

**AMESBURY SCHOOL COMMITTEE
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
AMESBURY HIGH SCHOOL
MAY 18, 2010**

Present at 6:00 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 Channele Havey, SAC Representative.

The Chair called the meeting to order. Ms. Havey led the Committee in the Pledge of Allegiance. The Chair explained that after the first presentation, #6 Naming the Amesbury High School Library, would be taken out of order and discussed as the second item.

Motion by Stanley Schwartz, seconded by Bonnie Schultz to take presentation #6 out of order. Unanimous, Yes.

II. PRESENTATIONS

1. Perfect Attendance Award

The school committee gave a certificate of merit to Justin LaBatte, Senior, for having perfect attendance during his 13 years in the Amesbury Public Schools. Justin's mother, Kim LaBatte, was also recognized.

2. Naming the Amesbury High School Library

Tom McGee, School Committee Member, submitted a request to name the new high school library after Roland Woodwell, former high school English teacher. Patty Hoyt, current English teacher, and Carol Bartlett, former student of Mr. Woodwell spoke in favor of this effort. Current high school student, Stephen Hanshaw and others worked on a project that involved finding, reading and preserving letters that former students of Mr. Woodwell wrote to him while they were away from home during WWII. Mr. Woodwell was devoted to John Greenleaf Whittier and wrote a book about Whittier's life. Ms. Hoyt asked the community if they had letters that were written by Mr. Woodwell that could be preserved to go with the letters he received from former students, please contact her at the high school.

Ann Connolly King thanked Tom McGee for all the work he put into this project. Tom asked if maybe there were members in the community who might be willing to make a donation so that a plaque could be purchased naming the library after Mr. Woodwell.

Motion by Tom McGee, seconded by Bonnie Schultz to take business item #3 out of order so that a vote could be taken. Unanimous, Yes.

Motion by Tom McGee, seconded by Debra Bibeau to name the Amesbury High School Library The Roland H. Woodwell Library Media Center. Unanimous, Yes.

3. Coordinated Program Review

Kathy Glennon, Special Education Director, gave a PowerPoint presentation regarding the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's process to verify that the special education department is meeting all of the requirements system-wide. This process happens every six years and is a multi-year process. The DESE spends two days in the district observing and going over a huge amount of paperwork that they request from the district. When they complete their draft report they send it to Ms. Glennon and send a final report to the superintendent. The special education department then creates a Corrective Action Plan based on the findings of the DESE.

4. OPTIONS Program

Ms. Glennon described a new program at the high school that has been created out of the ARRA funds. The program has been created to help students who may be struggling with behavioral issues, frustration with staying in a classroom for 90 minutes and a myriad of other issues. The program offers academic support, therapeutic support, schedule modifications, created individually for each student's needs. There are currently eight students in the program.

At this point, the Chair left the meeting to attend an Ordinance Committee meeting. The Vice Chair, Ms. Bibeau, took over the direction of the meeting.

5. AHS Handbook Changes

Les Murray, Principal, Roy Hamond, Dean of Curriculum, and Elizabeth McAndrews, Dean of Student Activities/Athletic Director, were present to answer any questions the committee may have with the changes that have been proposed for the 2010-2011 Student Handbook. Page 48, #3 was discussed and will be updated as well as an update on page 31. They also discussed how the handbook is presented to the student population as well as if/when the handbook would be totally online and no longer in printed format.

6. AMS Handbook Changes

Assistant Principal, Steve O'Connor, told the committee that there have been no significant changes made to the student handbook except the updated anti bullying and sexual harassment policies. They discussed how the handbook was presented to students as well as the policy on cell phone use and the term "electronic devices".

III. COMMENTS BY VISITORS, DELEGATIONS

- Landry Stadium Committee Chair, Les Anderson, was present to answer questions regarding the proposal the stadium committee made to the school committee at the last meeting. Since the stadium committee's request to add \$1 to any Landry ticket sale is on the agenda for a vote, Ms. Bibeau allowed Mr. Anderson more time than the usual three minutes as well as time for answering questions from the school committee.

Ms. Schultz asked if the stadium committee had gone to see the Mayor to ask for funds to pay the expenses needed to maintain the stadium. Mr. Anderson stated that they had met with the Mayor one time but there was no decision resulting in money for stadium maintenance. The \$6,000 that appears in the town budget was discussed further. The superintendent elaborated on this issue since he had talked to the town's CFO, Mike Basque.

IV. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

A. Superintendent's Report

1. Race to the Top (RTTT) Grant

As was reported at the last school committee meeting, Massachusetts was not one of the states that was approved for the Race to the Top funding. The AFT has advised the union members to withdraw their support for this funding and Cindy Yetman informed the superintendent that the Amesbury AFT would not sign the RTTT grant. The consensus of the committee was that Amesbury would no longer pursue the RTTT funds. Mr. Jack stated that he would notify RTTT that Amesbury will not have the third signature they needed to proceed. Ms. Connolly King suggested that no formal statement be made with regard to the AFT withdrawal of support.

2. Amesbury Academy Charter Renewal

Mr. Jack stated that the Academy was ending year four of their five year charter. The Academy board will be meeting on May 26th from 5 to 8 p.m. to discuss the processing of the charter. The board of directors has requested that a school committee member be involved in this process. Ann Connolly King volunteered to sit on the charter board of directors.

ITEMS FOR APPROVAL OR EARLY CONSIDERATION

A. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion by Tom McGee, seconded by Gale Hanshaw to approve the regular minutes dated May 4, 2010. Unanimous, Yes.

B. BUSINESS

1. AHS Handbook Changes

Motion by Bonnie Schultz, seconded by Gale Hanshaw to approve the changes to the AHS Student Handbook. Unanimous, Yes, Student Rep., Yes.

2. AMS Student Handbook Changes

Motion by Stanley Schwartz, seconded by Tom McGee to approve the AMS Student Handbook changes with possibility of changing language regarding the use of “electronics”. Unanimous, Yes.

3. Landry Stadium Vote

Ms. Bibeau, Acting Chair, recused herself from this portion of the meeting because of a conflict of interest. As Secretary, Tom McGee then took over this portion of the meeting.

Motion by Stanley Schwartz, seconded by Gale Hanshaw to approve a \$1.00 increase per ticket for events taking place in Landry Stadium. This \$1.00 will be for the specific purpose of the maintenance of the stadium.

Ms. Schultz stated that it was difficult to agree with the increase when we have also increased the student fees for participation. Why is the stadium committee asking the school committee? Why aren't they asking the Municipal Council?

Mr. Jack verified with Ms. McAndrews, AD, that the Landry Stadium Committee currently receive 25% (net) of the fees collected from events at the stadium plus a \$75 lighting fee. The superintendent made it clear that this additional \$1.00 would not affect winter sports and it could be considered as an annual process to see how it goes. If we committed to one year the school committee and the stadium committee could assess the results of the first year. Ms. Hanshaw stated that she would like to see the stadium committee make more of an effort in doing something to raise the money they need to maintain the stadium. Ms. Schultz asked if the increase in the ticket price was only for the stadium or for all sports. Mr. Schwartz suggested that Ms. Schultz could make a friendly amendment to his original motion that would state that the \$1.00 increase in ticket prices would be only for events in the stadium and only for the 2010 to 2011 school year.

Motion by Stanley Schwartz, seconded by Gale Hanshaw amended by Bonnie Schultz to increase the cost of events at the Landry Stadium by \$1.00 per ticket. This increase would only apply to events at Landry Stadium and would only be apply for the 2010 to 2011 school year. The increase in ticket prices would not apply to winter sports. Vote: 5, Yes, 1 Abstain (Bibeau).

Mr. Jack made it clear that this increase in ticket prices is not included in season passes and that he would hope that the Jets Football would take advantage of this opportunity to increase their ticket prices and add a \$1.00.

Ms. Bibeau announced that the meeting would recess for 5 minutes at 8:25 p.m.

Ms. Bibeau called the meeting back to order at 8:35 p.m.

4. 1st Reading Policy JFAA Residency

Ms. Hanshaw stated that Mr. Bergeron created this policy to help clarify issues for parents who do not live in Amesbury but drop their children off at Amesbury Schools.

5. 1st Reading Policy JJD Collection of Student Fees, Fines and Charges

Ms. Hanshaw stated that Mr. Bergeron created this policy to give parents guidelines and consequences for fees that go unpaid. Ms. Hanshaw asked that any school committee member who has questions on either of these new policies to please give her or Mr. Bergeron a call prior to the second reading on June 2nd.

6. Summer and School Year Meeting Dates

The committee changed the July date from July 20th to July 27th. All of the dates will remain as printed.

Motion by Gale Hanshaw, seconded by Bonnie Schultz to change the date of the July 20, 2010 meeting to July 27, 2010. Unanimous, Yes.

7. Superintendent's Evaluation 09-10

I. Performance Areas

A. School Committee Relations

David has continued to keep the full committee informed in a very consistent manner. He is extremely accessible. He also has great listening skills. He has been very approachable on suggestions or has a good ear to just listen to your thoughts, very welcoming and receptive! It felt like David was a co-superintendent the past few years and has transitioned in this role with great ease.

B. Community/Public Relations

David has taken on the "public" role of superintendent in a very competent and effective way. He is literally always prepared. He has maintained a high level of contact with the public and presents himself to the public as he does to the committee, that is, very accessible and open to communication. Listening to our pleas for two years and moving the meeting to the accessible high school library.

C. Personnel Management

David has maintained and supported a strong leadership team. His oversight of the recruitment for a new business administrator is evidence of his capabilities in the realm of HR; in addition, he demonstrates a professional sensitivity to the needs of his staff in a clear and consistent way. David recognizes the strengths of the staff and promotes individual recognition and teamwork. There is a strong emphasis on systems for professional development, release days, and an induction program. It would be "ideal" if we were able to develop objective measures for the outcomes of these initiatives.

D. Budget/Fiscal Management

David took on his new role in a very effective way. His presentations regarding the budget were clear, well developed and the process remained transparent. He demonstrated his ability to think strategically and over the long term. This was seen in the use of ARRA funds and pre-paying special education tuition, and implementing a review of our special education services. His oversight and support of Mr. Bergeron is apparent in the smooth transition process throughout the system.

E. Facilities Management

The systems that David oversaw as the assistant superintendent continue to ensure that our schools are well maintained and that problems are handled in an expedited manner. David has taken the necessary steps to plan for a new elementary school and handles issues in a proactive manner for all of our facilities. David has also worked with key staff (Brad Ford and Mike Bergeron) and municipal staff in looking at opportunities for energy savings and enhancements. The development of a capital plan with a realistic timetable for implementation is important.

F. Instructional and Curriculum Management

David has successfully delegated much of these responsibilities to Telena Imel. However, he does have in-depth knowledge of the major initiatives in education reform, curriculum oversight, and staff development. He is also supportive of innovative programming that has its roots in the interests and passions of the staff (Responsive Classroom, social-emotional development, Early College, distance learning/dual enrollment). Also, under David's direction, the leadership team has made some strategic decisions and adopted plans for improving academic performance. I believe that we need to, systematically, devote more effort and attention to the connection between social/emotional well-being and achievement.

G. Management of Student Services

David has undertaken a review of our special education services in an effort to find greater effectiveness, potential savings, and exemplary practices.

H. Comprehensive Planning

David is very open to feedback as evidenced by his approach to the coordination of school committee and superintendent goals. I would like to see some additional evaluation process of our schools that includes outcomes and data related to social-emotional development, school(s) culture, and school climate. Extremely involved in cultivating the school committee workshop and creating our goals. Keeps current on law changes and policy changes.

I. Professional and Personal Growth and Management

David participates in a number of professional development groups. He also had to learn some new wrinkles in this position. For example, RTTT, changes in various regulations, keeping abreast of ongoing developments (H1N1, anti bullying efforts, MIAA suggested changes) and in each instance has been able to learn what he needs to provide guidance, information, and support to the various stakeholders.

II. Progress Toward the Attainment of Goals

1. **To continue to promote the Mission Statement of the Amesbury School District**

David has made it a priority to place our mission front and center. While symbolic in nature, it is a powerful reminder of why we are here, to serve children. He has clearly focused on our facilities, attracting and retaining highly qualified and committed professionals throughout the system, and managed to oversee some additional bargaining and several important bid procedures.

2. **To establish partnerships which foster effective and active involvement in collaboration with the Amesbury community**

David continues to focus resources on this area, including South Hampton, Pettengill House, the Academy, AEFI, the Chamber and Rotary. We still need to explore ways to reach out to other groups in town that support children and youth and/or could be allies in raising attention to the needs of our schools, children, and families. I would like to see a focus on concepts of the Tower Foundation grant proposal whether or not we are granted the funding in this round, as a strategy for fostering a strong child-focused community.

3. **To structure our teaching strategies and resources in order to improve student achievement**

Build upon the strengths and passions that staff clearly identify or have been identified. Stress the connection between well-being and achievement. Identify additional evidence based best practices that support positive outcomes that relate to school culture, well-being, and students' connection with other students, adults, and the community.

4. **To attract, retain, and develop the highest quality workforce**

The superintendent's experience in human resources and his strategic marketing have helped to make Amesbury a destination for talented educators, teachers, and administrators.

5. **To review all existing facilities and to insure and foster an educational climate that meets the needs of our students, faculty and community members.**

With the addition of a realistic capital improvement plan and a request to begin the process for a new elementary school, we should be in a very strong position to maintain and improve our physical plant and transportation system.

6. **To effectively manage the FY'10 budget and the FY'11 budget process**

The superintendent has done a very fine job.

7. To ensure communications and transparency of operations for all aspects of the school district.

The superintendent has continued the practices of open communication and a transparent budget process. As stated earlier, he is accessible, open, and, in addition, a person of integrity.

Motion by Tom McGee, seconded by Bonnie Schultz to suspend the rules so the committee may vote after 9:00 p.m. Unanimous, Yes.

C. WARRANT

Motion by Stanley Schwartz, seconded by Gale Hanshaw to approve the warrant dated May 20, 2010 in the amount of \$516,389.54. Unanimous, Yes.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

A. Subcommittee Reports

1. Budget/Finance Subcommittee

Ms. Bibeau stated that she had met with the superintendent and the business administrator to go over the capital improvement plan.

2. Policy Subcommittee

This subcommittee met on May 11th and worked on the policies that are on the agenda for a first reading. The next meeting will be on June 10th at 3:00 p.m. in the superintendent's office.

3. Personnel Subcommittee

This subcommittee needs to schedule a meeting.

4. Student Advisory Council

Ms. Bibeau presented Chanelle Havey with flowers from the school committee thanking her for her year as the SAC representative. Chanelle thanked the committee for their support and help throughout the year.

COMMUNICATIONS

- Mr. Schwartz praised AEFI for the Hall of Honor event. He also thanked the committee for their donation to AEFI in honor of his father.
- Ms. Bibeau stated that MASC will be coming forward with an Early Bird special price for the Joint Conference in November. She also stated that the road construction and transportation was going well and kudos to all departments involved.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

1. Whittier Superintendent and Reps. (6/2/10)
2. Amesbury Academy Charter Renewal (7/27/10)
3. Summer Reading List (6/2/10)
4. Retiree Reception (6/2/10)
5. Report on Diversity in Students & Personnel

Ms. Bibeau announced that the school committee would be going into executive session in accordance with MGL Ch. 39, S.29b #1, to finalize the superintendent's evaluation. The committee will not return to open session, they will adjourn from the executive session.

Roll Call Vote: Kezer, Yes; Bibeau, Yes; Schwartz, Yes; Schultz, Yes; Hanshaw, Yes; McGee, Yes; Connolly King, 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.