

**Amherst School Committee Meeting
Monday, September 25, 2017
Library, Amherst Regional High School
21 Mattoon Street, Amherst**

IN ATTENDANCE

Phoebe Hazzard, Chair

Eric Nakajima

Anastasia Ordonez

Peter Demling

Mike Morris, Acting Superintendent

Sean Mangano, Finance Director

Public and Press

Debbie Westmoreland, Recorder

ABSENT

Vira Douangmany-Cage

1. Call to Order and Approve Minutes

6:02 p.m.

Ms. Hazzard called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m. and noted that the meeting is being live broadcast by Amherst Media. They are currently having trouble with the system to record the meeting, but hope to begin recording if it becomes operational. Mr. Demling moved to approve the minutes of September 19, 2017 with minor amendments. Mr. Nakajima seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

2. Announcements and Public Comment

6:04 p.m.

Chris Riddle, subcommittee member of the group Mothers Up Front, distributed and summarized a warrant article the group is submitting to Town Meeting asking the Town of Amherst to amend the general by-laws to add a Zero Energy Building bylaw. He also summarized the economic benefit of zero energy building, in addition to the environmental benefits. Mr. Riddle noted that Laura Fitch, an architect with school experience and experience with renewables, has volunteered to serve on the Fort River Building Committee if the School Committee would like for her to. Mr. Demling acknowledged the students and faculty involved in *The Graphic*, the ARHS newsletter, for the high quality of the stories and writing. He encouraged members of the committee to pick up copies, which are available in the ARHS library.

3. New and Continuing Business

6:28 p.m.

A. PVCICS Expansion Vote—Town Meeting Article

Mr. Demling expressed appreciation to the Town Meeting members who reached out to him with suggestions for revisions to the Town Meeting article regarding the PVCICS expansion application. He then distributed and read the draft, which has been revised since the last School Committee meeting, and discussion followed. Mr. Demling reviewed the document's changes individually and explained the reason for the changes. Ms. Hazzard thanked Mr. Demling for his work on this resolution, noting that she wants the resolution to pass without it becoming a controversial issue. Ms. Ordonez also expressed appreciation to Mr. Demling for his work. She noted that, if passed, this resolution coupled with a letter from the School Committee, will highlight the community's support for parent choice in education while asking that the funding issues for charter schools be addressed. Mr. Nakajima said he believes the resolution is focused where it should be. All members stressed the importance of providing data, demographics and other clarifying information to the Town Meeting members, both written and in the Town Meeting oral presentation. Mr. Demling noted that the School Committee letter will be ready for review and discussion at the October 17 meeting. Mr. Nakajima moved to substitute the resolution as presented by Mr. Demling for the resolution that was passed by the School Committee last week. Ms. Ordonez seconded and, after minor edits approved by unanimous consent, the motion was unanimously approved. Ms. Hazzard noted that the presentation of Town Meeting articles to the Select Board will be Monday, October 16 at 7:00 p.m. It was agreed that she will present the Pelham Regionalization article and Mr. Demling will present the PVCICS expansion article. Discussion followed regarding the presentation to the Select Board, and the committee agreed that it is important to focus on the article

rather than anything the committee chooses to put in their letter. It was also agreed that Dr. Morris and any other appropriate staff members will attend the Select Board meeting to be available to answer any questions.

B. Fort River Building Committee Mission Statement, Committee Composition, Recruitment and Selection

Ms. Ordonez read aloud the Fort River Building Committee mission statement that she and Ms. Hazzard drafted for the School Committee's consideration, and discussion followed. Mr. Demling suggested adding language that would require regular updates from the committee to the School Committee and it was agreed that such language will be included in the fourth paragraph. Ms. Ordonez suggested also adding "and Town officials" to the first sentence of the fourth paragraph after "inform the community." After discussion, it was agreed to change the phrase "environmentally enlightened" to "environmentally sustainable" in the first paragraph. Mr. Nakajima moved to adopt the mission statement for the Fort River Building Committee as presented and revised. Mr. Demling seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

Ms. Hazzard distributed and reviewed the proposed committee composition she and Ms. Douangmany Cage discussed. Mr. Demling suggested making sure that the community outreach coordinator be designated for that role only since it will be such a critical piece. Discussion followed regarding what community outreach and communication will entail and whether it can be done by only one person. Dr. Morris noted that there are discrete tasks that someone will need to do, or coordinate, in partnership with the OPM. He agreed with the suggestion that the person with the green energy and architectural background be the same. Additionally, Dr. Morris stated that having a financial person from the Town will be more beneficial than having Mr. Mangano in that role since building costs hit the town budget much more heavily than that school budget. Mr. Nakajima suggested that the building committee itself self-select the community outreach coordinator as they will select a Chair. He also noted that he would like to have a Town finance expert on the committee as at least a liaison, if not a voting member. Dr. Morris noted that on the last building committee, a member of the Amherst Finance Committee served as a liaison to report back to the Finance Committee. He suggested having that person as a voting member on this building committee. After further discussion, Mr. Nakajima moved that the School Committee identify the following designations as voting members of the Fort River Building Committee:

1. Fort River Principal or Designee
2. Fort River Teacher
3. Fort River Staff Member
4. Facilities Director or Designee
5. School Committee Member
6. Green Energy/Architectural Background Expert
7. SEPAC Designee
8. Fort River PGO Appointee
9. Town Finance Person

Mr. Demling seconded and the motion was unanimously approved. Discussion continued regarding the proposed additional members to be included on the Building Committee as voting members. Ms. Ordonez suggested having a member of the Family Center serve a liaison role, as needed, to the committee rather than as a voting member since they are a small, very busy staff. That was agreed to, by consensus, after discussion. Mr. Demling moved to add the superintendent or his designee to the Fort River Building Committee as a non-voting member. Ms. Ordonez seconded and the motion was unanimously approved. Mr. Demling moved to add two additional members to the Fort River Building Committee, a parent at-large and a community member at-large, as voting members. Ms. Ordonez seconded and discussion followed regarding ways to ensure diversity on the committee. Mr. Nakajima moved to amend the motion to include an additional at-large community member as a voting member of the committee. Ms. Ordonez seconded and discussion followed. The motion to amend was then unanimously approved. The amended motion to add three additional members to the Fort

River Building Committee, a parent at-large and two community members at-large, as voting members was then unanimously approved. The Fort River Building Committee composition of voting members is as follows:

1. Fort River Principal or Designee
2. Fort River Teacher
3. Fort River Staff Member
4. Facilities Director or Designee
5. School Committee Member
6. Green Energy/Architectural Background Expert
7. SEPAC Designee
8. Fort River PGO Appointee
9. Town Finance Person
10. At-Large Parent
11. At-Large Community Member #1
12. At-Large Community Member #2

Mr. Nakajima moved that a minimum of 50% of the voting membership of the School Building Committee be composed of women and persons of color. Mr. Demling seconded and discussion followed. The motion was then unanimously approved. Discussion turned to potential language regarding preferences for the at-large community members. Ms. Ordonez moved to use language as follows: preference may be given to parents and/or caregivers (past or present) and to those with town government experience in the selection of community members at-large. Mr. Nakajima seconded and after discussion, the motion was unanimously approved. Discussion then turned to which committee members will need to be chosen through a selection process and how it will be done for each. It was agreed as follows:

- **Fort River Teacher**—Dr. Morris will contact the APEA to make the selection.
- **SEPAC**—Ms. Westmoreland will reach out to SEPAC to make this selection.
- **Fort River PGO**—Ms. Westmoreland will reach out to the Fort River PGO to make this selection.
- **Town Finance Person**—Dr. Morris will contact the Town Manager for this role.
- **Green Energy/Architecture Expert and At-Large Members**—Those interested in serving in these roles will be asked to submit a short statement (no more than two paragraphs) summarizing their background and interest in serving. It was agreed that submissions of interest will be done via a Survey Monkey with a question for the statement and an optional demographic section to assist in meeting the 50% minimum of women and persons of color.

It was agreed that Chair Hazzard and Vice-Chair Ordonez will serve as a subcommittee to sort the applications with recommendations to the full committee for a vote at a public meeting. The names of the applicants will be stripped by Ms. Westmoreland prior to forwarding them to the full committee or subcommittee. The deadline for submissions and selections will be Friday, October 13 by noon.

C. FY19 School Committee Budget Guidance

Mr. Mangano reviewed the highlights of the budget guidance approach that was developed by the working group based on feedback from the School Committees, including a proposed schedule of meetings for the process. He noted that there are three areas of focus including budget and goal alignment, significant budget variables and strategic program reviews. Mr. Nakajima, who served on the working group, noted that the Superintendent will identify staff members within the district who can provide an on-the-ground perspective for the programmatic areas that are selected for taking a deeper dive into their effectiveness and financial viability. Ms. Ordonez expressed appreciation for formalizing the process at the district level, noting that it is strategically important to create budgets going forward and to understand how programs are performing once they are

established. She noted that enough time needs to be included on the agendas to allow for robust conversations around each of these pieces.

D. Gazette Column Authorship Discussion

Ms. Hazzard reminded the committee that the committee can submit an article to the *Daily Hampshire Gazette* for September 29 with a submission deadline of tomorrow. She noted that she contacted attorney Marc Terry to determine how articles can be submitted. He explained that one way the article can be written, since there is not time for the full committee to meet and vote on it, is to include a disclaimer that the article is the opinion of the authors not of the full committee. Ms. Hazzard noted that the purpose of this article would be to state the facts about what has been going on. Discussion followed about options for writing the article without having to have a disclaimer. Ms. Hazzard explained that Mr. Terry also said the committee can appoint a subcommittee to write a column or article with a vote about the general bent of the article, which would eliminate the need for the disclaimer. Ms. Ordonez suggested just sending the article draft to the full committee with a request for feedback on an individual basis. It was agreed that Ms. Hazzard will check with Mr. Terry to see if such an action would be allowable within open meeting law. Mr. Nakajima moved to authorize the Chair and Vice Chair to author a column for the *Daily Hampshire Gazette* and *Amherst Bulletin* regarding the Fort River Building Committee and the Enrollment Working Group. Mr. Demling seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

E. Accept Gifts

Mr. Nakajima moved to accept \$200 from Edelman USA in memory of Brian McNamara for use at the Wildwood Principal's discretion. Ms. Ordonez seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

4. School Committee Planning

9:10 p.m.

Mr. Demling asked for an update at the next meeting on the Fort River interim principal

5. Adjourn

9:14 p.m.

Ms. Ordonez moved to adjourn at 9:14 p.m. Mr. Demling seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

Respectfully Submitted,
Debbie Westmoreland

MEETING DOCUMENTS:

1. *Amherst School Committee Minutes (draft) of September 19, 2017 Meeting*
2. *Amherst Town Meeting Resolution Draft (To see if the Town will adopt the following resolution...)*
3. *Rethinking the Budget Guidance Process—Amherst Public Schools*
4. *Memo to the Amherst School Committee from Jill Berry, District Treasurer, dated September 15, 2017*
5. *Zero Energy Town Building Bylaw (distributed at meeting by Chris Riddle, a member of the public)*
6. *The Economic Case for Zero Energy (distributed at meeting by Chris Riddle, a member of the public)*
7. *Life Cycle Cost: Why is there little or no extra cost for a Zero Energy (ZE) Building (distributed at meeting by Chris Riddle, a member of the public)*
8. *ZE Building—Debt Service (for Extra Efficiency and Renewables) and Energy Cost (distributed at meeting by Chris Riddle, a member of the public)*
9. *FR SBC Proposed Composition—PH Draft*