

**AMESBURY SCHOOL COMMITTEE
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
AMESBURY HIGH SCHOOL
SEPTEMBER 21, 2010**

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

Ms. LaValley Bibeau stated that Mayor Kezer would be a few minutes late so she called the meeting to order as the Vice Chair. Ann Connolly King led the Pledge of Allegiance.

II. PRESENTATIONS

1. Special Presentation to John Lyman, AMS Teacher

Mr. Lyman, host of the cable television show, "Amesbury Educates" commented briefly about the television show. John took over hosting the show after Peter Hoyt, Cashman Elementary Principal, retired. John stated that next week the show will celebrate its 50th taping. He thanked Russ Munroe, the school department's audio visual coordinator, for all the help in getting the show ready and helping to make it successful.

Ms. LaValley Bibeau presented Mr. Lyman with a plaque from the school department to thank him for all of his volunteer service in keeping this show on the air.

2. Whittier Superintendent and School Board Representatives

The Superintendent of Whittier Regional Vocational Technical High School, Bill DeRosa, was present along with Amesbury's two representatives to the Whittier School Board, Charles LaBella and Tony LeSage. Mr. DeRosa informed the school committee about a variety of topics from the new roof to additional course offerings as well as the MCAS scores of Whittier students. There are currently 71 students who live in Amesbury and attend Whittier, which is an increase from last year. Whittier has discontinued offering fashion/interior design courses but has increased course offerings in the health field. Whittier has had to cut back on accepting students under the Choice program because they are filled to capacity.

The Amesbury School Committee asked Mr. DeRosa if Whittier does any outreach into the communities of their students. It was suggested that Amesbury put a link to Whittier on the Amesbury School Department website.

Mr. Jack asked the Whittier delegation if there was anything more that Amesbury could do that would benefit students. Mr. DeRosa stated that Mr. Curry, Amesbury Middle School Principal, does a wonderful job at communicating with Whittier. Whittier would like parents to call them if they have any questions about the school which is why a link to Whittier would be helpful.

One of the members asked Mr. DeRosa how Whittier spends its Choice money. Some of their Choice money goes toward a summer program for MCAS help, an after school program, Project Discovery, building maintenance, and they avoided some staff reductions.

The school committee asked about the success of the MCAS summer program. Mr. DeRosa stated that it is a 4-week program and 280 students participated last summer. At one point Whittier's MCAS scores were 4th from the bottom for the state and they are now seeing 98-100% successful scores from their students.

Amesbury citizen, Greg Noyes, was allowed to ask the Whittier delegation some questions.

III. COMMENTS BY VISITORS, DELEGATIONS

None.

IV. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

A. Curriculum Director's Report

1. K-12 Literacy Grant

Telena Imel informed the committee about the work being done in the elementary school in an effort to improve the MCAS scores on the open response questions. Elementary data teams for English Language Arts were created and designated individuals were termed "Data Divas". The first step was finding tools that would help the data divas analyze student data. The tools found were used to increase data diva knowledge on collecting student data and analyzing it to look for trends. It is the hope that through these tools, MCAS scores for open response questions will increase.

B. Superintendent's Report

1. Fundraising Request

Les Murray, AHS Principal, and Thom Connors, Football Coach, were present to ask the school committee to waive current policy and allow the football team to do door to door fundraising. Coach Connors stated that this would be a one day 4-hour extremely organized blitz that will be well publicized prior to the event. The players go out in groups, wear their football jerseys and are accompanied by staff or parent volunteers. More details were shared regarding the organization and safety of the event.

Some discussion regarding the form that organizations need to fill out when they are planning a fundraiser. It was suggested to add a spot on the form for "door to door". Ms. Hanshaw asked why "door to door" would be added to the form if the policy states that the school committee discourages it.

Mr. Murray reminded the committee that the policy does not say that door to door is “prohibited” just that it is “discouraged”. Ms. LaValley Bibeau stated that the budget cuts have affected the athletic department and their ability to purchase equipment and uniforms. The gold card fundraising helped them pay \$10,000 for new uniforms. Coach Connors also stated that football helmets have to be certified every year for safety and some of the helmets are NOT re-certified, making them unusable.

The Chair arrived at 8:05 p.m.

Ms. LaValley Bibeau asked Mr. Jack if he received any calls at his office of a negative nature concerning this door to door soliciting and he said that he had not received any negative calls in the past.

Ms. Hanshaw asked Coach Connors if he had considered having people come to the team members for gold cards. What about tagging at the businesses that are participating in the cards fundraiser? She stated that many fundraisers use the tagging method or some other more creative way to fundraise rather than going to people’s homes. Ms. Connolly King stated that if they support this effort under this policy then every other fundraising effort will have to come before the committee asking for the same ability to go door to door. She said that either the committee deny this athletic fundraiser and keep the policy as is, or say “yes” to the door to door and eliminate the policy. She stated that her neighbors are very uncomfortable with students coming to their homes to try and raise money. She said that people want to help but they are already paying taxes and then students are coming to them and asking for more support, it makes them uncomfortable.

The Mayor stated that the safety issue has been addressed and he is proud to be able to say that he can’t think of any place in Amesbury that would be unsafe for students to fundraise. Ms. Connolly King suggested that perhaps this effort can be viewed as a pilot program. The Mayor stated that it is voluntary for people to contribute and it is a constitutional right to let people from other communities come to Amesbury from outside to fundraise.

Ms. Ouellet stated that the gold cards are a recognized fundraising effort in the schools and in the community.

Motion by Tom McGee, seconded by Debra LaValley Bibeau, that the school committee waive Policy IGDF Student Fundraising Activities and allow the athletic department to fundraise the gold card door to door. Vote: Yes (Kezer, LaValley Bibeau), No (Hanshaw, Connolly King, McGee).

2. Well Power Initiative

Mr. Jack spoke about the initiative by the town's health insurance company, Blue Cross/Blue Shield. This effort began with the Mayor's office agreeing to have Amesbury be the lead pilot city in Massachusetts to roll this out. The effort is to have those who receive or are eligible for BC/BS through the town to become healthier by participating in the activities put forth in this Well Power Initiative. There is a list of kick-off dates and places all over town in the next month. It is a 3-year program.

3. Race To The Top Monies

The superintendent and the curriculum director gave a PowerPoint presentation on the status of the RTTT monies that are estimated to come to Amesbury and the district proposals that are due to the state by October 22nd. There is a tremendous amount of work to do to receive an amount of money that will not completely support the effort necessary to do the work. However, as the presentation showed, the school department will be required to do all of the work proposed whether the money is provided or it is not. Any towns who did not apply for RTTT money will have to do the same work as Amesbury but without any funds provided by the federal government.

Ms. Connolly King asked Mayor Kezer if there was any talk about legislation that would include supplemental funding for these requirements. The Mayor stated that he would be attending a Mayor's meeting the next morning but he had not heard of any funds as yet. He said that the Secretary of Education has attended two Mayor's meetings to address the needs for funding education. The Mayor went on to say that his sense is that Amesbury is a lot better off than some communities.

Mr. Jack asked the committee if it is their intent to move forward in this process. It was the consensus of the committee to keep on track with the requirements of the RTTT monies.

Motion by Gale Hanshaw, seconded by Tom McGee to suspend the rules so that the committee may conduct business after 9:00 p.m. Unanimous, Yes.

ITEMS FOR APPROVAL OR EARLY CONSIDERATION

A. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Motion by Debra LaValley Bibeau, seconded by Gale Hanshaw to approve the school committee minutes dated September 7, 2010. Unanimous, Yes, Student Rep., Yes.

B. **BUSINESS**

1. **2nd Reading Policy ABC Student Involvement in Decision Making**

Ms. Hanshaw told the committee that his policy was sent to our MASC representative, Mike Gilbert, for clarification and that the policy has been updated per his suggestions.

Motion by Gale Hanshaw, seconded by Debra LaValley Bibeau to approve Policy ABC Student Involvement. Unanimous, Yes, Student Rep., Yes.

2. **2nd Reading Policy BD School Committee Meetings**
Ms. Hanshaw spoke to the minor grammatical changes suggested by the policy subcommittee.

Motion by Gale Hanshaw, seconded by Tom McGee to approve Policy BD School Committee Meetings. Unanimous, Yes, Student Rep., Yes.

3. **2nd Reading Policy BDDA Notice of School Committee Meetings**
Ms. Hanshaw noted the changes to the policy in keeping with the new Open Meeting Law.

Motion by Gale Hanshaw, seconded by Debra LaValley Bibeau to approve Policy BDDA Notice of School Committee Meetings. Unanimous, Yes, Student Rep., Yes.

4. **Review of Draft of School Committee Goals for 2010-2011**
Ms. LaValley Bibeau read the four school committee goals out loud.
 1. To promote partnerships which foster effective communication and active involvement in collaboration with the Amesbury community
 2. To structure our teaching strategies and resources for students to meet or exceed grade level expectations
 3. To support the attraction, retention, and development of the highest quality workforce
 4. To review all existing facilities and to insure and foster an educational climate that meets the needs of our students, faculty and community members

Motion by Gale Hanshaw, seconded by Ann Connolly King to accept the final draft of the 2010-2011 School Committee Goals. Unanimous, Yes.

C. WARRANT

Motion by Tom McGee, seconded by Gale Hanshaw to approve the warrant dated September 23, 2010 in the amount of \$364,117.23. Unanimous, Yes.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

A. Subcommittee Reports

1. **Budget/Finance Subcommittee**
This subcommittee will meet prior to the next school committee meeting.
2. **Policy Subcommittee**
This subcommittee will meet on September 30, at 4:00 p.m. in the Superintendent's office.

3. **Personnel Subcommittee**

Mr. McGee reported that Mr. Helliesen, AES Principal, attended the meeting to explain to the subcommittee the additional students who have moved into the AES district who require additional personnel support. Two 30-hour special education tutors need to be hired as well as a 3rd grade regular education teacher. Also, CES has added a 19 hour per week assistant for new students. Mr. Jack explained that the addition of staff is necessary because class sizes are affecting student services. He also stated that AES did have the space to house the new 3rd Grade class.

COMMUNICATIONS

1. **Student Advisory Council**

Ms. Ouellet reported that freshmen elections would take place on September 23rd which will add three new members to the Student Advisory Council. She also stated that the parking situation at AHS was working out well. Ms. LaValley Bibeau reminded Ms. Ouellet that the Council will be put on a future agenda for dialogue with the School Committee.

- Ms. LaValley Bibeau reminded the committee about registering for the MASC/MASS Joint Conference. She said that the November 3rd School Committee meeting may need to be changed to Monday, November 1st because the Mayor will be away on duty that week and Ms. LaValley Bibeau will be going to the conference on Wednesday morning. This change will be added to the next agenda.
- Mr. Jack informed the committee that Les Murray, AHS Principal and Sue Grolnick from NECCO will be presenting at the joint conference on the Early College Program. Mr. Jack will be part of a panel.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

1. Report on Diversity in Students & Personnel
 2. CACD/Tufts University Program at AMS
 3. Adult Ed. Enrichment Program Proposal – Maggie Furlong (10/5/10)
 4. Date for Goals Review (2/11)
 5. MCAS Presentation (10/5/10)
 6. School Improvement Plans (10/19/10)
 7. School Improvement Plans (11/3/10)
- The Chair read the above future agenda items. Ms. LaValley Bibeau clarified that on item #1 she was looking for a report on Amesbury's ELL students. Also, the election of a delegate and a substitute will need to be voted on at the October 5th meeting.

- Ms. Connolly King stated that she will not be present at the October 5th meeting.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

- The Chair stated that under M.G.L. Chapter 39, s.23B, the School Committee will be going into executive session under number three, to discuss a matter under collective bargaining. The Chair further stated that the committee will not reconvene in open session but will adjourn from executive session.

Roll Call Vote taken at 9:20 p.m.: Connolly King, Yes; McGee, Yes; Hanshaw, Yes; LaValley Bibeau, Yes; Kezer, 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.