham Regional School Committee
Tuesday, September 8, 2015
Library, Amherst Regional High School

IN ATTENDANCE:

Trevor Baptiste (Chair)

Kip Fonsh

Rick Hood

Katherine Appy

Phoebe Hazzard

Dan Robb (arrived 6:02 p.m.)

Josiah Vasquez (arrived 6:04 p.m.)

Vira Douangmany-Cage (arrived 6:05 p.m.)

Kathleen Traphagen (arrived 6:08 p.m.)

Stephen Sullivan (arrived 6:10 p.m.)

Maria Geryk, Superintendent

Mike Morris, Assistant Superintendent

Sean Mangano, Finance Director

Kathy Mazur, Human Resources Director

Mary Wallace, Treasurer

Marta Guevara, Student/Family Engagement Director

Jean Fay, APEA President

Monica Hall, Equity/Professional Development Director

Faye Brady, Student Services Director

Mark Jackson, ARHS Principal

Lisa Desjarlais, Pelham Elementary Principal

Public and Press

Kimberly Stender, Recorder

1. Welcome

6:01 p.m.

- A. **Call to Order & Agenda Review**- Mr. Baptiste called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m. He read the district mission statement and nine goals from the Policy Manual (Policy AD) as a reminder to the committee to shape the direction of the schools. He asked the committee to review the agenda. Ms. Appy reminded the group to be mindful of the times listed on the agenda.
- B. **Approve Minutes** – Mr. Hood moved to approve the minutes of August 10, 2015 and August 27, 2015. Mr. Robb seconded. Mr. Fonsh referred to the August 10 minutes and indicated that a change be made in Section B (school committee calendar) and the 5th line beginning “Mr. Fonsh said “ I have met with the financial committee and select board and they voted unanimously to urge the Regional School Committee to make sure that the draft Regional Agreement come before Town Meeting in the Spring.” Per Mr. Fonsh’s request the minutes will be amended to reflect the change listed above. Mr. Fonsh then indicated that in the August 27 minutes it was inferred that he made a motion that the RSC appoint a Parliamentarian. His intent was to have a current Regional School Committee member serve as the parliamentarian and not an outside person. He wanted to make sure this was amended. This was duly noted. Ms. Douangmany-Cage reminded the group that by making motions at a retreat was not following protocol. Mr. Baptiste asked if all were in favor of approving minutes and both sets of minutes were unanimously approved.

2. Announcements and Public Comment

6:07 p.m.

There were no announcements or public comment.

3. Superintendent’s Update

6:08 p.m.

DOCUMENT: Major Projects & Engagement memo from Maria Geryk (9/2/15)

Ms. Geryk welcomed Josiah Vasquez who is the ARHS Student Advisory Council representative to the Committee. She also welcomed Kimberly Stender as school committee recorder for the 2015-2106 school year. Ms. Mazur spoke on behalf of the superintendent regarding Grades 7-12 consolidation and re-visioning, the consulting work of David Stephen and MOPC, the community re-visioning survey, and the November 7, 2015 community summit. Ms. Mazur indicated that over 200 survey responses were returned and more were expected. Based on the survey responses, three main points of concern emerged: 1). Cost savings & expenses of consolidation; 2). Concern over a broad age group (12 year-olds -18+ year-olds) in the same building; and 3). Accessibility of Grade 9 & 10 courses for students enrolled in Grades 7 & 8. Based on these and other factors a FAQ sheet will be created shortly.

4. New & Continuing Business

6:15 p.m.

A. FY15 Budget Final Report

DOCUMENT: Amherst-Pelham Regional School District FY15 End of Year Budget Report

Mr. Mangano reviewed the report and invited questions from the committee. Mr. Robb inquired why Central Office closed the year \$134,000.00 over budget and asked for specifics. Ms. Geryk addressed the question and explained that the reasons include legal costs linked to regionalization and employee settlements; professional development work with Dewey Cornell; restorative practices consultant fees; leadership and equity consultants fees; AFSME consultant work around equity; and discipline data consultation with UMASS. Mr. Fonsh requested a town by town breakdown of vocational students leaving the district. Mr. Mangano will provide this information to the group. Mr. Fonsh asked why there was an increase in vocational school enrollment (i.e. Smith Vocational). Mr. Mangano suggested that Smith Vocational enhanced their existing nursing and criminal justice programs with Greenfield Community College and broadened their athletics program to attract more students. Mr. Hood was very appreciative of Amherst College for providing \$65,000.00 towards ARPS Family Center programs. Ms. Douangmany-Cage inquired about the enrollment consistency at South East Campus (SEC) ; the cost of the Amherst Together survey work by the Department of Landscape Architecture and Regional Planning; as well as the cost of surveillance cameras installed at ARMS and ARHS. Ms. Geryk and Mr. Mangano will provide information regarding these items for the group. In addition, Ms. Douangmany-Cage inquired about a clear policy for the cameras (specifically data storage, who is viewing footage and the district's current relationship with the Amherst Police Department). Ms. Geryk answered that the process is an internal one and clearly defined. She asked Mr. Mangano to provide more information regarding this question. Mr. Baptiste thought this process should be reviewed by the Policy Subcommittee. Ms. Hazzard inquired about pre-payment of retirement and Mr. Mangano explained this aspect of the report. Mr. Mangano explained that after switching banks, the district saved approximately \$12,000.00 as certain fees were waived. Mr. Baptiste then asked for additional questions from the committee. There were none so he opened it up to the floor. Caridad Martinez, community member, inquired about the purpose of surveillance cameras in schools and Ms. Geryk offered to provide that information.

B. Bond Award Vote

6:31 p.m.

DOCUMENTS: Vote of the Regional School District School Committee; Standard & Poor's Rating Services Summary: Amherst-Pelham Regional School District, MA; General Obligation

Mr. Mangano explained the purpose of the Standard & Poor's summary in relation to the Bond vote. He then introduced Mary Wallace, ARPS Treasurer, who reviewed the two documents. They then explained "Continuing Disclosure" in section E. Mr. Baptiste asked if the committee should vote on individual motions. Mr. Mangano advised the committee to review the document and vote on it in its entirety. Mr. Baptiste asked the committee if they were prepared to vote and Mr. Robb read the vote in its entirety:

VOTE OF THE REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Voted: that we hereby determine, in accordance with G.L. c. 70B, that the amount of the cost of the Middle School window replacement project authorized by a vote of the District passed on March 29, 2011 not being paid by the school facilities grant is \$607,105 and we hereby approve of the issuance of notes and bonds in such amount under said G.L. c. 70B.

Further Voted: That in order to reduce interest costs, the District Treasurer is authorized to issue refunding bonds, at one time or from time to time, pursuant to Chapter 44, Section 21A of the General Laws, or pursuant to any other enabling authority, to refund the District's \$11,335,000 General Obligation Bonds dated March 15, 2005 maturing on November 15, 2016 and November 15, 2017 in the aggregate principal amount of \$2,175,000 (the "Refunded Bonds") and that the proceeds of any refunding bonds issued pursuant to this vote shall be used to pay the principal, redemption premium and interest on the Refunded Bonds and costs of issuance of the refunding bonds.

Further Voted: that the sale of the \$4,187,000 General Obligation School Bonds of the District dated September 24, 2015 (the “Bonds”), to Roosevelt & Cross, Inc. at the price of \$4,375,356.30 and accrued interest, if any, is hereby approved and confirmed. The Bonds shall be payable on September 15 of the years and in the principal amounts and bear interest at the respective rates, as follows:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Interest Rate</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Interest Rate</u>
2016	\$1,282,000	4.00%	2021	\$205,000	2.00%
2017	1,265,000	4.00	2022	205,000	2.00
2018	210,000	4.00	2023	205,000	2.00
2019	205,000	4.00	2024	205,000	2.00
2020	205,000	4.00	2025	200,000	2.125

Further Voted: that in connection with the marketing and sale of the Bonds, the preparation and distribution of a Notice of Sale and Preliminary Official Statement dated August 31, 2015, and a final Official Statement dated September 8, 2015 (the “Official Statement”), each in such form as may be approved by the District Treasurer, be and hereby are ratified, confirmed, approved and adopted.

Further Voted: that the District Treasurer and the Chair of the Committee be, and hereby are, authorized to execute and deliver a continuing disclosure undertaking in compliance with SEC Rule 15c2-12 in such form as may be approved by bond counsel to the District, which undertaking shall be incorporated by reference in the Bonds for the benefit of the holders of the Bonds from time to time.

Further Voted: that we authorize and direct the District Treasurer to establish post issuance federal tax compliance procedures in such form as the District Treasurer and bond counsel deem sufficient, or if such procedures are currently in place, to review and update said procedures, in order to monitor and maintain the tax-exempt status of the Bonds.

Further Voted: that each member of the Committee, the District Clerk and the District Treasurer be and hereby are, authorized to take any and all such actions, and execute and deliver such certificates, receipts or other documents as may be determined by them, or any of them, to be necessary or convenient to carry into effect the provisions of the foregoing votes.

Mr. Baptiste moved to approve vote read by Mr. Robb and and Mr.Fonsh seconded. Ms. Douangmany-Cage abstained and all others voted in favor.

C. Review of School Committee Norms Suggested During August Retreat 6:47 p.m.

DOCUMENT: School Committee/Reminders for Effective Meetings (3/21/11)

In the interest of time, Ms. Traphagen suggested a sub-committee be formed to address norms. Ms. Appy supported the idea of a sub-committee for the purpose of reflecting on the retreat materials to develop norms. Ms. Douangmany-Cage reminded the group that rules were broken during the retreat in regards to motions. Mr. Baptiste acknowledged this and also agreed that a sub-committee be formed to address norms of operation as a goal. Mr. Baptiste asked for volunteers to serve on this sub-committee and Mr. Hood, Ms. Appy and Mr. Baptiste did so. Ms. Douangmany-Cage asked the group to consider ethics as well as norms when examining retreat materials. She mentioned that other school committees across the Commonwealth have ethics sub-committees. Ms. Hazzard asked the group to consider what would an effective retreat look like as they do their work. Ms. Douangmany-Cage thanked Mr. Hood for creating *School Committee/Reminders for Effective Meetings* and distributed them to the group.

D. Review of New Draft of Regionalization Agreement and Plan Community Engagement About Regionalization Including a Public Forum in Each Town 6:56 p.m.

DOCUMENT: Regional Agreement Regional School District Comprised of Amherst, Leverett, Pelham and Shutesbury

Mr. Baptiste began the discussion by expressing the importance of establishing dates for community forums as well as the materials to be presented at each. He will reach out to Pelham and Shutesbury while Mr. Fonsh will speak to Leverett and Ms. Appy to Amherst. Mr. Fonsh asked a question of clarity regarding whether or not committee members can share the information found in the Agreement with community members, finance committees and select boards. Mr. Baptiste replied that this information should be shared in order to educate and familiarize all residents with Regionalization. Ms. Appy and Mr. Hood suggested that specific structure of the forums be agreed upon during the discussion. A brief discussion followed regarding proposed dates, location of forums, participation of committee members, and content materials of forums in regards to the draft Regional Agreement. It was agreed that all forums take place in October to follow the original Regionalization timeline. Mr. Hood stated that each town's school committee should set date of community forum for their town. Ms. Hazzard agreed. Ms. Traphagen agreed and added that it would be beneficial if the Regional School Committee would plan to structure the forums after dates were set by each town. Ms. Geryk pointed out that dates should be established soon as many evenings in October are already scheduled with meetings and events. After a brief discussion, Ms. Douangmany-Cage suggested the creation a sub-committee. Mr. Baptiste believed the entire Regional School Committee should sort out this matter. Mr. Robb suggested that the sub-committee keep small town residents in mind when crafting forums and preparing informational materials. Ms. Traphagen indicated that the draft Regional Agreement explains financials, governance and educational implications and each school committee would have to select information for the benefit of their town. Ms. Traphagen pointed out that not every resident can and will understand legal language as it appears in the Regional Agreement so a simple Powerpoint may be very useful during the community forums. Mr. Fonsh referenced the June 25, 2015 meeting in which a motion was passed that provided a timeframe which stated between November-December forums would be held to educate and inform the public and possibly hold more forums in March and April 2016. Mr. Baptiste believed that the committee was in general consensus and should remain laser focused. Mr. Hood moved to form a Regionalization Forum Planning Sub-Committee to prepare a presentation that the full committee can present at forums to be scheduled by local committees. Ms. Douangmany-Cage seconded the motion. A vote was taken with eight members in favor and one opposition (Baptiste). Mr. Fonsh volunteered to be on this sub-committee and requested technology support from the district. Ms. Geryk agreed. Ms. Appy offered to step down from the Norms Sub-Committee if Ms. Traphagen would take her place. Ms. Traphagen agreed. Ms. Appy then volunteered to be a member on the Regionalization Forum Planning Sub-Committee. Mr. Sullivan agreed to be a member of the sub-committee. Mr. Robb cautioned that after this work is completed some changes to the presentation may be necessary. Ms. Douangmany-Cage asked if Amherst Together could help disseminate the information throughout the community. Ms. Geryk stated that the district is happy to support this work. She suggested Carol Ross (Media and Climate Communication Specialist) support this work. Ms. Geryk reminded the group that only school committee members should present and answer questions from the community rather than school staff. A Regional School Committee meeting was scheduled for October 1, 2015 to hear a report from the sub-committee pertaining to forum planning. Ms. Hazzard added that, although forums are important, perhaps other means of communication should be considered. Community member, Mary Lou Theilman, indicated that the Regional Agreement as distributed is a DRAFT and should be noted as such on the document. Ms. Geryk stated it will be posted on the district website once annotated questions are answered by Attorney Tate. Ms. Traphagen felt strongly that the draft Regional Agreement with answers to questions should be posted on the website. Ms. Douangmany-Cage requested that the word DRAFT and the date be placed on the Regional Agreement document and pages and individual lines be numbered for easy reference. Community member, Janet McGowen, asked how the school committee would invite residents of each town to attend the forums because attendance was extremely low at past RAWG forums. She went on to say that the sub-committee should ensure that all information is clearly stated whether deemed a pro or a con to Regionalization and perhaps a FAQ be created to assist the public with understanding the issues. Mr. Baptiste suggested that Mr. Sullivan answer FAQs pertaining to Shutesbury so all community members will understand the reasoning behind this town's resistance to support Regionalization.

E. Orientation to Superintendent Evaluation Process

7:42p.m.

DOCUMENTS: *Superintendent Rubric at a Glance; From the 2014-2015 Superintendent Evaluation: Indicators which were within the proficient range, but noted as relative areas for improvement; School Committee Self-Evaluation; DESE MA Model System for Educator Evaluation; Process for Superintendent Evaluation*

Mr. Morris reviewed the documents with the group (Pelham members and the superintendent excused themselves as they heard this information on September 2, 2015) and explained that this is the same rubric developed by DESE and used in the 2014 evaluation. When all members returned to the table, Mr. Baptiste asked how the committee could evaluate the superintendent based upon the State-suggested baseline as well as the rubric in relation to the district's mission statement. Mr. Morris suggested that the mission statement could be used as a guide to evaluate if linked to the rubric. Mr. Fonsh stated that the evaluation process has been problematic for two reasons: 1). Spring elections and 2). Which members could participate. He explained that as a direct result of spring elections members leave and new members join the committee during the evaluation process. He went on to say that a firm timeline would enhance the entire evaluation process. Ms. Douangmany-Cage asked why the timeline was pushed back in 2015. Mr. Baptiste explained that long deliberations during the evaluation goal-setting process pushed back the timeline. Ms. Appy urged a professional process and added that the committee be respectful of the superintendent's daily responsibilities and vote a firm timeline. After deliberation, Mr. Fonsh made a motion that the Regional School Committee adopt the suggested timeline as the firm timeline for the superintendent evaluation process. Mr. Hood seconded the motion and a discussion followed. It was agreed that May 28-June 25 be the time period in which school committee members each write individual End-Of-Cycle Summative Evaluation Reports, which would then be compiled by the Chair into a Summary End-of-Cycle Summative Evaluation Report. Mr. Fonsh explained this would address the lingering issue created by the large gap between March and June. Mr. Robb added that the rubric is expansive with a lot of room and it may be easier to link goals to specifics. It would also be beneficial if the committee discuss and determine who can participate and submit evaluations. Ms. Douangmany-Cage noticed that July and August did not appear on the timeline as many people might be out of town on family vacations. This created a timing problem (no wiggle room) with the summary report and vote. She explained that the entire committee could not review it nor vote on it in such a short amount of time and asked for more buffer time. She began a motion in which the evaluation report be discussed at the June 25 meeting but quickly tabled it in favor of the one Mr. Hood recommended. Mr. Hood moved to amend the motion to read May 28-June 18 and Ms. Appy seconded. The amendment to the motion was approved with one opposing (Baptiste). Ms. Traphagen pointed out that June 25, 2016 is a Saturday and that perhaps the best day to end this portion of the process would be June 28 (Tuesday), 2016. She moved to change the date from June 25, 2016 to June 28, 2016 to conclude the process. Mr. Hood seconded. The motion passed with one opposing (Baptiste). Mr. Baptiste suggested the committee consider soliciting feedback from the community to amend the timeline in October and November. Ms. Appy thought this would be better suited as an agenda item to discuss at an upcoming meeting. She believed that the school administration may not be the best group to solicit feedback. Mr. Baptiste agreed. Mr. Morris urged that the entire evaluation process be completed by July 1, 2016. Ms. Geryk requested evaluation feedback on the four goals and explained the *Superintendent Rubric At-A-Glance* document to the group. Mr. Hood asked if the 20 indicators and 43 elements comprised the entire rubric. Ms. Geryk affirmed this question and added that the feedback from the rubric will become smart goals. Mr. Hood suggested that members provide Ms. Geryk with five areas of focus and members contributed the following:

- Ms. Douangmany-Cage: thought the document was very helpful and pointed out an example that some community colleges do not accept certificates of completion but rather only high school diplomas. She asked if this type of example be included as a trend and if the superintendent could provide this data to the group.
- Ms. Appy: the superintendent's convocation speech regarding re-visioning and meeting the needs of all students; aspect of the retreat in which the committee focused on students will

framework the process; goals around teacher learning and assessing students to inform instruction.

- Mr. Fonsh: shared vision (Standard IV E); recruitment of staff of color (Standard II B)
- Ms. Traphagen: Equity strategy (efforts, initiatives, progress); communicating clear outcomes; quantitative and realistic goals
- Ms. Hazzard: meeting the needs of high-achieving students; communication that encourages community dialogue
- Mr. Baptiste: analytical process and data collection; retaining diverse educators/staff; demonstrative communication with community; professional development
- Mr. Sullivan: meeting needs of diverse learners; student support and sharing responsibility
- Mr. Robb: commitment to high standards (Standard IV); information on South East Campus; needs of diverse learners; HR recruitment/development; family & community engagement; culturally proficient communication as an indicator.
- Mr. Hood: would like to see all highlighted and underlined goals addressed; more outcome measures and data; better survey data to measure community's perception.
- Ms. Douangmany-Cage: used the Cambodian Cultural Celebration as an example – This was a very popular event but also showcased an old and crowded building. How can this be captured as a highlight on the evaluation? Is it possible to utilize local community members as experts and volunteers instead of external consultants.

Ms. Geryk thanked everyone for their suggestions and will begin work on draft goals and will present these on September 21. Mr. Baptiste would like to see the school committee generate a survey for community without pushing back the timeline. Ms. Geryk supports this and offered the ARPS Survey Monkey account to complete this work.

F. Accept Gifts

8:43 p.m.

DOCUMENT: Memo from Mary Wallace (8/21/15)

Mr. Baptiste suggested the group accept gifts. Ms. Appy pointed out that an item for Fort River Elementary School was included in the Region gift listing and should be removed to the Amherst list. Ms. Appy read and moved to accept all regional gifts: \$500.00 from Jeffrey D. Tripp to support the Anson J. Tripp Memorial Scholarship; \$266.55 from the David Smyser Scholarship Fund to support the David Smyser Scholarship Fund; \$3,000.00 the Local Vocal Chord Bowl (Ellen Augaten) to support the HS Performing Arts for piano; \$75.00 from Target to support the MS Principal's Discretion; \$1,874.09 from Stop & Shop A+ School Rewards to support the HS Principal's Discretion; \$17,396.80 from Stop & Shop A+ School Rewards to support the HS Principal's Discretion; \$25.00 from Barry J. Levy Trust to support Project Backpack 2015. Mr. Robb seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

5. School Committee Planning

8:46 p.m.

A. Calendar

DOCUMENT: 2015-2016 School Committee Meetings: Dates and Topics

It was suggested that norms, regionalization and the Regionalization Planning Forum Subcommittee report be the only items on the agenda for October 1. In addition, the topics for the October 13 meeting should be 7-12 Consolidation update, a vote on the superintendent's goals and discussion of the Regional Agreement. The updated calendar will be posted in the shared folder.

B. Items for Future Agendas

Mr. Fonsh urged the Policy Subcommittee to determine which members of the Regional School Committee could participate in the final superintendent evaluation. Mr. Robb added that a date must be established as to when the Regional School Committee needs this indicator of urgency. Mr. Baptiste suggested that this item be placed on the October 13, 2015 agenda.

6. Other items not reasonably considered by the Chair 48 hours in advance of meeting

Ms. Hazzard asked what the purpose of the Regional School Committee members will be at the November 7 Re-Visioning Summit. Ms. Geryk replied that members should attend as participants and listeners.

7. Adjourn

9:02 p.m.

Ms. Appy moved to adjourn at 9:02 p.m. Ms. Traphagen seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,
Kimberly Stender