

Amherst-Pelham Regional and Union 26 School Committee Meeting
Tuesday, June 13, 2017
Library, Amherst Regional High School

IN ATTENDANCE

Eric Nakajima, Region
Ron Mannino, Region & Union 26
Anastasia Ordonez, Region & Union 26
Emily Marriott, Region & Union 26
Audra Goscenski, Region
Peter Demling, Region
Phoebe Hazzard, Region & Union 26
Trevor Baptiste, Region & Union 26
Stephen Sullivan, Region
Vira Douangmany-Cage, Region

Michael Morris, Superintendent
Sean Mangano, Finance Director
Barbara Bilz, LSSE
Debbie Westmoreland, Recorder
Public and Press

ABSENT

Cara Castenson, Union 26

1. Welcome and Call to Order 6:33 p.m.

Mr. Nakajima called the Regional School Committee to order and Ms. Ordonez called the Union 26 School Committee to order at 6:33 p.m.

2. AEF Presentation 6:33 p.m.

Becky Michaels, AEF Co-President, presented Dr. Morris with a check for \$500 from AEF, noting that the funds were raised at the AEF Celebrates Music event. Dr. Morris thanked AEF for their incredible work, noting that the grants they awarded this year support a broad array of curricular areas and grade levels. Ms. Michaels briefly noted the four grants that have been awarded to support the work of the schools in 2017-2018, noting that they were selected out of 11 grant applications. At Mr. Demling's request, Ms. Michaels provided an overview of the AEF mission and the grant program.

3. Approve Minutes—May 18, 2017; May 23, 2017 6:38 p.m.

Ms. Hazzard moved to approve the minutes of May 18 and May 23, 2017 on behalf of the Regional School Committee with minor corrections. Ms. Marriott seconded and the motion passed unanimously with Mr. Sullivan abstaining. Mr. Demling moved to approve the minutes on behalf of Union 26. Mr. Mannino seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

4. Union 26 Vote on Contract for Assistant Superintendent Doreen Cunningham 6:42 p.m.

Ms. Ordonez explained that there was a technical oversight when the Regional School Committee voted to approve Ms. Cunningham's contract at the last meeting, noting that the Union 26 committee needs to also approve the appointment. Ms. Marriott moved to approve the Assistant Superintendent appointment of Doreen Cunningham. Mr. Demling commented that he is happy to have another opportunity to vote for this great new position and this wonderful candidate. Mr. Mannino seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved. Ms. Hazzard moved to adjourn Union 26 at 6:45 p.m. Mr. Demling seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

5. Announcements and Public Comment 6:45 p.m.

There were no public comments. Mr. Nakajima said it was an honor to participate in the ARHS graduation last Friday, noting that it was a moving experience. Mr. Sullivan acknowledged and thanked the volunteers who kindly worked at the senior party following graduation. Mr. Nakajima reported that he and Ms. Ordonez need to schedule an Executive Session next week regarding the Ray and Associates offers that have been put forward.

4. Interim Superintendent's Update

6:49 p.m.

DOCUMENT: Update to the Amherst-Pelham Regional School Committee June 13, 2017

Dr. Morris reported that the livestream video of the ARHS graduation will be posted online by next week, noting that it was a great event. He thanked Ms. Goscenski and Mr. Demling for attending the South East Campus graduation, which was also a wonderful event. Dr. Morris briefly reviewed upcoming events including the STARS in Special Education recognition, the Employee Recognition Event, the moving-up ceremonies at each school, and the Immigrant Rights meeting scheduled for 5:30 p.m. tomorrow night in the ARMS library.

5. New and Continuing Business

6:54 p.m.

A. LSSE Pool Agreement/Discussion

DOCUMENT: Memorandum of Agreement Draft

Dr. Morris framed the discussion, noting that there has been discussion of a partnership with LSSE for use of the ARMS pool for several months. He explained that there is no vote required by the School Committee; however, the administration wanted the elected officials to know what is being considered so they could provide input or ask any questions they may have. Mr. Mangano introduced Barb Bilz from LSSE. He then presented a Powerpoint that outlined the current partnerships between LSSE and the schools and outlined the highlights of the agreement that has been drafted for LSSE's use of the pool two days per week. Ms. Bilz noted that having access to the pool will provide many more opportunities for LSSE to provide swimming lessons for children in the community, as well as additional opportunities for open swim and lap swimming. Mr. Mangano noted that the agreement would be for LSSE to pay the district \$6,000 for use of the pool and outlined the fiscal trends regarding the pool. Ms. Hazzard asked for some history regarding the use of the pool since it is asked about at every Town Meeting. Ms. Bilz provided some background, noting that the fees became too high in around 2005 to afford it. Dr. Morris acknowledged the efforts of Dave Ziomek in moving the agreement forward. Ms. Ordonez asked about who will be on hand at the pool for supervision when LSSE uses it. Ms. Bilz noted that there will be a pool manager and two lifeguards on duty, at a minimum. For swimming lessons, there is a one-to-five student-teacher ratio and all teachers must be Red Cross certified.

B. Food Service Collections Policy

DOCUMENT: Policy JQA--Food Service Collections

Dr. Morris noted that the policy has been significantly revised since the School Committee's first reading based on feedback from SETF and the community. At Mr. Nakajima's request, Mr. Mangano reviewed the highlights of the policy, noting that any collection efforts will be directed strictly to parents and never to students. He also noted that no child will be denied a meal at any time. Ms. Hazzard asked how the Family Center could potentially be used to help with collections. Mr. Mangano explained that the Family Center has close relationships with a cohort of parents and can often help if there is a language barrier. Mr. Demling asked if the intention is to have an arrangement made to pay balances prior to graduation or to have the balance paid. Mr. Mangano said the intention is to have an arrangement in place if the balance is not paid off at graduation. Ms. Douangmany Cage thanked Mr. Mangano for listening to the feedback from SETF, noting that she believes this may be the most progressive food service collection policy in the country. She noted that she hopes that the collection letters provided to families will include a list of resources they can access and will be done in the language they can best understand. Mr. Mannino expressed appreciation for the policy's lack of shaming techniques, noting that it is clear a great deal of effort went into avoiding that. Ms. Ordonez said she thinks it will be important to communicate with families that there will not be any impact on their child's graduation due to this policy. Ms. Ordonez moved to approve Policy JQA: Food Service Collection as presented. Ms. Douangmany Cage seconded and discussion followed. Mr. Demling suggested moving "prior to graduation" in section D to the beginning of the sentence to make the intention more clear. Ms. Hazzard suggested adding a sentence stating that attendance at graduation will not be affected. Ms. Douangmany Cage suggested eliminating the first sentence in section D and

replacing “prior to graduation” with “by the end of the school year.” Ms. Goscenski then moved to amend the policy in section D to read “Prior to the end of the school year, parents/guardians must make arrangements with the school district (food service department) to fully or partially pay outstanding balances.” Mr. Mannino seconded and the motion was approved unanimously. Discussion followed regarding other potential edits and whether the policy should be returned to the Policy Subcommittee or approved tonight. Ms. Hazzard moved to amend the amended sentence in section D to read “...fully or partially pay, *or waive*, outstanding balances.” Ms. Douangmany Cage seconded and the motion was unanimously approved. The original motion, with the approved amendments, was then unanimously approved.

C. Warrant Signing Procedure

DOCUMENT: Payment of Bills Flowchart

At Mr. Nakajima’s request, Mr. Mangano gave an overview of the process that is followed in processing expenditures from purchase order through the warrants that are signed by the School Committee authorizing release of payments. Mr. Demling asked what the School Committee’s action in signing the warrants is legally doing. Mr. Mangano noted that they are signing that, to the best of their knowledge, the warrants represent valid charges based on the Finance Director’s confirmation. He noted that the districts’ audits affirm that the process is being followed correctly and there are no deficiencies. Ms. Ordonez said that her concern has been that the School Committee is signing without a detailed understanding of the ins and outs. She noted that she has confidence in Mr. Mangano, but she finds it troubling that the School Committee is signing off on so much financial information without a more formal process by which any questions can be answered. Mr. Mannino noted that he is not certain what additional evidence the School Committee could ask for. Ms. Ordonez explained that she thinks it is important to have an opportunity to ask questions before signing warrants if an item comes to the attention of a School Committee member and they do not understand what it is for. Mr. Nakajima suggested that, in addition to signing for standard warrant expenses, a separate process could be to have more information around an expenditure that may be extraordinary for some reason. Dr. Morris suggested that the Budget Subcommittee may be able to play a role in this process. After further discussion, Mr. Nakajima suggested having volunteers from the Committee to work with Dr. Morris and Mr. Mangano to think through the issue to bring it to the retreat. Ms. Ordonez volunteered to do this work. Mr. Demling noted that MASC would also be able to help with this. He also suggested adding 15 minutes to the beginning of the meeting at which time Mr. Mangano could be available to answer questions that may arise for those signing warrants. After discussion about the potential for open meeting law and posting violations in such scenarios, it was agreed that the small group will meet ASAP before deciding on a process. The group will include Ms. Ordonez and Mr. Mannino. Ms. Douangmany Cage volunteered to research best practices for warrant signing.

D. Use of Stabilization Funds

DOCUMENT: Amherst Pelham Regional School District Stabilization Expenditures; Capital Stabilization Fund Chart

Mr. Mangano noted that the School Committee is being asked to approve disbursements that have been made from the stabilization fund this year. He explained that such disbursements will be approved in advance in the future, based on the preference of the districts’ new auditors. Mr. Mangano reviewed a chart that outlines the stabilization fund from 2011 through anticipated trends through 2020. After brief clarifying questions, Ms. Goscenski moved to approve payment of the following expenses out of the District’s capital stabilization fund for fiscal year 2017: 1. South East Campus Renovation Debt – Reimbursement to Town of Amherst \$10,442 and 2. Middle School Reconstruction Debt—\$76,500 for a total of \$86,942. Ms. Marriott seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

E. Designation of OPEB Funds

DOCUMENT: Amherst Pelham Regional School District Other Post Employment Benefit (OPEB) Funding Designation; OPEB Trust Fund Chart

Mr. Mangano noted that this will be an annual vote of the committee, with Medicare Part D reimbursements being designated for the OPEB obligation. He distributed and reviewed a chart showing a break-down of the OPEB funding plan from FY17 through FY26, based on an annual funding plan that will be recommended to the School Committee by the OPEB trustees. After brief discussion, Mr. Demling moved to designate the FY17 Medicare Part D reimbursement (\$88,833) for the purpose of financing the District's OPEB obligation. Ms. Hazzard seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

F. UFCW Recognition Agreement

DOCUMENT: Amherst Pelham Regional School District United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Recognition Agreement (memo and agreement)

Dr. Morris noted that the food service workers currently employed by the outside vendor providing food service for the district will become employees of the district now that we are moving to an in-house food service program. He noted that the district supports the right of these employees to be members of the UFCW Union. Ms. Ordonez then moved to accept the enclosed recognition agreement between the School Committees of Amherst, Pelham, and the Amherst-Pelham Regional School District and the United Food and Commercial Workers Union, Local 1459. Ms. Goscenski seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

G. Immigration Policy Implementation

Dr. Morris shared that the policy passed by the School Committee has been shared with all staff and families through the *ARPS Update*. Additionally, principals provided clerical staff members with specific language to use if an ICE agent seeks access to a student. Dr. Morris noted that he is waiting to write the guidelines for the policy since things are changing so rapidly around immigration, but they will be ready for the fall. All staff members will be provided with training around the policy when staff returns for the beginning of the school year, prior to students returning. Dr. Morris said he will continue to keep the School Committee updated on the training and guidelines around this policy.

H. Community-Based Strategic Planning

Dr. Morris noted that community-based strategic planning is more traditionally done by towns rather than schools; however, a model named Planning for Success has been developed to help districts do strategic planning through community engagement. The model includes a visioning process to imagine the future and a data review to identify what is the current reality is. It also includes a planning committee and events to engage community stakeholders, the administrative team and focus groups. Dr. Morris noted that he does not see himself facilitating the process, rather, he would bring in a facilitator. Mr. Demling asked Dr. Morris to share links regarding Planning for Success with the committee so they can read more about the model. Ms. Douangmany Cage said that she thinks use of this model would satisfy the policy regarding participatory action research. She encouraged an open process for selecting the facilitator. Dr. Morris noted that the facilitator should be someone who does not have a stake in the process, but it is also important to have someone who is local and understands the community. Each of the School Committee members individually expressed their support for engaging in the Planning for Success process. Dr. Morris suggested that the School Committee consider developing a subcommittee to work with him on planning for the process. He noted that the work of the Data Trends Subcommittee is similar to what such a subcommittee would be doing.

I. Subcommittee Assignments

DOCUMENT: Regional School Committee Subcommittees and Working Groups

After discussion, members expressed interest in serving on the following subcommittees/working groups:

- **Audit Subcommittee:** Mr. Mannino
- **Budget Subcommittee:** Mr. Mannino
- **Contract Negotiating Team for Three Units:** Ms. Ordonez, Ms. Douangmany Cage
- **Contract Negotiating Team for APAA:** Ms. Ordonez, Ms. Douangmany Cage
- **Contract Negotiating Team with UFCW:** Ms. Ordonez, Ms. Douangmany Cage
- **Data Trends Subcommittee/Strategic Planning:** Ms. Goscenski
- **Policy Subcommittee:** Ms. Hazzard, Ms. Marriott, Mr. Sullivan
- **School Equity Task Force:** Ms. Ordonez, Ms. Douangmany Cage
- **The Collaborative Representative:** No volunteers
- **Recreation Working Group:** Mr. Sullivan
- **SEPAC Representative:** Mr. Demling, Ms. Hazzard
- **Regional Assessment Working Group:** Ms. Goscenski
- **Amherst Media Liaison:** Ms. Douangmany Cage
- **Clerical Merit Award Selection:** No volunteers
- **MASC Delegate:** No volunteers
- **Professional Leave Subcommittee:** No volunteers
- **Summer Warrant Signing Subcommittee:** Amherst Members Requiring Three Member Signatures
- **Community-Based Strategic Planning Subcommittee:** Ms. Goscenski, Mr. Nakajima
- **Superintendent Evaluation Subcommittee:** Ms. Hazzard, Ms. Marriott, Ms. Goscenski
- **Warrant Signing Working Group:** Ms. Ordonez, Mr. Mannino

Mr. Demling suggested adding a “marketing” working group to work on getting information out to the community. Ms. Hazzard suggested a new member orientation subcommittee. Mr. Nakajima asked that Ms. Westmoreland send a Doodle poll for a retreat meeting in August. He noted that one of the topics of the retreat would be how new members are welcomed. Ms. Ordonez asked that the committee think about creative ways of handling the work as part of the retreat.

J. Bill S223FBRC (An Act Modernizing the Foundation Budget for the 21st Century)Discussion

DOCUMENT: Senate No. 223

Mr. Nakajima noted that at the next Regional School Committee meeting, the committee will have a discussion of Bill 223 with Representative Solomon Goldstein-Rose and consider a resolution supporting the bill. Mr. Demling will share articles regarding the bill with Ms. Westmoreland who will forward them to the full committee.

K. Accept Gifts

DOCUMENT: Memo to Amherst-Pelham Regional School Committee from Jill Berry, Amherst-Pelham Regional School District Treasurer dated June 7, 2017

Ms. Goscenski moved to accept \$100 from Michele Bernet Cutting, \$100 from Clifton and Arlene Read, and \$100 from ARHS 2017 baseball team for the Spirit of Charlie Read scholarship; \$500 from Norman Brown for the Metzger Brown Holocaust Remembrance Scholarship; \$500 from Katherine J. Atkinson for the Atkinson Family Practice Scholarship; \$500 from the Northampton Elks for the Northampton Elks Scholarship; \$250 from Shirley Musumeci for the Leo P. Vigeault Memorial Award; \$500 from anonymous for the Community Building Award; \$250 from Mt. Holyoke for the ARPS Family Center; \$7,900 from the Trustees of Amherst College for the Summer Program 2017; and \$500 from Jeffrey Tripp for the Anson Tripp Memorial Scholarship. Ms. Ordonez seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

6. School Committee/Retreat Planning

10:06 p.m.

Ms. Westmoreland will conduct a Doodle poll to determine a date for the retreat. For the superintendent evaluation summary, it was agreed that the Chair and Vice-Chair of each committee will write a draft summative evaluation for the next meeting.

7. Adjourn

10:09 p.m.

Mr. Nakajima moved that the committee will adjourn to Executive Session according to MGL Chapter 30A, Section 21(a)(3) to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining (UFCW) if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the public body and the chair so declares. Ms. Goscenski seconded and the committee adjourned to Executive Session by unanimous roll call vote at 10:10 with no intention to return to open session.

Respectfully Submitted,
Debbie Westmoreland