



General Meeting Minutes for the 2009 – 2010 Academic School Year

January 12, 2010 @ 7:00 p.m.

AMS Library

PTA Members in attendance: 9

Co-Presidents: Gillian Smith
Jennifer Boucher
Vice President: Denise Alderson
Secretary: Sharon Campbell
Treasurer: Michele Donoghue
Board Member at Large: Gretchen Pyles

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.

President's Report

- ❖ Pledge of Allegiance

Secretary's Report

The minutes from the November 2009 meeting were reviewed at the meeting. One amendment to the minutes was made to reflect that the Curriculum Enrichment for Clark includes a "Native" American presentation. Porter Dodge moved to accept the minutes as amended. Jennifer Boucher seconded the motion. The November 2009 minutes were accepted as amended.

Treasurer's Report

Copies of the Treasurer's report regarding the November and December 2009 financials were reviewed at the meeting and copies were available to all that were present. Porter Dodge moved to accept the financials for November as presented and this motion was seconded by Gillian Smith. The November 2009 financials were accepted as presented. Porter Dodge moved to accept the financials for December as presented. This motion was seconded by Denise Alderson. The December 2009 financials were accepted.

Principal's Report

Porter Dodge ~ Amherst Middle School

- Winter Concerts: Our winter concerts have been well attended again this year. The sixth grade band concert was held on December 8, the seventh and eighth grade band concert on the ninth; the seventh and eighth grade choral concert was held on December 16. The sixth grade choral concert will be held tomorrow night at 6 p.m. Due to two very recent family losses in the fifth

grade choral director's family, the fifth grade concert has been postponed to a later date. I want to thank Chris Brunelle, Larry Ballard, and Carrie Swift for their efforts in getting our students so well-prepared every year. I really enjoy attending these musical events and I receive many compliments from parents.

- Oxfam: The seventh-grade multidisciplinary Oxfam Unit just keeps getting better every year. This year's Celebration was held on Monday, December 21 and was well covered by the local press. Money from a recently secured \$10,000 federal grant allowed seventh-grade teachers to purchase cameras and IMacs to enhance video productions of the student projects. The videos were shown to students and guests at the Oxfam dinner and were very impressive.
- Interscholastic Sports: Boys' and girls' basketball and cheerleading are in full swing and at the halfway point. The annual Amherst-Milford Basketball Tournament was held during Christmas break with both boys and girls teams competing. Again, our thanks go out to Athletic Director Jeff Wing and boys basketball coach Tim Lambrou for all the time they devote to running this successful tournament and to their dedication to our students.
- Theatre Club: Michelle Emmond is in her last year as director of our Theatre Club. Michelle and the cast and crew are in the middle of this year's production of *Beauty and the Beast*, and we anticipate another excellent performance in March. Our play productions are just incredible, and thanks to previous donations from the Amherst PTA and the Amherst Junior Women's Club, our stage has professional light and sound. A special thanks goes to Jim Miner, Roger Langley, and the custodial staff of AMS for their patience as they work around props and sets in the stage area.
- Mont Vernon and Amherst Community Recovery Group: As a member of this important committee, I have found the discussions and information very valuable, not only as we prepared for the release of the Cates murder investigation police report, but for future events that may impact our community and our schools. The broad makeup of the committee membership assures a balanced discussion between the people involved and any programs that may be presented to the community. The middle school was the site of the first of three community forums. This past Monday night, Organizational Resilience, Inc. led an informational meeting of parents from Mont Vernon and Amherst. The next forum will be this Thursday January 14th at the middle school, and the third forum will be held at the Mont Vernon Village School next Tuesday, January 19th. Both of these will feature a conversation on how to deal with grief and loss with your child.

Gerry St. Amand ~ Clark-Wilkins School – Mr. St. Amand was unable to attend the meeting and the following report was read in his absence:

- As part of our ongoing focus on emergency preparedness, all classes in both buildings are practicing "lockdown" and "shelter-in-place" drills.
- The January 12th "Late Start" was facilitated by our six "Differentiated Instruction" leaders: Franna Eaton, Melissa Pollak, Gail Polio, Maureen Lessard, Becky Ladeau, and Barbara Bellipanni.
- A reminder that we go outside for recess whenever the temperature with wind chill factor included reaches at least 10 degrees Fahrenheit.

- As part of our global connection to the 2010 Winter Olympics, all classes at both schools will be studying participating countries, their athletes, flags, and customs. We will be conducting “Opening Ceremonies” to coincide with the actual Olympics in mid-February.
- Second quarter grades will close on Friday, January 22, 2010.
- Second quarter report cards will go home with all students in grades Kindergarten through four on Friday, February 5, 2010.
- The finals for the fourth grade National Geographic Geography Bee took place on Thursday, January 7, 2010. Congratulations to our winner – Benjamin Carnick – from Mrs. Gilpin’s class!
- The mini-technology lab connected to the Wilkins library is being accessed regularly for small group research topics, including the 2010 Olympics.

School Board Report

- ❖ ***No School Board Representative or Report – Rob Graybill sent following report read in his absence:***

Here is a brief update on the recent Amherst School Board meeting:

- It is budget season, and the Board and Administration has spent a significant amount of time, in conjunction with the Ways and Means Committee, reviewing and editing the budget proposal for the schools
- The current budget proposal is reasonable and responsible, and focuses on achieving the student educational needs of the District. Given the significant increases in healthcare this year, the Administration did an excellent job in finding other ways to control costs. I ask for your support of the budget during the voting in the Spring
- The ASSA (sic AEA) (teachers union) and the Board were unable to reach an agreement relating to a contract. All negotiations at this time have ended
- The Board also heard presentations regarding the safety of our schools (Clark Wilkins and AMS) and the Response to Intervention (RTI) program

Committee Chair Reports

Bellringer ~ All items for February Bellringer are due by Friday, January 15th. Thanks!

Curriculum Enrichment ~ **AMS** – Ruth Infanti reported that “Chariot of the Sun”, a one man show regarding Greek mythology was recently performed at AMS. Ruth stated that she will contact Porter Dodge if any funds remain in the curriculum enrichment budget for AMS after all presentations are scheduled to see if those remaining funds can be used for additional curriculum enrichment. **Wilkins** – Jil Romano reported by e-mail that Techsploration will be hosting a show and workshops for 3rd graders on January 14th. Kevin Skarupa w/ WMUR will be presenting “Weather” to the 3rd graders on January 21st. Techsploration returns to present a show on Simple Machines to 4th graders.

Family Math Night ~ Although 23 people initially signed up to volunteers, only 9 people are currently able to help so Family Math Night will only be held on one night, Monday, February 1st instead of two nights. Some middle schoolers have volunteered to help and some teachers have agreed to perform “Math Magic.” Other teachers have been invited to attend. Kathy McIntyre volunteered to open the mini-computer lab. There will be a carnival theme to this year’s Family Math Night.

Family Science Day ~ No new updates

Holiday Story Time ~ No new updates

Membership ~ A discussion was held regarding the possibility of making the PTA Directory available online.

Original Art/ Art to Remember ~ Leslie Yingling Bennett reported via e-mail as follows: The Art to Remember program offers parents the opportunity to have their children's own artworks reproduced on a variety of quality items that make ideal gifts for friends and family. Based on feedback from families in 2009, we have pushed the timing of the program later in the spring. This year we are also striving to implement a process that will offer parents of all children in grades K-4 the option to order items created from art produced at school; plus an alternative to create additional or replacement projects at home. Kate Geskos and Leslie Bennett – the co-chairs—have been working closely with the Art to Remember Company to finalize the process for 2010. We are planning a meeting of our volunteer team for the end of the month (an invitation will be going out this week), and we are scheduled to kick off the program with the students in March. We are still ironing out the final kinks with the process. We anticipate that all keepsakes that are ordered from Art to Remember will be completed and returned in time for mother's day, father's day and grandparent's day. More details will follow over the coming months. In the meantime, if you have any questions, please feel free to call or write the Committee co-chairs, Leslie Bennett (672-4865; leslieyingling1@aol.com) or Kate Geskos (672-0977; kgeskos@comcast.net).

PTA Play – The cast will be selected on Thursday, January 14th. Gail Jordan, who is in charge of the Playbill, is looking for committee members to help obtain advertisements.

Staff Appreciation ~ Leigh Ann Evans reported via e-mail that the second staff appreciation event of the year was held in December. Teacher appreciation events were held at all three schools on December 16th and 17th, serving holiday goodies. Leigh Ann reported that “[a]s usual, the teachers seemed delighted!”

Reflections ~ Shelly Kayser reported via e-mail that a promo for the Reflections Art Show was going out to all schools via e-mail this week. Attached is a copy of that promotion.

New Business

- The PTA will host Vidbel Old Time Circus, a “Sunday School friendly circus”, at the back field of Souhegan High School on Friday, June 4th or Sunday, June 6th. Denise Alderson and Sara Derushia agreed to co-chair the organization of this event.
- The PTA hopes to host a “Game Night” at AMS in March with Best Buy supplying video game units and games.
- The PTA may offer roller skating at either Wilkins or AMS. If anyone is willing to chair a committee to look into this possibility, please contact a member of the PTA Board.

- The PTA will invite Mont Vernon residents to attend our meetings in order to reach out to the parents whose children will be moving into AMS.
- The PTA may have a Family Fun Night at the Manchester Monarchs in the next few months.
- Jean Rogers, author of the book Kids Under Fire, will speak at the March 2010 meeting.

Adjournment

Motion was made by Michele Donoghue to adjourn the meeting at 8:30pm, and the motion was seconded by Jennifer Boucher.

Submitted by:

Gretchen Pyles

Member-at-Large for

Sharon Campbell

Secretary

Next Meeting: February 9, 2010 @ 7 p.m. AMS