

Amherst-Pelham Regional School Committee Meeting
Tuesday, January 8, 2013
Library, Amherst Regional High School

In Attendance:

Kip Fonsh, Chair
Rick Hood
Lawrence O'Brien
Trevor Baptiste
Amilcar Shabazz
Michael DeChiara
Rob Spence
Annemarie Foley
Zoe Langsdale (Student Rep.)

Maria Geryk, Superintendent
Rob Detweiler, Director of Finance & Operations
Jerry Champagne, Director of Information Systems
Faye Brady, Director of Student Services
Kathy Mazur, Human Resources Director
Mike Morris, Director of Evaluation & Assessment
Betsy Dinger, Principal, ARMS
Rhonda Cohen, Director of Teaching and Learning
Marta Guevara, Director of Achievement & Equity

Absent:

Katherine Appy

1. Call to Order and Business Agenda Review 7:03 PM

A. Welcome and Agenda Review—Mr. Fonsh called the meeting to order at 7:03 PM and welcomed everyone. He extended get well wishes to member Katherine Appy who is home sick with the flu. Mr. Fonsh added a personal thank you to Nick Grabbe, Amherst Bulletin reporter, who is retiring soon.

B. Approve Minutes—Mr. Fonsh asked there are any changes to the minutes of November 27, 2012 and December 11, 2012. No changes were suggested and the minutes were approved as presented by unanimous consent.

2. Announcements and Public Comment None

There were no public comments.

3. Superintendent's Update 7:05 PM

DOCUMENTS: *Superintendent's Updates to the Regional School committee dated 1/8/13*

Ms. Geryk provided updates/announcements on the following:

1. Acknowledgement of gratitude for Nick Grabbe, who has reported on the ARPS for the past five years and is retiring.
2. Received formal notification of the DESE grant award, which is the planning portion of the potential regionalization efforts, should that be the direction that is decided upon. Follow up questions will be answered tomorrow regarding the next phase of grants.
3. Dr. Marta Guevara has been examining our systemic approach to family engagement. Family University, a session program aimed at assisting families (many of whom are beginning English language learners, and are new to Amherst) begins January 10th. The primary goal(s) of Family University is to support family's in understanding and navigating our school system; to provide an opportunity for people to connect; to understand their rights and the community resources that are available; to begin focusing on curriculum advocacy and parent leadership skills. Ms. Geryk encourages people to contact Dr. Guevara for more information and acknowledges Dr. Guevara for the work done thus far.
4. Reminder regarding winter weather; information regarding school closures or delays may be found on the ARPS website or by calling (413)362-1898.
5. \$10,000 grant from the Amherst Rotary to the HS athletic weight room. New equipment from said grant will be unveiled January 17, 2013. Ms. Geryk extends gratitude to the Rotarians and the Amherst Rotary at large for their support of this grant.
6. Upcoming installments of Got Teens, Get the Facts: January 17th; "Flirting with Danger," 7:00 PM @ ARHS. February 7th - Pressures of a Competitive Society.

4. FY14 Budget Presentation

7:17 PM

DOCUMENT: Comprehensive Spending Plan (binder); Amherst-Pelham Regional School District FY14 Budget; FY 14 Budget Introduction Powerpoint

Ms. Geryk facilitated a Powerpoint providing a preliminary look at how the district has come to where we are today in preparing for the upcoming budget, noting the Region is facing a funding gap for FY14. She noted that more information will be available from the state in the coming weeks. Mr. Detweiler then provided an overview of the financial data included in the School Committee's FY14 budget binders. He noted that the projected increase in the assessment to member towns is 3.5% and that with level funding there is a funding gap of \$923,000. Ms. Geryk reported that she is working with district administrators to plan for ways to address the gap, but currently she anticipates a reduction of 9.3 FTE in staff due to changing enrollment and other factors. Mr. Baptiste asked how many students are placed out of district right now. Ms. Geryk noted there are 25 students currently out of district. Mr. Hood commented that it appears that Health Insurance and Special Education have had the most significant impact on the budget over the past decade. He said it may be helpful to complete a cost per student examination in both general education and special education. Mr. Spence asked whether revenue in the consolidated athletic budget includes booster donations. Mr. Detweiler said they are not included. Ms. Geryk requested that SC members email questions to Mr. Fonsh with a cc to Ms. Westmoreland. Ms. Westmoreland will consolidate the questions and ensure that all SC members and Ms. Geryk have access to them before the next Regional meeting. Mr. DeChiara expressed gratitude for this "impressive document." Mr. Baptiste and Ms. Foley both agreed, noting that it represents a high level of transparency.

5. Acceptance of Gifts

8:34 PM

Mr. Spence moved to accept \$500 from Mark & Sheila Hemeon-Heyer for the Ellis Heyer Survival Living Scholarship fund, \$250 from Marshall & Annie Jones for the James Faison Scholarship fund, and \$300 from Andrew Horton and the Class of 1962 for the Kingsley Perry Award. Mr. Baptiste seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

6. RSDPB Update

8:36 PM

Mr. DeChiara provided a brief update on the following:

- The Community is encouraged to attend a presentation on February 2, 2013, 1:00-3:00 PM at ARMS to hear directly from consultants on their findings. Information will also be available on the website. The Board does not have a date for making their recommendation, but it is likely to be in March. Forums in specific Towns will have a broader scope and the dates will be posted.

7. Policy Update

8:39 PM

A. Policy IIB: Second Reading.

Mr. DeChiara made the motion to approve Policy IIB: Instruction—Class Size as presented. Mr. O'Brien seconded and discussion followed, including questions regarding what belongs in policy. After discussion, the motion was unanimously approved.

8. School Committee Planning

8:50 PM

Calendar: Saturday, 9:00-11:00 AM, Four-Town meeting; January 22nd, Joint School Committee meeting—more educationally focused with mid-cycle evaluation.

Adjournment

8:56 PM

Mr. DeChiara moved to adjourn at 8:56 PM. Mr. O'Brien seconded the motion and the motion was unanimously approved.

Respectfully Submitted,
Wendy Bloomenthal

Approved 3/12/13