

**AMESBURY SCHOOL COMMITTEE
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
AMESBURY HIGH SCHOOL
APRIL 3, 2012**

Present at 7:00 p.m. were Thatcher Kezer, Chair, Debra LaValley, Vice Chair, Stanley Schwartz, Gale Hanshaw, Tom McGee, Peter Hoyt, Michele Robinson, Superintendent of Schools and Jon Tedford, SAC Representative.

The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Tom McGee led the Pledge of Allegiance.

I. COMMENTS BY VISITORS, DELEGATIONS

None.

II. PRESENTATIONS

- A. Chartwell's – Kevin Kish and Theresa Minnucci, District Manager**
Mr. Kish and Ms. Minnucci gave the school committee up to date information with regard to lean, finely textured beef (LFTB) or “pink slime” and beef containing Ammonium Hydroxide. They explained that the pink slime and ammonia hydroxide was been added to beef years ago to prevent the spread of e-coli during a 1993 outbreak. As of this presentation, all beef that contained either of these pathogen interventions has been put aside in our school freezers and Mr. Kish has been paying substantially more money for beef that doesn't contain them. He explained the cost of pure beef vs. the cost of the USDA Commodity beef that he usually buys. For now, Mr. Kish will only buy pure beef as this issue is examined further and more information becomes available. Chartwell's will meet with the Superintendent and Business Administrator to create an action plan for the future.
- B. PTA Presentation**
Kristen Dore, PTA President, informed the school committee of the many activities that the PTA sponsors, i.e., ice cream social, principal coffees, two teacher appreciation luncheons, after school enrichment programs, science fair, coat drive for Pettengill and many others. The funds raised by the PTA goes towards field trips to Boston for the students to visit the Museum of Science, the Aquarium and the Nutcracker.

III. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

- A. Curriculum Director's Report**
None.
- B. Business Administrator's Report**
None.

C. Superintendent's Report

Dr. Robinson reminded the committee and the community that there were lots of activities going on in the schools this Spring and encouraged people to access the Calendar of Events on the website. She also informed the committee that their secretary, Suzi Cashman, will be attending a professional development event sponsored by the MASC for the Administrative Assistant's organization, COSCAP. Suzi was elected as Secretary to the 5 member board of COSCAP at last November's MASC Conference.

The Superintendent also spoke about the MASC sponsored Day on the Hill. Attendees met with our legislators at the State House.

ITEMS FOR APPROVAL OR EARLY CONSIDERATION

A. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion by Mr. Schwartz, seconded by Mr. Hoyt to approve the school committee minutes dated March 20, 2012 as amended. Unanimous, Yes, Student Rep., Yes.

Mr. Hoyt requested a change in language to comments he made at the previous school committee meeting. The changes were accepted and the minutes were approved, as amended.

B. BUSINESS

1. 1st Reading Policy EGAF Cell Phones & Portable Communication Devices

1st Reading Policy GCG Employment of Substitutes

1st Reading Policy IKE Promotion & Non-Promotion of Students

1st Reading Policy JEB Entrance Age

Ms. Hanshaw, Chair of the Policy Subcommittee, explained the changes recommend by the subcommittee and asked committee members to review the above policies and contact her or the superintendent if they have any questions. These policies will be on the May 1st agenda for a second reading.

2. School Choice

Ms. LaValley explained that the Budget/Finance Subcommittee spoke with the principals prior to this meeting about the status of School Choice. The final recommendation is to close grades K-4 and grade 8 to Choice students. The administrators at the middle and high schools will have to determine the acceptance of Choice applications based on class sizes.

Motion by Ms. LaValley, seconded by Mr. Schwartz to open the Amesbury Public Schools to Choice in all grades except grades K through 4 and grade 8. Accepting Choice students at the middle and high school levels will be left to the discretion of the administration based on class size. Unanimous, Yes. Student Rep., Yes.

3. **Vote on FY13 Budget**

Mr. Bergeron told the Chair that the final number on the school department budget had lowered slightly since the March 1st final number to \$1,058,820. Ms. LaValley described how the school committee usually goes through the cost centers in the budget and if there is a question from a committee member, that cost center is flagged and once all cost centers have been read aloud, any flagged cost centers would be reviewed and discussed. Mr. Schwartz stated that before the committee begins going through the budget, he wanted to talk about the Energy Management Report on pages 57 and 58 of the budget to highlight for the community all of the ways in which the school department has saved the schools and the city a lot of money over the years by using ingenious ways of doing every day processes in a more efficient way.

The Chair gave a brief explanation of the history of the budget of the city and the school department including the “good times” prior to the last five years in which the economy declined ever year. During the current crisis every department’s budget has had to be cut in order to meet the cost of running a city. Things are getting better but the revenues that come into the town are not yet high enough for the Mayor and the City Council to approve all of the departments’ budgets as submitted.

It is up to the Mayor to strike a balance between the school department’s budget and the budgets on the city side. The problem this year is that at this time the Mayor does not yet have a dollar number to give to the school committee.

The revenues have flattened out but they haven’t increased either. Proposition 2 ½ puts a lid on how much property taxes can be raised and even if the taxes were raised to the maximum, there would still not be enough incoming revenue.

Mr. Bergeron added that the budget that they are voting on tonight does not include any increase in state aid. Also, the reason the budget vote is tonight is to follow the rules of the City Charter to submit the budget to the Mayor 45 days before the Mayor submits his budget to the City Council. Even if the budget amount voted on tonight is not the amount that will be the final budget amount, the vote must take place tonight.

Ms. LaValley stated that it may not be necessary for the committee to take the time to go through the entire budget by cost center because this is the budget they all agreed to as of March 1st. Each member of the committee agreed with Ms. LaValley. This is a budget of recovery and everything included is essential. The Chair suggested that the committee members stand behind this budget as a foundation of tomorrow’s needs. Ms. LaValley stated that they were putting

together talking points to refer to when the time comes to challenge its contents with any department in the city.

Motion by Mr. McGee, seconded by Ms. LaValley to accept the current proposed budget of \$26,892,318. Vote: 5 Yes, 1 Abstain (Kezer), 1 Absent (Schultz).

C. WARRANT

Motion by Ms. LaValley, seconded by Mr. Hoyt to approve the warrant dated April 5, 2012, in the amount of \$214,122.53. Unanimous, Yes.

VI. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

A. Subcommittee Reports

1. Budget/Finance Subcommittee

Ms. LaValley reported that the budget/finance subcommittee discussed the FY13 budget. Also, the principals were present to talk about School Choice possibilities. Mr. Bergeron will be putting the school food services contract out to bid and will send out an RFP on a bank branch for the Amesbury High School. Ms. LaValley added that the Space Needs Committee will be giving a report to the school committee at the May 1st school committee meeting.

2. Policy Subcommittee

Ms. Hanshaw stated that the subcommittee was scheduled to meet on March 28th but that meeting was canceled. Another meeting will be scheduled for another date and time.

3. Personnel Subcommittee

Mr. Schwartz acknowledged the commitment of Tom McGee and Peter Hoyt for their input on the negotiations committee. Negotiations are going well, there have been some positive, open discussions. More meetings are scheduled.

B. COMMUNICATIONS

1. Student Advisory Council

Jonathan Tedford reported that the Council is working on their goals and they are re-electing two regional SAC members. They are also getting ready for their elections. After graduation, they will be planning for the 8th grade orientation.

Mr. Hoyt announced that the 10th AEFI Hall of Honor will take place on May 4, 2012. The three honorees are: Murray Svigny, Barbara Foster and Ozzie Morrill. This is a great celebration of all that is good in our district.

Ms. LaValley attended the AMS play and Ms. Shirshac has done another fine job with this year's production. There are a lot of great things happening in all of our schools. The Cashman Elementary School's Wax Museum will take place on April 12th. Check the calendar for upcoming events.

VII. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

1. Update on Elementary Math Program (5/12)
2. NSBA Conference (4/12)
3. Student Handbooks (5/12)
4. Superintendent's Evaluation (5/12)
5. Summer Reading Lists (5/15/12)
6. Whittier Regional Vo-Tech Presentation (6/5/12)
7. So. Hampton School Board (6/12)
8. Retiree Reception (6/5/12)
9. Summer Meeting Dates (6/19/12)

VIII. PRESS CONFERENCE

None.

IX. EXECUTIVE SESSION

None.

Motion by Debra LaValley, seconded by Gale Hanshaw 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.