

**AMESBURY SCHOOL COMMITTEE
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
AMESBURY HIGH SCHOOL
MARCH 1, 2011**

Present at 7:00 p.m. were Thatcher Kezer, Chair, Debra LaValley, Stanley Schwartz, Tom McGee, Gale Hanshaw, Ann Connolly King, David Jack, Superintendent of Schools and Courtney Ouellet, SAC Representative. (*Absent: Schultz*)

The Chair called the meeting to order. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Courtney Ouellet, Student Representative.

II. COMMENTS BY VISITORS, DELEGATIONS

None.

III. PRESENTATIONS

1. Principal's Award

Mr. Murray, AHS Principal, gave the NASSP Award to Emily Noonan along with a gift from the Amesbury Alumni Association. The high school principal chooses an individual who is a high school senior in the top 20% of their class.

2. Superintendent's Award

Mr. Jack, Superintendent of Schools, gave the MASS Award to Tyler Lay, Valedictorian of the class of 2011. The student was also given a gift from the Amesbury Alumni Association.

3. Recipient of "Excellence in Foreign Language Award" – Sam Martinez

Mr. Martinez was scheduled to be acknowledged by the committee for his award, however, he was unable to attend. Mr. Jack read a summary of the award to the committee.

4. Futures Health – Peter Bittel and Michael Nyman

Dr. Peter Bittel and Dr. Michael Nyman were present and gave a PowerPoint presentation explaining the results of the study they did of the execution of Amesbury's special education services. The school committee members were given the results of their study and recommendations for the future. They explained that the delivery of special education services is a very complex process. They applauded Amesbury's Director of Special Education, Kathy Glennon, as well as the superintendent. One of the issues they cited was a shortage of extensive training for paraprofessionals, which these employees need in order to meet the needs of the special education students that they are servicing. They recommended professional development for all staff, especially the paraprofessionals in servicing students in the area of special education. Dr. Bittel said that school departments needed to start putting a time frame on special education services and use benchmarks as a way to evaluate the success of the services. Dr. Bittel stated that there needs to be a change in every school department's culture if the students are to

get what they need from the special education departments. He said that any change takes a lot of time and everyone has to be vested in the outcome in order to be successful. All departments of the school system should be responsible for all of the services given to every student.

The Chair stated that the superintendent will continue to keep in touch with Futures to come up with ideas and decide what is next and share it with the committee.

IV. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

A. Curriculum Director's Report

Telena Imel gave the school committee an overview of the Professional Release Day offerings for teachers on Wednesday afternoon.

B. Superintendent's Report

The superintendent reported that the snow removal from school building roofs was handled as efficiently as possible at a cost of \$55,000. The Mayor stated that the \$55,000 was better than the amount of money a lot of other towns were spending. Making the decision to bring in S.J. Services' employees before there was a roof collapse was critical to keeping the cost down.

Ms. LaValley sent the committee's thanks to the custodians, maintenance and Mr. Bergeron for their hard work. She requested that letters be sent to those who helped including S.J. Services and the DPW. She thanked Bonnie Schultz for bringing the workers pizza.

FY12 Budget – the superintendent reported that in order to move forward with a level service budget, it would require an additional \$2.8 million dollars. He explained that the budget issues are not a spending issue, they are a loss of revenue issue. The Mayor has slated \$900,000 from the town budget for the school department. This still is a \$1.9 million shortfall. Reductions are being discussed and the cuts will be significant. There is a workshop on Monday, March 7th and Saturday, March 12th.

ITEMS FOR APPROVAL OR EARLY CONSIDERATION

A. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion by Debra LaValley, seconded by Tom McGee to approve the school committee minutes dated February 3, 2011. Unanimous, Yes, Student Rep., Yes.

B. BUSINESS

1. Kids as Peacemakers

The committee had briefly discussed this item at their goals workshop. The consensus was to allow the principals an opportunity to participate in this project as long as there is a timeline for removing the mural after a short period of time.

Motion by Gale Hanshaw, seconded by Stanley Schwartz to support the Kids as Peacemakers but to delegate to the superintendent and leadership team to have one school willing to take it on. Unanimous, Yes, Student Rep., Yes.

The committee further agreed that if no school steps forward, the school committee still supports it. Also, Ms. LaValley requested that an amount of time be designated that the mural can be up.

2. Vote to Amend January 4, 2011 Minutes

It was noted that the SEAPAC Liaison appointment had been left out of the January 4, 2011 minutes.

Motion by Debra LaValley, seconded by Stanley Schwartz to accept the updated version of the January 4, 2011 school committee meeting minutes as amended. Vote: 5, Yes, 1 Abstain (Hanshaw), Student Rep., Yes.

C. WARRANT

Motion by Gale Hanshaw, seconded by Tom McGee to approve the warrant dated February 24, 2011 in the amount of \$453,099.03. Unanimous, Yes.

VI. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

A. Subcommittee Reports

1. Budget/Finance Subcommittee

Ms. LaValley gave a report from the meeting that took place prior to this school committee meeting. The HVAC and gas contracts are up so Mr. Bergeron will be preparing bid documents. The food services budget was discussed. Mr. Bergeron will email the budget expense sheet to the committee tomorrow morning. A new food service model was opened at the high school.

The Pre-K tuition was compared to a list of other local Pre-K programs and the subcommittee voted to increase the tuition from \$245 per month to \$265 per month.

Motion by Debra LaValley, seconded by Stanley Schwartz to increase the Pre-K tuition from \$245 to \$265 per month. Unanimous.

March 7th at 5:00 p.m. is the next finance committee of the whole.

2. Policy Subcommittee

The next policy meeting is March 15th at 5:30 p.m.

3. **Personnel Subcommittee**
Mr. Schwartz stated that negotiations are ongoing.

B. COMMUNICATIONS

1. **Student Advisory Council**
Courtney stated that it was nice to come back after vacation to the high school cafeteria changes. She said that Mr. Kish had done a nice job. Next week the Student Advisory Council will be hosting the big Frost Fest which is a week of fun activities, competitions and there is something for everyone.

VII. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

1. Superintendent's Evaluation (5/11)
2. Whittier Representative Appointment
3. MASC Day on the Hill (3/29/11)
4. FY12 Budget Hearing (3/15/11)
5. Vote on School Choice SY11-12 (4/5/11)
6. Student Handbooks (5/11)

VIII. PRESS CONFERENCE

None.

Motion by Stanley Schwartz, seconded by Gale Hanshaw to adjourn the meeting at 9:00 p.m. Unanimous, Yes. Student Rep., Yes.

Respectfully Submitted,

Tom McGee, Secretary

Amesbury Public Schools Mission Statement

The Amesbury School District is unconditionally committed to every child, ensuring that all students experience success through the development of attitudes and skills necessary for lifelong learning by providing the highest quality staff, meaningful learning experiences, and a vitally involved community.