

**AMESBURY SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES  
AMESBURY MIDDLE SCHOOL  
APRIL 8, 2009**

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Present at 7:00 p.m. were Thatcher Kezer, Chair, Stanley Schwartz, Paula Blair, Bonnie Schultz, Gale Hanshaw, Tom McGee, Charles Chaurette, Superintendent of Schools and Mike Bruno, SAC Representative.

The Chair called the meeting to order. Tom McGee led the Committee in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**2. PRESENTATIONS**

None.

**3. COMMENTS BY VISITORS, DELEGATIONS**

The Chair reviewed the rules governing the public participation during the school committee. He also said that there were members of the community who were unhappy with the proposal on cutting freshman sports. Because of the extent of this concern, another proposal would be coming forward in the cost center discussions on the FY10 budget.

Ms. Bibeau arrived at 7:10 p.m.

- Barbara, Amesbury citizen, thanked the committee for their reconsideration of eliminating freshman sports.
- John Pelletier, Woodsom Drive, proposed changes in the high school schedule eliminating “A” block.
- Kathy Pelletier said that she was glad that there is an alternative plan to eliminating freshmen sports.
- Sam Wilmot stated that he had sent an email to the school committee members expressing his concern if freshman sports are eliminated.
- Jaylene, Amesbury resident, has a son who will be trying out for freshman sports in the fall and she hopes that he will be able to play as a freshman.
- John Manchester wrote an editorial in the newspaper and he said that he thinks that eliminating freshman sports would be a “black eye” to the community.

**4. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS**

**A. Curriculum Director’s Report**

1. “Let’s Start From Scratch” Grant from Verizon

Telena Imel and Leslie Barnaby explained a \$10,000 Verizon grant they have applied for that will help students create interactive sculptures. The plan will be to create an “Invention Center” in each of Amesbury’s third grade classrooms, AES and CES.

**B. Assistant Superintendent’s Report**

1. Preliminary Quarterly Report

Mr. Jack explained that the quarterly report was reviewed by the budget/finance subcommittee and would be coming before the full committee at the May 5<sup>th</sup> meeting.

2. Federal Stimulus Funds

Mr. Jack explained that Amesbury did not qualify for any of the Chapter 70 stimulus stabilization funds because Amesbury has a slightly decreasing student enrollment. There will be money for Title I and IDEA (SPED). This money is coming for two years only. Therefore, the district needs to be strategic in the expenditure of stimulus funds. They will need to brainstorm how best to use the funds to help the students of the Amesbury Public Schools.

**C. Superintendent’s Report**

1. FY’10 Budget Proposal

Dr. Chaurette stated that all of the budget cuts in the last five years have been in academics. When going from a level service budget to a level funded budget anything in the budget is open to possible cuts. He then proceeded to give a Powerpoint presentation regarding the budget process.

The Chair commended Dr. Chaurette and Mr. Jack on their ability to keep the current year’s budget in control and prevent the need for personnel layoffs prior to the end of the fiscal year.

Dr. Chaurette spoke about the possible change in the high school schedule to increase time on learning making all students arrive to school for 7:30 a.m., not just band members and giving band members the option to take chorus as well as band.

The early release days proposal was discussed with members from all of the school councils. If this proposal is approved, the school calendar for ’09-’10 will need to be revised.

In order to move future school committee meetings to the high school, Comcast requires a 180-day notice. Russ Munroe is researching the cost of mounting permanent cameras for live broadcasts. Ms. Bibeau stated that the quality of the broadcasts at this time is not good. The Chair stated that he has spoken to Comcast regarding this issue.

Dr. Chaurette congratulated the cast members and director of the production of Beauty and the Beast as well as the high school Spring concert. He reminded everyone that Little Shop of Horrors would be on stage next week.

## **ITEMS FOR APPROVAL OR EARLY CONSIDERATION**

### **A. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Ms. Bibeau noted that there was an error in a student's name that needed to be corrected.

*Motion by Bonnie Schultz, seconded by Debra Bibeau to approve the regular minutes dated March 17, 2009 as amended. Unanimous, Yes, Student Rep., Yes.*

*Motion by Stanley Schwartz, seconded by Gale Hanshaw to approve the executive session minutes dated March 17, 2009. Unanimous, Yes.*

### **B. BUSINESS**

#### **1. FY'10 Budget**

The school committee agreed that the Chair would announce each cost center and if any member had an objection, that item would be returned to at the end of the read through. Mr. Schwartz stated that he would be objecting to every cost center as they relate in some way to the elimination of freshman sports. It was decided that this topic would be discussed later in the meeting and Mr. Schwartz did not need to object to every cost center.

#### **COST CENTER 012 – AMESBURY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

No objection.

#### **COST CENTER 013 – CASHMAN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

No objection.

#### **COST CENTER 014 – AMESBURY MIDDLE SCHOOL**

Ms. Blair/Ms. Schultz objected to MS X-Curr. Contracted 2530940, increase of 117.65%  
Ms. Bibeau objected to MS Custodian Supplies 558950, \$14,750

#### **COST CENTER 015 – AMESBURY HIGH SCHOOL**

Ms. Bibeau objected to HS Principal Supplies 542950, \$7,500  
Ms. Bibeau objected to Athletics Other 558950 \$11,350  
Mr. Schwartz objected to Athletic Custodian Salaries, telephone, athletics other

**COST CENTER 018 – CURRICULUM**

No objection.

**COST CENTER 019 – SPECIAL EDUCATION**

No objection.

**COST CENTER 016 – TECHNOLOGY**

No objection.

**COST CENTER 010 – CENTRAL OFFICE**

No objection.

**COST CENTER 019 – TRANSPORTATION**

No objection.

**COST CENTER 017 – MAINTENANCE**

No objection.

**COST CENTER 020 – PENSION S BENEFITS**

No objection.

The Chair directed the committee back to the first objection to the middle school line item, extra-curricular contracted. Principal Curry was asked to explain why this line item would increase by 117.65% over last year. Mr. Curry stated that the middle school was given a grant of \$10,000 by the Amesbury Education Foundation as well as others, to purchase equipment to monitor the seismic activity in this area. This line of the budget would be used to hire a seismologist to train and work with the teachers as well as students on the new equipment. This objection was withdrawn.

Ms. Bibeau asked Mr. Jack if the money that was not yet spent in the MS Custodian Supplies line item could be used somewhere else in the budget. Ms. Bibeau did not withdraw the objection.

Since so much of the high school budget was affected by the committee's decision around the athletics department, Elizabeth McAndrews, Athletic Director, answered questions from the committee. Ms. Schultz asked which sports currently had freshman teams. Ms. McAndrews listed: football, field hockey, basketball for both girls and boys, baseball and track. She also explained why the athletics department increased the travel amount asked for in the budget. The indoor track team must travel to Exeter for practices two times per week.

***Motion by Debra Bibeau, seconded by Bonnie Schultz to suspend the rules so that the committee can vote after 9:00 p.m. Unanimous, Yes.***

***Motion by Stanley Schwartz, seconded by Debra Bibeau to amend the part of the budget that eliminates freshman sports and replace it with an alternate plan as follows:***

<b>\$6000</b>	<b><i>Athletic Custodial Account</i></b>
<b>\$720</b>	<b><i>Athletic Supplies</i></b>
<b>\$1700</b>	<b><i>Athletic Other</i></b>
<b>\$1300</b>	<b><i>Athletic Other</i></b>
<b>\$1760</b>	<b><i>Athletics Contracted</i></b>
<b>\$22,520</b>	<b><i>Athletic Revolving Account Offset</i></b>

***Vote: Unanimous, Yes.***

In light of the lengthy discussion about athletics, the Mayor cautioned the committee and the community at large not to lose sight of academics. Ms. Blair thanked Ms. McAndrews for her original plan to cut freshman sports as well as her alternate plan. Ms. Schwartz hopes that the community comes out to support the rest of the budget process as it moves on to the Municipal Council. He also stated that Dr. Chaurette, over the last five years, achieved the goal to make the budget process transparent and it has been a pleasure working with him.

Ms. Bibeau withdrew all of her objections to the budget.

***Motion by Paula Blair, seconded by Gale Hanshaw to approve the budget proposed by the budget/finance subcommittee as amended. Unanimous, Yes.***

2. Athletic/Activity Fee, Proposal to Lower Family Cap to \$650

***Motion by Debra Bibeau, seconded by Stanley Schwartz to decrease the family cap paid by families with children in sports and activities from \$800 to \$650. Unanimous, Yes.***

3. Academy of Strategic Learning Memorandum of Understanding  
Dr. Chaurette explained that the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education suggested that the Amesbury Public Schools and the Academy of Strategic Learning combine their Memoranda into one document. If the school committee approves, the Chair will sign the document and it will go back to the Board of Trustees of the Academy of Strategic Learning.

***Motion by Gale Hanshaw, seconded by Bonnie Schultz to authorize the Chair to sign the Amesbury Public Schools' Memorandum of Understanding that has been combined with the Memorandum of the Academy of Strategic Learning. Unanimous, Yes.***

C. WARRANT

***Motion by Tom McGee, seconded by Stanley Schwartz, to approve the warrant dated 4/9/09 in the amount of \$367,727.43. 6, Yes, 1 Abstain (Bibeau).***

## **INFORMATIONAL ITEMS**

### **A. Subcommittee Reports**

#### **1. Budget/Finance Subcommittee**

This subcommittee met prior to the school committee meeting. Ms. Schultz reported that the subcommittee voted to increase the pre-school tuition for the 09-10 school year by 2.5%. The monthly cost will increase from \$235/month to \$240/month.

There is a process in place for a new food services bid. The bid documents will be ready on April 13<sup>th</sup> and the bid opening will be held on May 18<sup>th</sup>.

The budget/finance subcommittee discussed the quarterly report. The full committee will be given this report at the next school committee meeting. There will also be some transfers coming forward for a vote.

The hiring of a business administrator is in process and Dr. Chaurette and Mr. Jack hope to have a candidate(s) for the committee to interview in early May.

#### **2. Policy Subcommittee**

This subcommittee will meet on April 15<sup>th</sup> at 8:00 a.m.

#### **3. Personnel Subcommittee**

This subcommittee will meet on May 19<sup>th</sup>.

#### **4. Student Advisory Council**

Mike Bruno stated that the council has been discussing the possible change to the high school schedule. Ms. Schultz asked Mike if SAC members were planning on going down to the middle school to talk to 8<sup>th</sup> graders about participating in activities, especially the band and chorus when they get to the 9<sup>th</sup> grade.

#### **5. High School Building Committee**

Mr. McGee stated that this committee met on March 27<sup>th</sup>. They are making progress on the punch list. The next meeting is scheduled for May 1<sup>st</sup> at 7:30 a.m. in the Student Activities Room at AHS.

## **COMMUNICATIONS**

- May 7<sup>th</sup> Day on the Hill
- At the next school committee meeting Ms. Bibeau will share some of the information she gathered at the National School Boards Association conference in San Diego.

**FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

Ms. Schultz requested that numbers seven and eight be removed from the list of future agenda items. She also requested that Mike Curry and Starr Hume share with the leadership team how they put the middle school poly's on the web.

1. Proposal for Early Release Days
2. AHS Football Team Reception  
·Ms. Bibeau said that rings had been ordered for the football team and that there will be a ceremony when the rings are ready.
3. FY'10 Budget
4. Amesbury's Whittier School Board Representatives  
·Dr. Charette will call Bill DeRosa and invite Whittier to a future meeting.
5. Summer Reading List Presentation (6/2/09)
6. Retiree Reception (6/2/09)
7. ~~Establish a Steering Committee to look at elementary school reconfiguration~~
8. ~~Dialogue regarding transitioning the Academy to the high school~~

***Motion by Stanley Schwartz, seconded by Bonnie Schultz to adjourn the meeting at 9:45 p.m., Unanimous, Yes.***

Respectfully Submitted,

Tom McGee  
Secretary