

**Amherst-Pelham Regional School Committee Meeting
Tuesday, October 14, 2014
Library, Amherst Regional High School**

In Attendance

Trevor Baptiste, Chair

Stephen Sullivan

Dan Robb

Sara Dolven

Katherine Appy

Kathleen Traphagen

Amilcar Shabazz

Lawrence O'Brien

Myles Olmsted, Student Representative

Absent:

Rick Hood

Maria Geryk, Superintendent

Kathryn Mazur, Human Resources Director

Sean Mangano, Finance Director

Marta Guevara, Director of Achievement & Accountability

Mark Jackson, ARHS Principal

Marisa Mendonsa, ARMS Principal

Faye Brady, Student Services Director

Carol Ross, Media & Climate Communications Specialist

Public & Press

Debbie Westmoreland, Recorder

1. Welcome and Agenda Review

6:01 PM

A. Call to Order and Agenda Review

Mr. Baptiste called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m. and reviewed the agenda.

B. Approve Minutes

Ms. Traphagen moved to approve the minutes of July 14, 2014. Mr. Shabazz seconded. Ms. Appy asked if the committee should wait to vote on this set of minutes since there is an open meeting law complaint that may necessitate retracting the minutes if it is upheld by the Attorney General. There was no agreement to wait, and the motion was approved with five in favor and three abstaining (Dolven, Appy and O'Brien). Ms. Appy moved to approve the minutes of August 26, 2014. Mr. Robb seconded and Mr. O'Brien asked for a sentence to be added noting that he was not unable to post a meeting for July 14; rather he was unwilling to post a meeting due to fiduciary and ethical reasons. Mr. Shabazz stated that the minutes refer to a memo from Koppelman and Page "that was distributed to the School Committee prior to the July 14 meeting," noting that he has no record of ever receiving that memo. It was agreed that the quoted portion of the sentence will be deleted from the minutes. After further discussion, it was agreed that the August 26, 2014 minutes will be tabled until corrections can be made. Mr. Baptiste asked that the documents sent in response to the Open Meeting violation complaint be included in the minutes when they are brought back for consideration. Mr. O'Brien moved to accept the minutes of September 9, 2014. Ms. Dolven seconded and the motion was unanimously approved. Ms. Dolven moved and Ms. Traphagen seconded approving the minutes of September 16, 2014. The motion was unanimously approved.

2. Public Comments

6:03 p.m.

Mr. Baptiste welcomed Kalyani Kortright, ARMS student, performed a song she wrote about bullying which was widely praised by those in attendance. Victoria Cliche, parent, noted that the ARMS PGO is having a tag sale this Saturday as a fundraiser and invited interested parties to either rent a table space for \$10 to sell their own items or to donate items for sale by the PGO. She then commented on the recent discourse in the community, suggesting that the community develop norms to govern the way in which issues are raised, discussed and settled in order to create a more civil, productive discourse.

3. Student Advisory Update

6:22 p.m.

Mr. Olmstead reported that the Student Advisory Council has set up an anonymous suggestion box for student feedback. They are also drafting an announcement for inclusion in the morning announcements to let students know who they are and how to contact them. Mr. Olmstead noted that the Student Advisory Council met last week with Ms. Appy. He reported that the council would appreciate higher attendance at these meetings by School Committee members, and the council members would also like to be made aware of subcommittee meetings so they can potentially attend. Ms. Appy noted that one of the first things the students asked at the meeting was "Where are the other School Committee members." She said the students feel they are sacrificing class time to attend the meetings, and they hope the members can make time to attend as well. She noted that the students want to know how they might get something on the agenda and that there was some mention of late start and the quality and quantity of food served in the cafeteria as agenda topics. Mr. Baptiste noted for Mr. Olmstead that the meetings are less important than seeing the students' ideas come to fruition. There was discussion of the

upcoming meeting on November 4 and who will be able to attend. Mr. Shabazz and Mr. Robb stated that they will plan to attend. Ms. Westmoreland will send the list of meeting dates and times to the full committee again.

3A. Subcommittee Updates

6:30 PM

AEF—Ms. Appy noted that the Trivia Bee is October 30, and the School Committee has a team that currently includes Ms. Appy, Mr. O'Brien, Mr. Hood and Ms. Appy's son. She encouraged any member interested in participating to join, and Mr. Baptiste said he will participate.

Budget Subcommittee—There was no report in Mr. Hood's absence.

The Collaborative—Mr. O'Brien reported that at the last meeting there was a thoughtful discussion and vote on the new contract for employees of the Collaborative and a great presentation of the occupational therapies offered by the Collaborative.

Policy Subcommittee—Mr. Robb noted that the subcommittee has not met yet and is trying to schedule a meeting. He noted that he has reviewed the Policy Manual. Ms. Appy asked about the process by which Mr. Robb was made Chair of the Policy Subcommittee since it was done differently than past practice, noting that in the past the Policy Subcommittee had met and selected a Chair. She said that she asked Mr. Robb to wait to schedule a meeting until the question could be resolved, noting that her question is not a reflection on Mr. Robb in any way. Ms. Appy noted that she tried to resolve the question by email but has not received a response. Mr. Baptiste said he thought he had spoken to Ms. Appy about the question at a past meeting and that he followed policy which allows the Chair to appoint Subcommittee Chairs. He noted that he would prefer not to talk about his reason for the appointment in public. Ms. Appy noted that Mr. Baptiste told her at a past meeting that he would talk to her about the question but they never did. Mr. Baptiste asked her not to hold up the work, noting that he will talk to her privately about the question.

School Equity Task Force—Mr. Shabazz reported that the SETF will meet in the ARHS library this Thursday, October 16 at 6:00 p.m., and the agenda includes reports from the working groups. Ms. Traphagen reported that the SETF has appointed voting members, which include Amilcar Shabazz, herself, Mark Jackson, Sonji Johnson-Anderson, Michael Burkart, Vira Douangmany Cage, Russ Vernon-Jones and Caridad Martinez. Sajo Jefferson is the non-voting student representative and Marta Guevara is a non-voting Superintendent's designee. Ms. Traphagen noted that there are another 25 to 30 other people participating in the working groups. Ms. Appy asked how the voting members were identified. Ms. Traphagen said that they were identified by she and Mr. Shabazz. Mr. Baptiste asked what the voting members will be voting on. Mr. Shabazz explained that that working groups have met over the summer and fall to develop ideas which will be presented to the larger group. The initial topics are not the only topics the task force can or will consider, but were a set of areas that were important to discuss coming from last year. Mr. O'Brien asked if there was an official process by which the opinions of the working group participants were considered in appointing the voting members. Ms. Traphagen said they were considered and she and Mr. Shabazz tried to have a balance in gender, race, ethnicity and point of view when appointing the voting members. She noted by the time there is an actual vote on anything, there will have been extensive discussion and work on the part of the many participants throughout the process. Ms. Traphagen also noted that they are working on intersecting the SETF work with the work of the Superintendent's Climate Advisory Committee. Ms. Appy noted that she has had members of the public ask where they can view the SETF minutes. Ms. Traphagen noted that they will be approving minutes at their next meeting and will be working with Ms. Westmoreland to develop a page for the district website.

Data Trends Subcommittee—There was no report in Mr. Hood's absence.

RAWG—Ms. Appy reported that there is a meeting tomorrow night at 6:00 p.m. in the PD Center. That is likely to be the last meeting of the RAWG as it is constituted now, and the RAWG's recommendation will be coming to the School Committee. Mr. Baptiste noted that the School Committee will need to carve out time to discuss and decide on the recommendation of the RAWG.

5. New and Continuing Business

6:58 p.m.

A. MASC Representative

DOCUMENTS: MASC Official Delegate Form

Mr. Baptiste noted that the committee needs to appoint a member to serve as their representative to the MASS/MASC Conference on The Cape in November. Ms. Dolven noted that she has been appointed to serve as Leverett's representative to the Conference and she will be happy to serve as the Regional representative if she is able to go. Mr. Baptiste suggested that whoever attends should serve as the School Committee's emissary regarding standardized testing and seek out other school committees that are committed to advocating against them. He asked for and received general agreement with the suggestion. There was discussion of the dates of the

conference and who might be available to attend. Ultimately, no one was appointed although Mr. Robb noted that he might be able to attend one day of the conference.

B. Transportation Contract Vote/Approval

DOCUMENTS: Memo to the Amherst-Pelham Regional School Committee from Sean Mangano, Finance Director regarding Transportation Contract Vote/Approval

Mr. Mangano explained that the district is in the last year of its transportation contract and must go out for bids. He noted that the district can legally only ask for bids on a maximum three year contract unless the School Committee approves including two optional years on the contract. If approved, the district could opt for one or two additional years if it is advantageous financially. Mr. O'Brien moved that the Amherst-Pelham Regional School Committee authorize the Amherst-Pelham Regional School District to enter into a three-year contract for transportation services, with an option to extend for an additional two-years, beginning in FY2016. Ms. Appy seconded, after which Mr. Mangano answered clarifying questions for the committee. The motion was then unanimously approved. Larry Kelly, parent, noted that he can hear the bus brakes squeal when they drop off his children each afternoon and asked whether the district gets a monthly maintenance report from the transportation companies. Ms. Geryk will get the information from Mr. Bohonowicz and will provide it to the School Committee and Mr. Kelly.

C. Accept Gifts

DOCUMENTS: Memo to Amherst-Pelham Regional School Committee from Mary Wallace, District Treasurer, dated October 9, 2014

Mr. O'Brien moved to accept \$920.37 from Target Take Charge of Education for ARHS and \$172.80 from Target Take Charge of Education for ARMS. Mr. Robb seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

Policy for Second Reading

A. Life Threatening Allergies Policy

DOCUMENTS: Life Threatening Allergies Policy Draft for Second Reading dated August 2014

Mr. O'Brien moved to accept the Life Threatening Allergies Policy as presented for a second reading. Ms. Appy seconded and Mr. Robb read the policy aloud for the audience. Discussion followed regarding the policy and any changes needed. Ms. Appy moved to amend the motion to approve the policy by changing the phrase "on behalf of the Superintendent" in the second line of the third paragraph to "who serves as the delegate of the Superintendent." Mr. O'Brien seconded and the motion to amend was approved unanimously with Mr. Shabazz abstaining. The original motion to approve the policy was then approved unanimously with Mr. Shabazz abstaining.

6. School Committee Planning

7:37 p.m.

A. Calendar--Ms. Geryk distributed an updated calendar. Suggestions for future agenda items included: later start time (Appy); How the district responds to legal issues and an update on pending legal issues (Shabazz); Review of the district financial audit and policy around special education parental involvement (Baptiste). Lani Sherlock stated that she was elected along with two others to serve as Presidents to the SEPAC. She noted that SEPAC is charged with advising the School Committee in terms of special education issues, and she is requesting space on behalf of the board to address the School Committee. They will be prepared to speak to some of their recommendations at the November 18 meeting. It was then agreed that the School Committee meetings will all begin at 6:00 p.m. going forward.

7. Adjournment

7:59 p.m.

Mr. Shabazz moved that the committee will adjourn to Executive session according to MA General Law Chapter 30(A), Section 21(a)3 to discuss strategy with respect to litigation since an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigating position of the public body, and the Chair so declares, and for review and release of Executive Session minutes with no intention to return to open session. Mr. O'Brien seconded and by unanimous roll call vote, the committee entered Executive Session at 7:59 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Debbie Westmoreland