

**AMESBURY SCHOOL COMMITTEE
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
SPECIAL MEETING – SUPERINTENDENT SEARCH
AMESBURY HIGH SCHOOL
FEBRUARY 28, 2011**

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

I. CALL TO ORDER AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Chair called the meeting to order. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Ms. LaValley.

II. PRESENTATIONS

1. MASC Superintendent Search – Mike Gilbert, MASC

The Chair gave an overview of the purpose of this special meeting of the Amesbury School Committee. The school committee has entered into a contract with the Massachusetts Association of School Committees (MASC) to oversee the process of filling the position of Superintendent of Schools. The first step is the gathering information from the employees and the community at large regarding what they are looking for in a new superintendent. Mr. Michael Gilbert of MASC was introduced by the Chair. Mr. Gilbert stated that there were several votes needed to be taken by the committee in order for the search process to continue.

Mr. Gilbert stated that the selection criteria were a result of the surveys as well as the focus group sessions.

Selection Criteria:

1. Demonstrates skills in budget development and implementation;
2. Demonstrates success in improving and maintaining high academic performance;
3. Demonstrates excellent communication and political skills;
4. Shows experience with development and implementation of curriculum;
5. Shows successful administrative experience;
6. Shows experience with long term planning and goal setting;
7. Understands and recognizes good teaching;
8. Demonstrates success in community engagement/involvement;
9. Demonstrates success in building construction and facilities management;
10. Shows experience with educational technology and digital learning.

The Mayor asked if the school committee is looking for people who meet every one of these criteria. Mr. Gilbert stated that since the criteria are in order of importance there is probably a stronger emphasis on a candidate meeting the top five criteria.

Ms. Connolly King stated that she would like to see an emphasis on special education since the committee has talked about that prior to this meeting. Mr. Gilbert stated that the committee can ensure that a question for the search committee would be a specific question regarding SPED experience. A candidate's qualifications will come out through the interviewing process.

Motion by Debra LaValley, seconded by Gale Hanshaw to approve the Selection Criteria for potential candidates for the superintendent position as presented. Unanimous, Yes. Student Rep., Yes.

Advertisement:

Based on the results of the survey and focus groups, Mr. Gilbert suggested to delete “a collaborative management style” and replace it with “strong fiscal skills”.

Ms. LaValley stated that she thought the salary range was too high but Mr. Gilbert said that it is what today’s market calls for in a superintendent’s salary. He went on to say that the role of the superintendent has changed since Education Reform. The position is 24 hours per day, seven days per week. The average length of time a superintendent stays in this position is four years. There are only 10 superintendents in Massachusetts who have been serving in this position for over 10 years. The position is demanding and public and there are not as many applicants as there used to be because of it. The benefits used to be pensionable, however, now they are not pensionable so the salaries have been raised as a result of this change.

Mr. Schwartz stated that if the advertisement said “strong fiscal skills”, it may skew people’s opinion on what is going on in the central office. Mr. Gilbert stated that the community is looking for the maintenance of what already exists at the central office.

Ms. Connolly King asked what a benefits package would consist of. Mr. Gilbert stated that typically the package would be 25 vacation days per year, 15 sick days and health insurance coverage.

Mr. Schwartz stated that the last sentence of the Qualifications section of the advertisement was redundant. It was the consensus of the committee to delete “ten years of successful work experience in education administration”. Ms. LaValley said that if a statement was removed, would it be possible to add “a collaborative management style” back into the copy.

Motion by Stanley Schwartz, seconded by Gale Hanshaw to approve the advertisement for the position of Superintendent of Schools as amended. Unanimous, Yes. Student Rep., Yes.

Brochure:

Mr. Gilbert included the latest copy of the proposed brochure in his packet. Ms. LaValley had requested that a photo of graduation in Landry Stadium be added to

the front of the brochure and that the architect's drawing of the new high school be moved to directly above the "Application Process". Mr. Gilbert will try to include all three photos in that spot, however, if only two photos will fit, the middle school photo will be removed.

The committee also suggests some reference to the school department's mission statement be moved from the Community Profile section of the brochure to the front of the brochure under the graduation photo. Mr. Gilbert suggested that a shortened version of the mission statement, "Unconditionally committed to every child", be added to the front of the brochure.

Motion by Debra LaValley, seconded by Ann Connolly King to approve the brochure for the position of Superintendent of Schools as amended. Unanimous, Yes. Student Rep., Yes.

Superintendent Advisory Search Committee:

Mr. Gilbert listed the constituencies that should be represented when searching to fill the position of superintendent. Ms. LaValley suggested that parent names be chosen by lottery before an upcoming school committee meeting. This was the method used when Dr. Chaurette was hired. Mr. Gilbert recommended that elementary, middle and high school parents who want to serve on the committee be kept separate, by school level, when doing the lottery.

Mr. Schwartz suggested that a special education parent be added to the list. The SPED parents have their own group called SEAPAC. It was agreed to add a member of SEAPAC to the Advisory Committee, increasing the committee to 16 members.

The date of the lottery was discussed. Ms. LaValley recommended the names be chosen before the March 15th school committee meeting. After further discussion, the date of the lottery was pushed out to the first meeting in April (5th) to allow more time for getting the word out to parents and community members that they should put their interest in serving on the Advisory Committee in writing to the Superintendent's Office.

Mr. Gilbert emphasized that anyone expressing their interest in sitting on the committee must be available for evening meetings April 25, 26, 27, 28 and 29. The deadline for submitting a letter of interest will be April 1st at 4:00 p.m. A Connect Ed message will go out to all parents and guardians regarding how to indicate their interest in serving. Parents must also include which level/category they would be representing. The remainder of the timeline was discussed.

Motion by Stanley Schwartz, seconded by Gale Hanshaw to approve the make-up of the Superintendent Search Advisory Committee for the position of Superintendent of Schools as amended to add one additional parent constituency for a total of 16 members. The deadline for parents to submit interest in serving on this committee is April 1st at 4:00 p.m. at the Superintendent's Office, in writing. Unanimous, Yes. Student Rep., Yes.

Motion by Stanley Schwartz, seconded by Debra LaValley to adjourn the meeting at 8:00 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.