

**Amherst School Committee Meeting
April 26, 2016
Library, Amherst Regional High School**

IN ATTENDANCE:

Katherine Appy, Chair
Vira Douangmany Cage
Phoebe Hazzard
Laura Kent
Anastasia Ordonez

Michael Morris, Assistant Superintendent
Sean Mangano, Finance Director
Press
Debbie Westmoreland, Recorder

1. Welcome and Reorganization

6:00 p.m.

Mr. Morris opened the meeting by asking for nominations for Chair, as required after election of new School Committee members. Ms. Hazzard moved to appoint Ms. Appy as Chair and the motion was unanimously approved. Ms. Appy then nominated Ms. Hazzard for Vice-Chair and asked if there were any other nominations. There were no other nominations, Ms. Douangmany Cage seconded, and Ms. Hazzard was appointed unanimously. Ms. Appy then moved to appoint Ms. Kent as secretary. Ms. Hazzard seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

Ms. Douangmany Cage moved to approve the minutes of March 8, 2016 and March 22, 2016. Ms. Appy seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

2. Announcements and Public Comments

6:07 p.m.

There were no announcements or public comments.

3. Superintendent's Update

6:08 p.m.

Mr. Morris reported that the final film in the Amherst Together film series, *The House I Live In*, is showing tomorrow night at 6:30 p.m. in the ARMS auditorium. He also reported that on Thursday, May 5, there will be a student/parent event at Fort River designed to give students the opportunity to provide their thoughts and feedback about what they would like in their new school. Mr. Morris noted that similar events will also be scheduled at Wildwood and Crocker Farm.

4. New and Continuing Business

6:12 p.m.

A. FY16 Third Quarter Budget Update

For the new members, Mr. Mangano gave a brief overview of what information is contained in the report. He then reviewed the highlights of the budget, noting that the budget is currently tracking to finish slightly over the anticipated amount. Expenditures will be closely monitored to ensure the schools finish within budget. Ms. Douangmany Cage asked if the savings being realized in electricity is already factored in to the figures. Mr. Mangano confirmed that they have been, and they will help offset the unanticipated payroll expenses. Ms. Douangmany Cage asked if the Amherst Schools will benefit from the town's solar project. Mr. Mangano said it will, but the amount expected is uncertain at this time. At Ms. Appy's request, Mr. Mangano explained that the Amherst Schools were able to realize health insurance savings because the town has a health care trust. Ms. Appy asked what will be done if the district does end the year over budget. Mr. Mangano explained that every effort will be made to end the year within the budget; however, there are options for covering overages if necessary. These include utilizing additional school choice reserve funds or reallocating grant funds.

B. Elementary Building Project Update

Mr. Morris reported on the meeting of the Facilities Advisory Subcommittee of the MSBA last Wednesday. He noted that the members of the subcommittee were very pleased with the plan, noting that it is a model school building. One thing they asked to have added going forward is to have covered handicapped parking spaces due

to the New England weather. The group confirmed that the Amherst project will be on the May 25, 2016 agenda for approval. Ms. Appy said she is impressed with the way the site plan and building plan has changed based on feedback from the MSBA as well as from members of our community. She noted that MSBA expressed great appreciation for our responsiveness to feedback. Ms. Hazzard asked if any progress has been made about working with the Region for shared use of the playing field. Mr. Morris explained that the attorney has been consulted about how to move forward with engaging in negotiations with the Region for shared use of the field. He noted that the architects are investigating what will be required to make the field handicapped accessible since there are issues with accessibility at this time.

Ms. Appy reviewed Article 38, which is a citizens' petition to Amherst Town Meeting requesting a feasibility study for repair of Wildwood and Fort River. The Finance Committee has voted not to support the petition, and they asked that the School Committee speak at Town Meeting specifically regarding the committee's vote to reconfigure the elementary schools. Ms. Appy provided a draft of remarks and asked for feedback from the committee. After discussion, Ms. Appy noted that she will make the suggested changes and distribute the revised draft to the committee via email. If there are comments, members can provide them to her individually. Ms. Douangmany Cage suggested having hard copies of the remarks available for Town Meeting members.

C. Policies

Ms. Appy explained that the policies under consideration have already been approved by the Regional School Committee. The Amherst School Committee is now being asked to approve them as well. Ms. Kent asked for clarification of how policies are reviewed, particularly the older ones. Ms. Appy provided background information on the work of the Policy Subcommittee, including the process that is being followed in reviewing old policies and approving new ones. Ms. Hazzard then moved to approve policies GBGB: Violence in the Workplace; BBAA: SC—Member Authorities and Duties; BBBE: SC—Unexpired Term Fulfillment; and GBGC: Weapons in the Workplace as approved by the Regional School Committee. Ms. Kent seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

5. School Committee Planning

7:01 p.m.

Building Project Update; Clerical/Media Award Vote

5. Adjournment

7:02 p.m.

Ms. Ordonez moved to adjourn at 7:02 p.m. Ms. Kent seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

Respectfully Submitted,
Debbie Westmoreland