

**Retreat Meeting of the Amherst-Pelham Regional School Committee
Tuesday, August 15, 2017
Lewis-Sebring Room, Valentine Hall
Amherst College**

IN ATTENDANCE:

Eric Nakajima, Chair
Peter Demling
Phoebe Hazzard
Ron Mannino
Emily Marriott
Anastasia Ordonez

Mike Morris, Interim Superintendent
Debbie Westmoreland, Recorder
Marc Terry, District Counsel

ABSENT:

Vira Douangmany Cage
Audra Goscenski
Stephen Sullivan

1. Review of Agenda, Objectives and Ground Rules

Mr. Nakajima called the meeting to order at 6:09 p.m. and noted that the meeting will end by 8:30 with any topics remaining moved to a future discussion.

2. Discussion of Open Meeting Law

DOCUMENT: Open Meeting Law Training for the Amherst-Pelham Regional School Committee by Marc Terry, dated August 15, 2017

Marc Terry, district legal counsel, provided a brief overview of open meeting law. Suggestions included:

- Include the physical address of the meeting location since not doing so is a minor violation of OML.
- It is up to the committee whether to include whether there will be a vote on an item. It is not required by law.
- The Chair should announce at each meeting that it is being recorded by Amherst Media. Anyone who is in attendance and planning to record must inform the Chair prior to the meeting.
- It is up to the committee whether to include public comment, but it is advisable to do so.
- If an item comes up that was not posted 48 hours in advance but needs discussion due to urgency, the agenda should be updated online as soon as possible before the meeting.
- Subcommittees are required to maintain minutes, and a subcommittee is formed when the School Committee votes to appoint members and charges them with a particular task.
- Task forces and working groups must meet open meeting law requirements if they are under the supervision of the School Committee, rather than the administration.
- If done consistently, you can post an Executive Session that states "for review of minutes only."
- School Committee members cannot state their opinion on an unresolved School Committee issue on Facebook or email without violating OML.
- OML complaints need to be brought before the School Committee within 14 working days of receipt.
- On the agenda, identify the name of the person who filed the OML complaint when it is brought to the full committee for discussion.

2. Establish Protocols for Regional School Committee Meetings

The committee discussed whether, and how, to have the school committee subcommittees provide reports to the full committee on a set cycle or as a standing item, noting the potential budget and finance implications of work done by the subcommittees. Whether to have Chair/Vice-Chair updates was also considered. It was agreed to begin by listing subcommittee reports as a standing item on agendas with each subcommittee listed. At Mr. Demling's request, Ms. Westmoreland will send the subcommittee spreadsheet to the full committee.

There was discussion of making sure subcommittees provide plenty of advance notice to the full School Committee when they are considering something with budgetary impact. There was discussion around developing a transparent process by which subcommittees bring something to the full committee.

3. School Committee Engagement in the Budget Planning Process

Dr. Morris spoke about work he and Mr. Mangano, Finance Director, have done this summer to find ways for the School Committee to provide more meaningful input in budget planning before numbers are presented, and discussion followed. Mr. Nakajima suggested canvassing the School Committee early in the budget process to see what they are hearing from the community. He requested that the topic of budget planning be included on an agenda soon for full discussion.

4. Need for New Committee Member Orientation

Ms. Ordonez spoke about the need to provide orientation to new members to help them understand their role. She suggested scheduling a meeting with the Chair and Superintendent as soon as possible after the new members are sworn in. Mr. Nakajima suggested including the Finance Director. Ms. Ordonez noted the importance of reminding people of the protocol for interacting with respect and civility. Ms. Marriott volunteered to organize a group to draft protocols for the committee's consideration. New member orientation will be discussed at next week's meeting.

5. Adjourn

Mr. Demling moved to adjourn at 8:34 p.m. Ms. Hazzard seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

Respectfully Submitted,
Debbie Westmoreland