

**Regular Meeting of the Amherst School Committee
December 13, 2011
Town Room, Amherst Town Hall**

In Attendance:

Irv Rhodes, Chair	Maria Geryk, Superintendent
Rick Hood	Lisa Dejarlais, Pelham Principal
Rob Spence	JoAnn Smith, Student Services Director
Katherine Appy	Beth Graham, Dir. of PD, Collaboration & Teacher Evaluation

Absent:

Steve Rivkin

1. Welcome 7:07 p.m.

A. & B. Call to Order and Agenda Review—Mr. Rhodes called the meeting to order at 7:07 p.m. and reviewed the agenda.

C. Approve Minutes—Mr. Hood made a motion to approve the minutes of the November 22, 2011 joint Amherst and Region School Committee meeting. Mr. Spence seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

2. Public Comments 7:09 p.m.

Vladimir Morales, community member, noted that he belongs to a statewide coalition that is attempting to change the UMass Health Services to an outpatient clinic. This would mean they would be required to service people with Mass Health and Medicare. They will be asking the School Committee, as a body, to sign on to this initiative as the work moves forward. Mr. Morales also said he has read that 48% of our district's students are on free or reduced lunch and expressed concern about the impact of those statistics on the achievement gap. He said he trusts that the School Committee is looking into the issue. Mr. Morales noted that he is getting robo-calls from the schools that do not always include a Spanish translation. He encouraged that these calls always include the Spanish translation in accordance with the district's BAMSS and social justice commitment. Finally, Mr. Morales noted that he has learned that it is legal to create a bilingual class if 20 parents within a community petition the School Committee to do so. He encouraged the committee to consider what they would do if requested to create a bilingual class.

3. Superintendent's Update 7:15 p.m.

Ms. Geryk reported on the AEF gift donation fundraiser, the Generations Together Cambodian Open House that will be held at Crocker Farm on December 14, the Geography Bee at Crocker Farm and the Scholastic Book Fair sponsored by the Fort River PGO. Mr. Rhodes noted that the Junior Achievement Entrepreneurship program at Crocker Farm will be recognizing students from the program with certificates from 3:00-4:00 p.m. on Monday, December 19th.

4. New and Continuing Business 7:22 p.m.

A. FY13 Budget Guidelines

Mr. Rhodes asked for discussion of the draft FY13 Budget Guidelines from the Amherst School Committee. Mr. Spence noted that he likes everything included, but feels there should be only one tier rather than two. Ms. Appy agreed with Mr. Spence, noting that the guidelines are well aligned with the District Improvement Plan. Ms. Geryk noted that she feels the spirit and priorities of the committee are very clear and the administration would be able to work with the guidelines without tiers. Mr. Rhodes noted that he feels the tiers give guidance on how to move forward in a difficult budget scenario where cuts may be required. Mr. Hood then made a motion to approve the Amherst Budget Guidelines as presented. Mr. Spence seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

B. School Choice Discussion

Ms. Geryk spoke to her belief that it would be beneficial to accept a targeted number of school choice students in Amherst next year. She noted that it would allow the district to fill seats in circumstances where there are too few students to open an additional classroom but too many for one classroom. Mr. Spence noted that he is in favor of

accepting choice students within the margins in cases where it would not require an additional teacher. Mr. Rhodes noted that he would like to hear more data with regard to enrollments since choice students stay with the district for their entire education. Ms. Appy noted that the Committee has discussed ways to raise additional revenue and this would be a viable way to do it. Mr. Geryk noted that she will bring a detailed report to the Committee in January so they can have a well-informed discussion prior to finalizing this decision.

C. Amherst Fees

Mr. Hood moved to accept the proposed fee increases to the Crocker Farm preschool program and to school meal prices as endorsed by the Budget and Finance Subcommittee (attached). Ms. Appy seconded. Mr. Hood noted that this is a 10% increase in the preschool fees and suggested going up 10% per year until the program fees are in line with other preschool programs in the area. The motion was unanimously approved.

D. Regionalization Study Conversation

Ms. Appy reported that the first meeting of the Amherst Regional School District Planning Committee will be this Thursday at 9:00 a.m. in the First Floor Meeting Room of Town Hall. She noted that it is an open, posted meeting. Ms. Appy asked if there are any questions that the School Committee wants her to bring to the meeting on Thursday. Mr. Spence said he would be interested in knowing more about how the public forums will go forward. Ms. Appy noted that the RSDPC has been charged with having six public meetings, including two public forums, and they will be discussing this at the meeting.

E. Accept Gifts

Mr. Spence made a motion to accept \$1,500 from the Fort River Parent Council to help defray costs of the staff lounge renovations. Ms. Appy seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

5. Policies

None

6. Subcommittees

7:40 p.m.

Mr. Hood distributed summary notes from the October and November BCG meetings. He briefly reviewed how the Finance Committee came up with the preliminary budget guideline of a 2.8% increase. Mr. Rhodes noted that the schools do not anticipate coming in with a 2.8% budget because it will not be sufficient. Mr. Spence noted that the Joint Capital Planning Committee will ramp up their work again in January. Ms. Geryk reported that the district is again going through the process of applying for renovation funding for Fort River and Wildwood through the MSBA.

7. School Committee Planning

7:44 p.m.

A. Calendar—Ms. Geryk noted that she met with the Superintendent's Planning Council and will be presenting a revised draft of the School Committee report schedule to the three chairs at their meeting tomorrow.

B. Items for Future Agendas—Topics for the next meeting include school choice and the tiered instructional model. Mr. Hood noted that he would like to see more follow-up data analysis on MCAS and discipline compared with state and national data. Mr. Rhodes said he would like to have Dr. Cohen report on her work. Also, he noted that there is an extraordinary amount of data and information in the report presented by Dr. Guevara at the last Regional School Committee meeting, and he would like to look at it in regard to the Amherst Schools.

8. Adjournment

7:49 p.m.

Mr. Spence made a motion to adjourn at 7:49 p.m. Mr. Hood seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

Respectfully Submitted,
Debbie Westmoreland

Approved 1/17/12

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FY2013 Fee Review and Proposed Changes

Endorsed by the Budget and Finance Subcommittee

<u>Regional Schools</u>	FY12	FY13	Increase
College Application Services			
Electronic	3.00	4.00	1.00
Mailed	5.00	4.00	(1.00)
Parking Fees at ARHS	75.00	75.00	-
Musical Instrument Rental			
School Year	50.00	75.00	25.00
Summer	20.00	25.00	5.00
Preschool located at ARHS (per hour)	5.06	5.41	0.35
Athletics Participation			
Full Fee 1	231.00	247.00	16.00
Full Fee 2	193.00	207.00	14.00
Individual Cap	522.00	559.00	37.00
Family Cap	1,100.00	1,177.00	77.00
School Meal Prices			
Lunch	2.50	2.75	0.25
Breakfast	1.00	1.25	0.25
 <u>Amherst Schools</u>			
Preschool located at Crocker Farm (per hour)	4.50	5.00	0.50
School Meal Prices			
Lunch	2.50	2.75	0.25
Breakfast	0.50	0.75	0.25
 <u>Pelham School</u>			
School Meal Prices			
Lunch	2.50	2.75	0.25
Breakfast	0.50	0.75	0.25