

**AMESBURY SCHOOL COMMITTEE
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
AMESBURY HIGH SCHOOL
JULY 20, 2010**

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

The Chair called the meeting to order. Mr. Schwartz led all attendees in the Pledge of Allegiance.

II. PRESENTATIONS

1. Amesbury Academy Charter Renewal

Donna Georges, Amesbury Academy Principal, was present to answer any questions the committee may have on the draft of the Charter renewal application that was in their packets.

Donna spoke briefly about a study of three schools, one of which was the Amesbury Academy, that was emailed to the school committee members before the meeting. A final copy of the study will come at a later date.

Ms. Georges outlined the upcoming schedule of the Amesbury Academy's 5-year Charter renewal. Both the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and the Board of Education (Federal) will be conducting evaluations of the Academy by talking to students, parents, administrators of the Amesbury Public Schools, the Board of Trustees and by observing classrooms and meetings. DESE uses an outside vendor to review the charter renewal process for two days. The DESE team makes a recommendation to the Commissioner with a final vote in late December or mid-January. If the vote is positive the Charter will be renewed for another 5 years.

Mr. Schwartz asked if there could be a formal plan for dissemination of information, with specific timelines, when information is shared between the APS and the Academy. Ms. Georges stated that putting the Academy's annual report on the website is one of the ways that information is disseminated. She also has appeared on cable television three times talking about the work being done at the Academy. Also, sixteen of the APS teachers took a professional development course regarding teaching trauma sensitive students.

School committee members suggested that Ms. Georges and Ms. Imel, Curriculum Director for APS, meet regularly to talk about professional development between the Academy and the staff in the APS. Donna said that there are subcommittees of the Academy. Curriculum experts meet monthly at NECCO and having Telena sit on the subcommittee would be extremely beneficial for both the Academy and APS. Ms. Georges stated that she was pleased about

the school committee's continued interest in the Academy. Going through this process creating transparency with the budget and in-kind services has been positive.

Ms. Connolly King stated that Ms. Georges and Ms. Imel meeting on professional development would be the "informal" part of the continued communication and the school committee's involvement would be the "formal" part of the communication process.

Mr. Jack stated that Ms. Georges has the same role as all APS principals. She attends all of the Leadership Team meetings and any meetings that are for principals only.

The school committee would like to discuss the Academy's role with the Amesbury Public Schools at their workshop/goal setting session in August. Ms. Connolly King stated that the Memorandum of Understanding should be reviewed by the school committee every year during budget time. Particularly when it comes to what is in the budget vs. what is included as "in-kind" services. She does not think that the budget is totally accurate in what it includes in the "in-kind" services and what are the actual dollars that support the Academy. This annual review of the MOU could be part of the school committee's "formal" role between APS and the Academy. Ms. Georges and Mr. Jack will find out when the deadline is for the signing of the annual MOU and see if it fits with the annual budget review.

Mr. Schwartz would like to see another connection to the Academy in addition to the role of the Curriculum Director, which would include the role of the Special Education Director, Kathy Glennon. Ms. Georges stated that 37% of the students at the Academy are on an IEP so this connection with APS SPED would be very important.

III. COMMENTS BY VISITORS, DELEGATIONS

None.

IV. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

C. Superintendent's Report

1. Follow-up to Charter School discussion

Mr. Jack explained some of the items he referred to in his memo to the school committee that was in their packet. He spoke further about the "in-kind" services. Until now the school department has estimated the health insurance portion for the Academy and held them harmless if the amount was over budget. In the future the actual number will be reflected in the budget.

The superintendent told the committee that he is now a voting member of the Academy Board of Trustees. The school committee can also have a representative on the board.

Ms. Connolly King asked for clarification on what APS gives to the Academy in services and what APS may be over-giving. She believes that APS is paying for more SPED services than are required by law. Ann asked that if APS SPED services are **not** above and beyond what is required, then why are they listed as “in-kind”? She referred to #2 in the Technical Advisory in this meeting packet.

Mr. Schwartz stated that in the beginning discussions regarding the creation of the Academy, the school committee wanted to support the Academy with some indirect overhead at no additional cost to the Academy. He suggested that at this point some formula can be worked out as to the “value” of these services.

The Mayor stated that the future plan would be for Mr. Jack and Ms. Georges to work out a formula and bring it back to another school committee meeting.

2. Facility and Maintenance – Summer

Comcast will be moving their studio to the high school and will no longer retain their current location. The Mayor, Brad Ford and Russ Munroe are working with Comcast to help with this process. Mr. Jack said that the school department will be able to enjoy the use of a higher level of equipment when this move is complete.

The high school gym floor has been re-sanded by the contractor and the red lines have been re-painted. The contractor will return next week to polyurethane the floor. This work is being done at no cost to the school department. Also, the water issues at the Cashman School have been diagnosed and the contractor will be responsible for repairing the damage and the cause of the leaks.

Cleaning of the buildings, as well as painting, is going well. All those involved are happy with the cutting of the grass at Landry. Brad Ford will be coming to the committee to talk about energy conservation, in particular, saving money on lighting inside the buildings and outside. Summer school is being held at AES this summer and not CES. This gives CES a break from rushing for two weeks to get the building clean prior to the opening of school in September.

3. Open Meeting Law

Mr. Jack brought attention to the Open Meeting Law paperwork included in the packets. School committee members need to fill out the form that they received and return the signed form to the Town Clerk's Office.

Mr. Jack addressed Internet discussions regarding Common Core Standards that states are adopting. Research is still being done but the state Board of Education is suggesting that MA adopt these standards as well.

ITEMS FOR APPROVAL OR EARLY CONSIDERATION

A. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion by Debra Bibeau, seconded by Bonnie Schultz to approve the regular minutes dated June 15, 2010. Vote: 6 Yes, 1 Abstain (Hanshaw), Student Rep., Yes.

Motion by Tom McGee, seconded by Debra Bibeau to approve the executive session minutes dated May 18, 2010. Unanimous, Yes.

B. BUSINESS

1. Approval of Amesbury Academy Lease

Mr. Jack suggested that the committee table this business item as there is not an agreement as yet.

Motion by Debra Bibeau, seconded by Bonnie Schultz to table any action on the Approval of Amesbury Academy Lease. Unanimous, Yes.

C. WARRANT

Motion by Tom McGee, seconded by Stanley Schwartz to approve the warrant dated June 30, 2010 in the amount of \$159,109.26. Unanimous, Yes.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

A. Subcommittee Reports

1. Budget/Finance Subcommittee

Ms. Bibeau asked the Mayor what the status was on a possible cell phone tower on or near the AHS property. The Mayor said that they are contemplating a bid for a cell tower. Ms. Bibeau stated that a cell tower would bring some lease money into the town and will provide free lighting to the chosen surrounding area of the tower. Solar panels, purchased through an energy grant, are being installed on the high school roof in the next few weeks.

2. Policy Subcommittee

This subcommittee will meet on June 22nd at 3:00 p.m. in the Superintendent's office.

3. Personnel Subcommittee

Mr. Schwartz stated that the subcommittee will be meeting prior to the next school committee meeting on August 17th. Mr. Jack said that there are two open .5 elementary music teacher positions. The Math teacher position has been filled.

4. Student Advisory Council

Courtney stated that the council would not be meeting until the beginning of the school year. She asked the Mayor what impact moving Comcast to the high school would have on the students who currently use the cable equipment in the high school studio. The Mayor stated that the students will benefit from the use of upgraded equipment. There will be an enhancement and will not detract from the current uses of the equipment.

COMMUNICATIONS

- Mr. Jack highlighted the letter in the packet from the Sparhawk School praising the people in the school department who assisted in a theatrical performance put on by Sparhawk,

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

1. Whittier Superintendent and Reps. (9/21/10)
2. Report on Diversity in Students & Personnel
3. CACD/Tufts University Program at AMS
4. School Committee Goal Setting Session (8/24/10)

Motion by Bonnie Schultz, seconded by Stanley Schwartz to adjourn the meeting at 8:40 p.m. Unanimous, 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.