

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

IN ATTENDANCE:

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

Maria Geryk, Superintendent
Michael Morris, Assistant Superintendent
Sean Mangano, Finance Director
Press
Sasha Figueroa, Recorder

1. Welcome and Approve Minutes

6:00 p.m.

Ms. Appy called the meeting to order at 6 p.m. Ms. Douangmany Cage moved to approve the minutes of April 26, 2016 and Ms. Ordonez seconded. Ms. Hazzard noted that the minutes should be corrected to reflect that Ms. Kent nominated Ms. Appy for Chair. Ms. Douangmany Cage also noted that her name is misspelled in the minutes. With those corrections, the minutes were unanimously approved.

2. Announcements and Public Comments

6:07 p.m.

Ms. Hazzard spoke on the arts integration in the elementary schools and congratulated the students and district on this work. There were no announcements or public comments.

3. New and Continuing Business

6:12 p.m.

A. Approve Clerical/Media Awards

Ms. Appy noted that the Clerical/Media Awards selection committee met to select this year's winners from 17 nominees that were received. Lisa Fretwell, Fort River and Wildwood Special Education secretary, and Tina Annear, Student Services Office Administrative Assistant, were selected to receive the award, which includes \$500 dollars and recognition at the June 13 Years of Service and Retirement Celebration. Ms. Hazzard moved that, in accordance with the Unit B employee contract, the Amherst School Committee approves clerical/media merit awards in the amount of \$500 each for Lisa Fretwell and Tina Annear. Ms. Ordonez seconded and the motion was approved unanimously.

B. Elementary Building Project Update

Mr. Morris provided an update on the building project, the early childhood visioning work and the potential preschool expansion. He reported that on May 25, the MSBA approved the project to proceed to the next step which will involve detailing the design plans. The MSBA complimented the work that has been done with the community throughout the process. Mr. Morris noted that the architects and the OPM met with staff members, students and parents at Fort River to collect their feedback, which has been added to the items under consideration for the design structure. He noted that there will be similar opportunities for this team to meet with parents and students from Crocker Farm and Wildwood in the near future. Ms. Hazzard commented on the excitement and potential of the building, noting how positive it is to have the involvement is to the children who will be using the building. Ms. Ordonez asked when the apartment complexes will be visited again to share information and gather feedback about the Building Project. Mr. Morris will share details about these visits with the committee when they become available. Mr. Morris then provided an update on the early childhood visioning group, noting that they visited an early childhood center on May 12. He said that the group participated in a few classroom observations and toured the building, which was built three years ago. The group is scheduled to meet two more times, and a document outlining their work will be shared with the committee once it is finalized. Ms. Douangmany Cage had questions regarding what the plans are for funding and for the renovation of Crocker Farm in order for it to serve as an early childhood center. Mr. Morris

responded that Title IIA grant funds are being used to pay travel expenses for staff members who went on the trip to East Hartford. There is no additional MSBA funding for the work at Crocker Farm, but Ron Bohonowicz, Facilities Director, believes the district can afford these costs. Ms. Douangmany Cage also had questions about the details of the design, class size and teacher numbers and Preschool fees. Mr. Morris noted that the district has been discussing not having a fee, but more research is needed. Ms. Geryk noted that the district will work on a report with these details to be shared with the School Committee in August.

5. School Committee Planning

Resolution against lifting the cap on the charter schools

5. Adjournment

6:34 p.m.

The committee voted unanimously to adjourn at 6:34 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Sasha Figueroa