

Joint Amherst, Pelham and Regional School Committees Meeting/Retreat

June 26, 2012

Mullins-Faeber Room, Valentine Hall, Amherst College

In Attendance:

Kip Fonsh, Regional Chair	Glenn Koocher, MASC Executive Director
Debbie Gould, Pelham Chair	Maria Geryk, Superintendent
Katherine Appy, Amherst Chair/Regional Member	Kevin Courtney, MASS Mentor
AnneMarie Foley, Pelham/Regional Member	Press
Trevor Baptiste, Pelham/Regional Member	Debbie Westmoreland, Recorder
Michael DeChiara, Regional Member	
Rob Spence, Amherst/Regional Member	
Lawrence O'Brien, Amherst/Regional Member	
Kathleen Mailhot, Pelham Member	
Darius Modestow, Pelham Member	
Rick Hood, Amherst/Regional Member	

Absent:

Amilcar Shabazz, Amherst/Regional Member

1. Call to Order and Business Agenda Review 6:06 p.m.

Mr. Fonsh called the Regional School Committee to order at 6:06 p.m., and Ms. Appy called the Amherst Committee to order at 6:07 p.m. Mr. Fonsh reviewed the agenda, noting that he has asked Andy Steinberg, Chair of the Regional School District Planning Board, to report on the work of the board as an additional agenda item.

2. New/Continuing Business 6:08 p.m.

A. GIC Retiree Insurance Vote

DOCUMENTS: *Memo to the Regional School Committee from Maria Geryk, Superintendent regarding Retired Teachers' Insurance and dated June 21, 2012; Memo to John P. Musante, Town Manager, Maria Geryk, Superintendent, and Edward Martin Pelham Board of Selectmen Chair from Kay Zlogar, Amherst Pelham Health Claims Trust Manager, regarding Public Hearing June 13, 2012—Removal of Retired Teachers from GIC dated June 14, 2012*

Kay Zlogar, Amherst Pelham Health Claims Trust Manager, gave a brief update on the June 13th retiree insurance public hearing, including results of the retirees' votes at that hearing. Ms. Appy then moved to terminate acceptance of Chapter 32B, Section 11e, thereby transferring all eligible retired teachers and their dependents from the Commonwealth's GIC health and life insurance plans to the local Amherst-Pelham Health Claims Trust. Mr. Baptiste seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

B. Regionalization Discussion (Regional School Committee)

DOCUMENT: *Sources of Funding for Consultants (June 26, 2012)*

Andy Steinberg, Regional School District Planning Board Chair, reported on the work of the Board, particularly on the need to have expert consultants help with the work of developing a Regional Agreement proposal for a reconfigured Regional School District. He outlined the possible sources for funding to hire expert consultant assistance, including the advantages and disadvantages of each source. Mr. Steinberg noted that the full RSDPB has not yet voted on a preferred source. However, he outlined why the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) may be the best resource if the Board plans to meet the current timeline which calls for consideration of a new Regional Agreement at all four Town Meetings in time to allow implementation in 2014. If hired, PVPC will provide \$25,000 worth of funds and staff time, which would need to be supplemented by a district contribution of \$15,000 to \$20,000 in funds. Because of the time constraints faced by the Board to complete their work, Mr. Steinberg suggested that the Regional School Committee consider allocating funds contingent on two things: 1) the Regional School District Planning Board's agreement to contract with the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission and 2) agreement of the Superintendent and the Regional School Committee Chair to the contract terms with the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission. Mr. Fonsh agreed that there is some urgency to move forward due to timeline constraints. He noted, however, that if a vote is to be taken at tonight's meeting, the

Committee would have to vote to suspend their policy that prohibits voting on an issue at the same meeting at which it is discussed for the first time. Mr. DeChiara made a motion to suspend the referenced policy. Ms. Appy seconded and the motion was unanimously approved. Mr. DeChiara then moved that the Regional School Committee authorize contingency funds not to exceed \$20,000 subject to the Regional School District Planning Board's agreement to contract with the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission and agreement of the Superintendent and the Regional School Committee Chair to the contract terms with the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission. Ms. Appy seconded and discussion followed. Mr. DeChiara spoke to the history of efforts to regionalize over the years, noting that it is essential to have the help of a consultant if regionalization efforts are ever to be successful. Mr. Baptiste noted that he agrees with the need to get as much information as possible. However, he said he is worried about the perception that we are locking ourselves into moving down a path to Regionalization if district money intended to support students and programs is being committed for this purpose. He said he would be more comfortable if the money was coming from a source other than the schools. Ms. Geryk noted that any allocated funds would not come from the general funds used for students and programs, but from a contingency fund which is allocated for use by the towns for situations such as this. She noted that she has spoken to John Musante, Amherst Town Manager, and he is very supportive of using these funds for this purpose. Ms. Appy noted that she believes it is quite appropriate to use funds in this way since the consultant will be helping to answer questions that have been hanging over the Region for many years about whether Regionalization will benefit the education of children. After further discussion, the motion was approved with 7 in favor and Mr. Baptiste opposed.

C. Establish Warrant Subcommittees (Amherst and Regional School Committees)

DOCUMENTS: *Memo to Maria Geryk, Superintendent, and Rick Hood, Regional School Committee Chair, from Rob Detweiler, Director of Finance and Operations regarding Proposal to Establish a Warrant Sub-Committee of the Regional School Committee dated June 5, 2012; Memo to Maria Geryk, Superintendent, and Katherine Appy, Amherst School Committee Chair, from Rob Detweiler, Director of Finance and Operations regarding Proposal to Establish a Warrant Sub-Committee of the Amherst School Committee dated June 5, 2012*

Mr. Hood moved that the Amherst School Committee shall establish a Warrant Subcommittee composed of three members of the School Committee to review and sign off on payroll warrants and accounts payable warrants to allow for the release of checks. Mr. O'Brien seconded and the motion was unanimously approved. Mr. Spence moved that the Regional School Committee shall establish a Warrant Subcommittee composed of three members of the School Committee to review and sign off on payroll warrants and accounts payable warrants to allow for the release of checks. Mr. Hood seconded and the motion was unanimously approved. The Amherst Warrant Subcommittee will include Mr. O'Brien, Ms. Appy and Mr. Hood. The Regional Warrant Subcommittee will include Ms. Appy, Mr. Fonsh, Mr. Baptiste and Mr. O'Brien.

D. Authorize Per Pupil Expenditure Report Funds (Amherst School Committee)

DOCUMENT: *Memo to Maria Geryk, Superintendent, and Katherine Appy, Amherst School Committee Chair, from Rob Detweiler, Director of Finance and Operations, regarding Proposal to Contract for a Per Pupil Expenditure Analysis dated June 21, 2012; document titled "Analysis of Per Pupil Expenditures"*

Mr. Detweiler very briefly reported on the need to appropriate funds to contract for a per-pupil expenditure analysis as requested by the Amherst School Committee. Mr. Hood moved that the Amherst School Committee approve spending an amount not to exceed \$5,000 for an analysis of the per-pupil expenditures in the Amherst School District (LEA 008) for FY2011. Mr. O'Brien seconded and the motion was approved unanimously.

E. Approve Gifts (Amherst and Regional School Committees)

DOCUMENTS: *Memo to the Amherst-Pelham Regional School Committee from Mary Wallace, Treasurer dated 6/22/12; Memo to the Amherst School Committee from Mary Wallace, Treasurer dated 6/22/12*

Mr. Spence moved to accept \$150 from the AIC Matching Gift of Kiplangat Terer Road Race for the High School; \$21,344.09 from the Stop and Shop A+ School Rewards for the PGO HS awards; and \$1,432.87 from the Stop and Shop A+ Rewards for the Middle School. Ms. Appy seconded and the motion was unanimously approved. Mr. Hood moved to accept an in-kind donation of books for the summer literacy program from Richard C. Owen Publishers, Inc.; \$420 from various donors for the Betty Yaffe Art Scholarship Fund; \$2,165 from various donors for the Laurie Rabut String Scholarship Fund; and \$500 from Harvard Pilgrim Community Spirit for the Wildwood Art Special Projects. Mr. Spence seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

3. Retreat (Amherst, Pelham and Regional School Committees)

7:40 p.m.

DOCUMENT: *Evaluating the Superintendent—Understanding the New Massachusetts Educator Evaluation System dated 6/25/12*

A. Roles and Responsibilities

Mr. Koocher asked if anyone has specific questions regarding the roles and responsibilities of Superintendents versus School Committees. Mr. Hood asked about non-unit, administrator salaries and who has authority to approve them. Mr. Koocher explained that there is little guidance in law, noting that the School Committee can establish a specific budget account for administrator salaries and can set policy around how contracts are negotiated. While the Superintendent negotiates the contract with non-unit administrators, the School Committee can determine the amount to be allocated in the administrative salary lines and require the Superintendent to work within those funds as long as contracts have not already signed for a larger amount.

B. Educator Evaluation System

Mr. Koocher gave a presentation outlining the new DESE Educator Evaluation process, including the rubric of standards for Superintendents. Discussion followed including how best to work with the Superintendent to set goals, the potential to change the evaluation cycle to better correspond with the election cycles, integration of evaluation goals into the DESE standards, and developing one District Improvement Plan that incorporates the goals. At 8:29 p.m., Ms. Gould called the Pelham School Committee so the three committees can determine the make-up of the Goals/Evaluation Subcommittee. After discussion, there was consensus agreement that the three School Committee Chairs will work with Ms. Geryk to develop draft plan for presentation to the three full committees.

C. District Report Card/Measures

Mr. Hood noted that he believes it is important to develop some type of district report card for measuring success. He suggested looking at five-year trends when possible, comparing our districts' data to other districts whenever possible, including demographic data to inform understanding of the trend data, providing statistical analysis, and including numerical measures in addition to MCAS. Discussion followed regarding the type of information that should be measured with suggestions including college entrance of graduates (rather than just acceptance), scholarships awarded, the drop-out rate, survey input, internal measures and MAP assessments. Mr. Gould pointed out that she believes strongly that any report card must include qualitative data along with the quantitative data in order to accurately portray the values of our districts. Mr. Hood noted that the district report card should be separate from what the Superintendent is evaluated on, and Mr. Baptiste agreed. Mr. O'Brien encouraged the Chairs and the Superintendent to focus on developing only four goals.

4. Adjournment

8:59 p.m.

Mr. Fonsh moved to adjourn the Regional School Committee at 8:59 p.m. Ms. Appy seconded and the motion was unanimously approved. Ms. Appy then moved to adjourn the Amherst School Committee. Mr. O'Brien seconded and the motion was unanimously approved. Ms. Gould moved to adjourn the Pelham School Committee. Mr. Baptiste seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

Respectfully Submitted,
Debbie Westmoreland