

**Amherst-Pelham Regional and Union 26 School Committee Meeting  
Tuesday, February 14, 2017  
Library, Amherst Regional High School**

**IN ATTENDANCE**

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

Mike Morris, Interim Superintendent  
Sean Mangano, Finance Director  
Faye Brady, Student Services Director  
Kathryn Mazur, HR Director  
Mark Jackson, ARHS Principal  
Patty Bode, ARMS Principal  
Public and Press  
Debbie Westmoreland, Recorder

**1. Call to Order and Approve Minutes**

**6:36 p.m.**

Mr. Nakajima called the Regional School Committee to order and Ms. Ordonez called the Union 26 School Committee to order at 6:36 p.m. Mr. Baptiste requested that the committee postpone voting on the minutes until later in the meeting to allow him time to review them. Mr. Nakajima agreed. After the discussion of the Superintendent Search Process, discussion turned to approval of the minutes. Ms. Hazzard moved to approve the minutes of February 8, 2017. Ms. Goscenski seconded and the motion was unanimously approved with a correction requested by Mr. Baptiste. Ms. Douangmany Cage moved to approve the open session minutes from July 13, 2016. Ms. Goscenski seconded and extensive discussion followed. Mr. Baptiste and Ms. Douangmany Cage requested that their comments from the meeting be expanded and Mr. Baptiste requested that a link to the Amherst Media video of the meeting be included. The motion to approve the minutes as amended was unanimously approved with Ms. Goscenski and Mr. Nakajima abstaining. Ms. Appy made the same motion on behalf of Union 26, Ms. Hazzard seconded, and the motion was approved with Mr. Mannino abstaining. Ms. Appy moved to approve the minutes of July 20, 2016. Ms. Marriott seconded and discussion followed regarding whether the video should be attached or referenced in the July 13th minutes. Mr. Baptiste moved to attach a link to the July 13th video. Ms. Douangmany Cage seconded and the motion was unanimously approved with Ms. Goscenski abstaining. Ms. Hazzard made the same motion on behalf of Union 26, Ms. Appy seconded and the motion was unanimously approved. It was brought to the attention of the Chair that the motion regarding the video link was taken out of order since there was a motion on the floor at the time regarding approving the July 20th minutes. Mr. Nakajima asked Ms. Westmoreland to strike the vote to attach the video link to the July 13th minutes as a matter of procedure. Ms. Appy's motion to approve the minutes of July 20, 2016 was then unanimously approved with Ms. Goscenski and Mr. Nakajima abstaining. Mr. Baptiste then moved to approve the July 20, 2016 minutes on behalf of Union 26. Ms. Hazzard seconded and the motion was approved with Mr. Mannino and Ms. Castenson abstaining. Mr. Baptiste moved to attach a link to the Amherst Media video to the July 13, 2016 minutes. Ms. Douangmany Cage seconded and the motion was approved with Ms. Goscenski abstaining. Ms. Appy made the same motion on behalf of Union 26. Ms. Hazzard seconded and the motion was unanimously approved. Ms. Appy moved to approve the open session minutes of August 1, 2016. Ms. Hazzard seconded and Ms. Douangmany Cage noted that the location of the meeting should be added. The motion was approved w/Ms. Goscenski and Mr. Nakajima abstaining. Mr. Baptiste made the same motion on behalf of Union 26, Mr. Mannino seconded, and the motion was approved with Mr. Mannino and Ms. Castenson abstaining. Mr. Baptiste moved to amend the already-approved open session minutes of August 9, 2016 with the Amherst Media video link. Ms. Douangmany Cage seconded and the motion was approved with Mr. Nakajima abstaining. Mr. Mannino made the same motion on behalf of Union 26. Mr. Baptiste seconded and the motion was approved unanimously.

**2. Superintendent Search Process**

**6:40 p.m.**

***DOCUMENT: Amherst Flyer***

Ms. Mazur reported that the invitations to serve on the Screening Committee have gone out to all groups, and the community invitation will be advertised in the local newspapers and is posted on the district website. She then reviewed the advertising that will be done, including the projected cost, and distributed copies of the flyer Ray and Associates will be distributing. Ms. Mazur reported that the finalist visits will take place during the week of April 3, and will include full day

visits of each candidate. Ms. Mazur reviewed the process that will be followed each day for the finalist visits and interviews. Ms. Douangmany Cage read and distributed a letter from the elementary PGOs requesting two representatives for the Screening Committee so that there can be a representative from each side of the elementary building project. She asked if the committee can make a decision about this since it is time sensitive and discussion followed. Ms. Castenson asked if the Pelham PGO was included in the invitation to appoint a representative, and it was confirmed they were. Ms. Ordonez commented that she does see the value in both viewpoints being represented. Ms. Marriott noted that appointing two elementary members that must represent both sides of the building project in Amherst will ensure that a Pelham PGO member is not appointed. After further discussion, Ms. Douangmany Cage moved to approve an additional PGO member to the Screening Committee. Ms. Goscenski seconded and discussion continued regarding the potential for the communities other than Amherst to be represented. The committee expressed their hope that the Regional PGO will appoint a representative from either Leverett, Shutesbury or Pelham in order to ensure those communities are represented. The motion was approved by a vote of eight to one with Mr. Sullivan opposed. Mr. Mannino made the same motion on behalf of Union 26. Ms. Appy seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

### **3. Announcements and Public Comment**

**7:41 p.m.**

Jennifer Page, Crocker Farm parent, noted that the Crocker Farm PGO contacted her to ask if she would read the letter that was read by Ms. Douangmany Cage, and they confirmed they would include the Pelham PGO in their discussions. Ms. Douangmany Cage noted that she is pleased that there is an all-school field trip at ARMS to see the movie *Hidden Figures*. Ms. Bode noted that it was important to the students that the custodians and office staff join them, so arrangements have been made to make that happen. She invited the School Committee members to attend as well.

At 7:45 p.m., Ms. Castenson moved to adjourn the Union 26 School Committee. Mr. Baptiste seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

### **4. Interim Superintendent's Update**

**7:46 p.m.**

Dr. Morris did not have a new update since he just presented an update at last week's meeting.

### **5. New and Continuing Business**

**7:46 p.m.**

#### **A. Water Testing Update**

Dr. Morris reported on the water fixture repairs to date. He noted the following:

- Repairs are completed at Pelham;
- 57 of 64 fixtures at Fort River are repaired,
- Repairs are completed at the High School;
- Three of the fixtures at Wildwood have been successfully repaired and retested. The remaining repairs will be completed over vacation week and retested;
- Repairs on the 23 fixtures at the Middle School and the four South East Campus fixtures will begin once the Wildwood repairs are complete.

Mr. Sullivan asked if South East Campus is still receiving bottled water. Dr. Morris confirmed they are and that the flushing protocol is being followed at the Middle School. Dr. Morris noted that the cost of repairs completed to date now stands at approximately \$40,000.

#### **B. Immigration Resolution (First Read)**

##### ***DOCUMENT: Amherst-Pelham Regional Schools Resolution: Rights of Undocumented Students and Protocols for INS and ICE Access to Schools***

Mr. Nakajima noted that tonight's meeting is intended to be an opportunity to review the draft and provide any feedback on the resolution. Dr. Morris acknowledged that the resolution is modeled after the Portland, Oregon resolution on the topic. He noted that our organization has not encountered having an ICE officer show up at one of our schools, and he would like to have a plan in place so our staff will know what to do if it should occur. Ms. Ordonez thanked the committee for the discussion at the last meeting, noting that it is important to present a very unified and strong message that we will not allow this in our district. Mr. Nakajima said this is clarifying a practice that should already be universal. Ms. Goscenski noted that Policy JIH mentions interrogations of students by law enforcement. Mr. Baptiste stated that this resolution has the ability to make people feel better and should be done; however, it is toothless without having policy to back it up. He noted that the term "law enforcement" is too broad, and deliberative discussion is needed regarding what we are trying to avoid and what authority we recognize. He encouraged the Policy Subcommittee to meet as soon as possible to work on this. Ms. Douangmany Cage noted that Policy JIH concerns her and expressed her hope that the larger community can

discuss this policy. She noted that civil liberties are paramount for students. It was agreed that any edits to the resolution from the committee will be sent to Dr. Morris for inclusion in the second-read draft and vote on February 28.

**C. School Choice Vote**

**DOCUMENT: Memo to the Regional School Committee from Kathryn Mazur regarding School Choice dated 2/1/17**

Ms. Hazzard moved to remain a school choice district for the 2017-2018 school year. Ms. Goscenski seconded and discussion followed. Dr. Morris noted that the School Committee was provided with a report regarding the history of school choice in the district. At Mr. Sullivan’s request, Mr. Mangano explained that he monitors school choice in and out of the district. Dr. Morris noted that in the next few years there will be a time when the committee needs to determine if the district should contract the number of choice students accepted, but that is not an issue at this time. Ms. Douangmany Cage noted that there are currently 53 choice students at the high school. The motion was unanimously approved after brief discussion.

**D. Four Town Meeting Report**

Mr. Nakajima noted that, due to the work of Mr. Mangano and Ms. Goscenski, an alternative Regional Assessment method was identified which was agreeable as a compromise by all four towns. Additionally, there was agreement to get outside assistance to work with the four towns to identify a permanent solution prior to the Fall Town Meetings. Ms. Goscenski encouraged members of the committee to work with officials in their towns. Mr. Mangano noted that all four towns have agreed to sign an agreement outlining their willingness to work on a permanent solution prior to the Spring Town Meeting to share with their members. Fall Town Meeting is the goal for completion. Ms. Ordonez spoke about the value of having School Committee members play a prominent role in this work, particularly considering the importance of budget in the School Committee’s authority. She encouraged the committee to formally consider what role they will play in the Four Town meetings. Mr. Nakajima agreed, noting that the School Committee should be educated advocates.

**E. Sabbatical Request Vote**

**DOCUMENT: Proposal to Mike Morris, Superintendent, From John Bechtold re: Request for Professional (Sabbatical) Leave dated 11/28/16**

Ms. Appy, member of the Sabbatical Request Subcommittee, noted that the subcommittee unanimously agreed that Mr. Bechtold’s request is well deserving of approval. Mr. Nakajima concurred, noting that what he will bring back to the district is extraordinary. Mr. Baptiste then moved to support the sabbatical request of John Bechtold, ARHS teacher, for the 2017-2018 school year. Ms. Ordonez seconded and the motion was unanimously approved. Mr. Bechtold thanked the committee, expressing his deep allegiance to the district and his excitement for bringing his work back to the district after his sabbatical.

**F. FY17 Assessment Revote**

**DOCUMENT: Revised FY17 Assessment**

Mr. Mangano explained that in FY16 the district exceeded the E&D limit of 5% and briefly outlined the factors that resulted in that excess. To correct the issue, the FY17 assessments will be revised to bring E&D back in line with the limit. Ms. Ordonez moved to revise FY17 operating budget assessments as shown below:

Town	Initial FY17 Assessment	E&D Giveback	Revised FY17 Assessment
Amherst	\$15,196,144	\$(162,498)	\$15,033,646
Pelham	\$1,125,782	\$(13,314)	\$1,112,468
Leverett	\$1,522,460	\$(16,023)	\$1,506,437
Shutesbury	\$1,700,340	\$(18,165)	\$1,682,175
Total	\$19,544,726	\$(210,000)	\$19,334,726

Ms. Appy seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

### **G. Policy for First Reading**

#### ***DOCUMENT: New Policy--Disposal of Surplus Materials***

Mr. Mangano outlined the reason this policy is needed, noting that currently the School Committee is required to approve disposal of any surplus materials. This policy would allow the district to dispose of surplus property in a more timely way, as needed, with a report to the School Committee. Dr. Morris noted that the Fire Department has requested that some surplus materials currently in storage be disposed of as soon as possible. There were no suggested changes to the policy, which will be brought back to the committee for a second reading at their next meeting.

### **H. FY17 Second Quarter Budget Update**

#### ***DOCUMENT: Amherst-Pelham Regional School District***

Mr. Mangano reviewed the highlights of the second quarter budget update for FY17, noting that the budget is on track at the midpoint of the year. Ms. Douangmany Cage asked when the district last had an independent audit. Mr. Mangano explained that there is an annual independent audit, noting that this year there is a new audit firm. Ms. Hazzard asked for clarification of what the PIP Coordinator does as well as the Writing Center paraeducator, which have been added. Dr. Morris explained that the PIP Coordinator works with some of our most vulnerable population of students with special needs. The Paraeducator has been added to staff the Writing Center, which has been done in the past as a teacher duty. This will provide more consistency. Mr. Baptiste asked if the gym repairs have been paid at this point. Mr. Mangano gave an overview of where the work is in process, and noted that the full amount for the repairs has been included in the figures. Mr. Baptiste asked if the settlement costs with the former superintendent are included in this year's budget. Mr. Mangano confirmed that the full amount is included in this budget.

### **5. School Committee Planning**

**8:58 p.m.**

Mr. Nakajima reminded the School Committee that they need to participate in the Doodle poll to reschedule the March 7 meeting. Ms. Westmoreland will also send a Doodle poll to schedule a Policy Subcommittee meeting. Future topics will include budget hearing, policy vote on surplus materials, homework discussion, immigration resolution, law firm selection process, and a presentation by the Director of The Collaborative. Mr. Sullivan asked for an update on the semester schedule at a future meeting. Ms. Gosenski reminded the committee that a future agenda is supposed to include an update on the athletic revolving account. Dr. Morris noted that would like to address that topic over two meetings after the budget is passed--one to talk about the history of the athletic revolving account and one to set a direction moving forward.

### **6. Adjourn**

**9:07 p.m.**

Mr. Baptiste moved to adjourn at 9:07 p.m. Ms. Gosenski seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Debbie Westmoreland