

AMES Board of Trustees

October 14, 2020

Called to Order: 5:04 p.m.

Attendees:

Board:

Richard Anthony

Liliana Diaz

Julie Faure

Shwan Javdan

Don Saxon

Lisa Taylor-Swanson

Excused:

Alison Flanders

Staff:

Brett Wilson

Hema Katoa

Richard Welch

Nancy Carpenter

Visitors:

Robin Abramowitz

Paige Bird

Jude Horsley

Janna Martin

Amy Noyce

Paul Ramsey

Martha Taylor

Sara Whitbeck-Zacharias

Educational Excellence

1. Minutes of July 30, 2020 –

Motion to approve the minutes of September 9, 2020 as written: Shwan Javdan

2nd: Don Saxon

Vote: Unanimously approved

2. PTSO Report – The AMES PTSO had a virtual meeting on 10/8/2020 at 7:30 p.m.

The meeting wasn't as well attended as the one in September. They discussed fund raising options using videos and social media. There is a newsletter that goes out to school districts that they would like to advertise AMES in. The cost would be \$500.00, they think that this might reach more students. The PTSO also discussed how to increase student participation, they thought that getting students involved in making the videos about the school could help.

3. COVID-19 & Student Achievement – Brett Wilson went over the low achievement list with the AMES Board, Juniors and Seniors were not much different than in years past, there were several students in each grade that hadn't appeared on the list in

previous years. Sophomores and Freshmen are doing a very nice job. Students who have struggled in previous years are struggling now. Freshmen are doing a nice job, but many of struggling with connectivity with each other and the school, we feel the difference with this group not being able to attend Freshman House. We would like to have Freshman House as soon as AMES is back in session. Lisa Taylor-Swanson suggested having a virtual Freshman House for 9 graders. Some of our students waited to get the technology needed to participate in classes, most have been remedied. The AMES Administrators, Counselors and ELL Director will start home visits to students that are struggling with attendance and grades next week.

4. **Review of COVID-19 DATA & AMES Status** – Brett Wilson presented the AMES Board with COVID information from the state and Granite School District. Cottonwood High School went above 15 cases this week, they closed as of today and students will remain out of the building until October 28th. They are doing a deep cleaning. This doesn't affect AMES except for the 40 – 50 students that come to the school to participate in online classes. AMES has had only a very few positive cases of COVID-19, 2 were never in the school, 1 was through a Cottonwood class and 2 were through a Cottonwood activity. Once the school reopens, Cottonwood's count starts at 0 again. Cases in the state are still climbing, we are hoping that the new mandates from the Governor will help. If cases start going down it would be nice to have time to plan for in person class attendance. Don Saxon asked about implementing the Hybrid schedule with social distancing, Brett Wilson replied that AMES may have to make adjustments but it could be done. Shwan Javdan said that the only way he would feel comfortable sending students back would be if over all cases were going down and the virtual learning was not working.

Motion to continue with online synchronous learning until January at the end of the Second quarter: Shwan Javdan

2nd: Liliana Diaz

Vote: 5 Yea, 1 Nay – Motion carries

5. **Parent/Teacher Conference Report** – AMES had a very good response from parents for the virtual conferences held on September 21st & 22nd. We had a 45% turn out which is down from a usual 65% attendance rate. 9th and 10th grade had a higher rate of participation than 11th and 12th grade.
6. **Bussing Information** – Brett Wilson reported that the independent contractors that have contacted him in the past are all out of business. He is still working on getting information from Murray School District, Granite School District and a Private School that he contacted. He will report his findings in November.
7. **Grant Report** – This item is combined with #8.
8. **Teacher Student Success Act Funding Approval** – The TSSA is funding that the Utah State Legislature has allocated as a grant instead of adding it to the WPU. With the funds, AMES has added an FTE in the Math Department, funded a Cost of Living increase for teachers, funded a signing bonus for new teachers and it will be used for the December bonus for AMES staff. The AMES Board discussed the use of this funding and asked that clarifications be made. Richard Anthony said that most districts use this to reduce class size, AMES will look at replacing funding that was lost due to the USTAR grant.

Motion to defer TSSA decision until January: Don Saxon

2nd: Shwan Javdan

Vote: 5 Yea, 1 Nay – Motion carries

Fiscal

1. **December Bonus** – The TSSA decision may affect the December Bonus. The AMES Board will look at funding a flat stipend as in the past or a percentage of the base salary. Richard Welch informed the Board that we budgeted for a flat stipend but he will look at the budget again for a source and the decision can be made at the November Board Meeting.

Board Organization

1. **Board Training** – Brett Wilson will be sending out a training video that was unavailable before the meeting.
2. There are several trainings available to AMES Board members, as Brett is informed of them, he will send the information on to members. As is reminder, AMES Board members should be attending or viewing 3 trainings a year. Lisa Taylor-Swanson recommended that board members attend the Utah State Charter School Board meetings online, she said they were very informative.

Foundation

No Business

AMES Mission

1. **Change in Granite School District Calendar** – The AMES Board was given a copy of the Granite School District calendar that was revised on September 10, 2020. This gives Granite teachers 2 extra work days before the end of the term to prepare for the upcoming term. This change does not affect the AMES teachers.

Public Comment

Jude Horsley, AMES senior and National Merit Semi-Finalist, stated that he was impressed with the thought and discussion that went in to the decision to continue with the online learning but he is also disappointed. He feels that distance learning is damaging to students, it impacts their mental health and says that it is just going through the motions. He stated that with the increase in COVID, 1 in 4 students have suicidal thoughts. He commented that the Cottonwood Music Department is heroic in their efforts at social distancing and he would like to see AMES open up.

Amy Noyce, AMES Teacher thanked the AMES Board for the thought and care that they put in to the decision to stay online until January. She stated that this really helps the teachers with their planning and focus for the 2nd term.

Robin Abramowitz, AMES parent also thanked the AMES Board for the thought that they put into the decision to remain online until January. She is the parent of a senior and a freshman and both students are doing well. Her senior is also a National Merit Semi-Finalist and is busy with college applications. She appreciates that AMES will be able to have some continuity through the end of the semester.

6:53 p.m.

Motion to move to closed session: Shwan Javdan

2nd: Don Saxon

Vote: Unanimously approved

7:17 p.m.

Motion to open session: Richard Anthony

2nd: Shwan Javdan

Vote: Unanimously approved

7:18 p.m.

Motion to close Meeting: Shwan Javdan

2nd: Liliana Diaz

Vote: Unanimously approved

Next Meeting – November 12, 2020 – 5:00 p.m.

Approval pending