

Amherst School Committee Meeting
Tuesday, June 27, 2017
Library, Amherst Regional High School

IN ATTENDANCE

Phoebe Hazzard, Chair
Vira Douangmany Cage
Eric Nakajima
Anastasia Ordonez

Mike Morris, Interim Superintendent
Sean Mangano, Finance Director
Debbie Westmoreland, Recorder

ABSENT

Peter Demling

1. Call to Order and Approve Minutes

7:42 p.m.

Ms. Hazzard called the meeting to order at 7:42 p.m. Ms. Hazzard read updates she and Mr. Demling sent to Ms. Westmoreland for the June 14th minutes. Ms. Douangmany Cage and Mr. Nakajima requested additions to the June 20 minutes. Mr. Nakajima moved to approve the minutes of June 14 and June 20, 2017 as amended. Ms. Ordonez seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

2. Announcements and Public Comment

7:49 p.m.

There were no public comments. Ms. Douangmany Cage noted that she met with Steven Brewer, Chair of the Amherst Media Board, who provided a nice overview of the role of the board. She and Dr. Morris will also be meeting with Jim Lescault of Amherst Media.

3. New and Continuing Business

7:51 p.m.

A. Bill S223 Foundation Budget Resolution

DOCUMENT: Amherst School Committee Resolution regarding Bill S223

Mr. Nakajima moved to support the passage of Bill S223 Foundation Budget Resolution and adopt the enclosed resolution. Ms. Ordonez seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

B. Superintendent Evaluation

DOCUMENT: Evaluation Summary from the Amherst School Committee

Ms. Hazzard and Ms. Ordonez explained the process they followed in developing the narrative summary of the superintendent's evaluation. Mr. Nakajima moved to adopt the summary superintendent evaluation as presented. Ms. Douangmany Cage seconded and discussion followed. Ms. Hazzard briefly reviewed the highlights of the evaluation, and Mr. Nakajima expressed his appreciation for the work of the Superintendent in a difficult year. He noted Dr. Morris' willingness to engage and to learn, stating that we can see this year as a foundation for the work of the district. The motion was then unanimously approved. Dr. Morris thanked the School Committee for the tremendous amount of work they have done this year, noting that he looks forward to continuing the work.

C. School Committee Forum Planning

Ms. Hazzard distributed a document of proposed tasks to be done in preparation for the Fort River School Building Committee forums and the committee discussed the tasks and the text for invitation flyers. Ms. Ordonez noted that it is important at this stage to think about the name of the committee, since naming the last project the Wildwood Building Project confused people for quite some time. Ms. Douagnmany Cage noted that consideration should be given to changing the name since a great deal of feedback has been received about the name. Mr. Nakajima said that he would support adding "site" to the title (Fort River Site Feasibility Study) since it is descriptive of exactly what the project will be doing. He suggested changing the name if the mission of the work changes. Ms. Hazzard noted that the funding approved has been strictly for the feasibility study, so she

believes it is accurate to keep the name Fort River. She agreed with adding the word “site.” Ms. Ordonez suggested fleshing out the language in the body of the flyer encouraging participation from throughout the community. Dr. Morris suggested adding “building and site” rather than just site so it is clear that both will be considered during the feasibility study. Ms. Douangmany Cage expressed concern about people understanding the meaning of “feasibility” and suggested adding language indicating that they will be looking at renovation and new construction. She also suggested adding the charge of the building committee to the flyer. Discussion followed regarding specific language to include. Ms. Ordonez moved to approve text for the Fort River Elementary Building and Site Feasibility Study forums as amended and discussed. Mr. Nakajima seconded and the motion was unanimously approved. Discussion turned to the proposed tasks necessary to prepare for the forums. It was agreed that the announcement emails will be sent to as many groups throughout the community as possible. Ms. Ordonez agreed to draft a press release that will be sent to the press contacts through the district. Ms. Douagnmany Cage volunteered to post flyers at all of the libraries and the apartment complexes. Other members of the committee will also help distribute flyers. Dr. Morris noted that the district will translate the flyer into Spanish before they are posted. The committee will meet on Tuesday, August 1. A September 25 meeting should also be included on the calendar for the one topic of the Building Committee. It was agreed that Ms. Ordonez and Mr. Nakajima will meet as a planning subcommittee regarding the forum to present at the August 1 Amherst School Committee meeting.

4. Further School Committee Planning

8:58 p.m.

Ms. Ordonez suggested having a retreat at the Amherst level in the fall to map out the calendar for the Amherst School Committee meetings. After discussion, Mr. Nakajima suggested that the Chair and Vice-Chair work out the details about the retreat. Dr. Morris reported that the Pelham School Committee voted unanimously to ask the Amherst School Committee to enter into a study of the possibility of regionalizing the Amherst and Pelham elementary districts.

5. Adjourn

9:04 p.m.

Mr. Nakajima moved to adjourn at 9:04 p.m. Ms. Douangmany Cage seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

Respectfully Submitted,
Debbie Westmoreland