

**AMESBURY SCHOOL COMMITTEE
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
AMESBURY HIGH SCHOOL
October 1, 2018**

Present at 7:00 p.m. were Deb LaValley, Chair; Peter Hoyt, Rob Chamberlain, Gretchen Marinopoulos, Amy Sherwood, Joan Liporto, and Jared Fulgoni, Interim Superintendent of Schools.

Arrival at 8:06 pm Ellie Costello, SAC Representative

Absent were Mayor Gray and Tim Kisielewski

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.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Ms. LaValley called the meeting to order at 7:03 PM and led the committee in the Pledge of Allegiance and read the Mission Statement aloud.

II. COMMENTS BY VISITORS, DELEGATIONS

One community member, Mr. Thivierge, spoke regarding the Newburyport News article about the AES school building project. The following are some of his concerns/statements and thoughts:

- Very concerned about the projected cost of the project (\$37.9M- \$40.9M)
- Cost to the city translates to property tax increase of approximately \$420/year for a 20 year bond or \$360/year for a 30 year bond for homeowners
- Thanked the school committee for the time and energy they had put into this project and for calling off using Woodsom Farm

Mr. Hoyt thanked Mr. Thivierge for the feedback and noted that the mayor wants all of the project information out so the community has an opportunity to give feedback. Mr. Hoyt reminded everyone that there will be a Public Forum held in the AHS auditorium to discuss the AES building project on October 10, 2018 at 7 pm.

III. PRESENTATIONS AND ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

A. Superintendent's Report

Mr. Fulgoni, Interim School Superintendent, spoke about the following:

- Introduced and welcomed Robin Heiser, new Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent. She will transition to being the minute taker for the school committee meetings.
- MCAS is the metric used by the state to measure student achievement.
- Process for measuring school achievement has been simplified and changed from a method that had a bias toward the punitive. New accountability system has a heavy emphasis on achievement and student growth and uses MCAS scores as a basis. Also allows schools to be compared regardless of grade configuration.

- How is the school doing? Each principal will give a brief update on recent ranking.
- How did we get where we are? Next step is for the principals to do a deep dive, go back and analyze the data to determine what changes need to be made.
- School improvement plans will be tied to the achievement data. This is usable data that helps us understand so we can use it.
- There are new analytic tools that will allow us to drill down to specific details (classroom performance, student performance, etc)

B. Presentation by Amesbury School District Principals

Each principal in the district is doing a presentation giving an overview of their accountability system results:

- Elizabeth McAndrews presented for AHS:
 - Thanked the committee for allowing them to present the data.
 - Achievement (47.5% of score): 7 out of 12 were exceeded target
 - Growth (22.5%): ELA – all either met or improved target; Math – met or exceeded all subcategories. Ms. McAndrews feels that the flex time they now offer in the schedule has made a big difference in this area.
 - High School Completion (20%): Did not do well for students completing college in four years but exceeded the target in all areas for completion within five years. Exceeded the target in high school dropout rate.
 - Chronic absenteeism (10%): Continues to be an issue. Increase in mental health hospitalizations. It doesn't matter if absence is excused or not. What is the number of days that are allowed? Ms. McAndrews responded that it is 10% or 18 days.
 - Completion of advanced coursework and AP course enrollment are doing well. We have expanded partnerships with three colleges.
- Eryn Maguire presented for the AIHS:
 - They had a 100% pass rate for the past two years for all three tests
 - Looking at implementing reading and writing standards. They have already implemented some norms that the students are responsible for and each quarter they will add an additional standard
 - Mr. Hoyt asked about their attendance so far this year? Ms. Maquire indicated that so far this year it was pretty decent.
 - Enrollment this year is 52 students and there are 4 waitlisted
 - Started an English Recovery program. Currently have 5 (all seniors) part time students participating. This program allows them to make up missing ELA credits. If this program continues to be successful, they will add a math recovery program.
- Michael Curry presented for AMS:
 - It has been tough going at the middle school.
 - Middle school showed an overall decline in targets for both ELA and Math and Science.
 - Chronic absenteeism is an issue at the middle school as well.
 - Overall participation rate in MCAS was 99% compared to 95% statewide

- Analyzing data from all grade levels to plan ways to address concerns across all subgroups, particularly high needs, economically disadvantaged and students with disabilities.
- Focused on development, implementation, and observation of common school-wide expectations and practices. Data will help benchmark progress, do comparisons, make targeted informed decisions and planning, and implementation of effective instructional strategies.
- AMS utilized computers for MCAS testing for all grades for the first time this year (2017-2018). They believe that it affected the results.(2016-2017 4th and 8th did computer based testing)
- The school committee supported that Mr. Curry has been a vocal advocate for reading and math supports, after school bussing, department heads while dealing with sizable cuts. The committee shared his disappointment but recognize the opportunity and do not want him to feel that he carries this alone.
- These MCAS results are a byproduct of what is going on at the schools but it is more than that – it is not just an AMS issue but includes the families and the community.
- Walter Helliesen presented for AES:
 - They are also struggling with chronic absenteeism. Perhaps the School Committee should consider a policy change? How can we best utilize the school resource officers?
 - Met all learning goals for ELA; meeting goals in Math except for lowest performing students.
 - In the achievement areas things are going in the right direction.
 - Growth measure were disappointing but he feels it is a direct result of attendance and how often students are in front of a teacher.
 - Have shared requests for supports that are needed at the elementary school
 - Need to remind parents of the importance of students coming to school. We have trained medical professionals to take care of them.
- Karina Mascia presented for CES:
 - Overall partially meeting targets and are below for accountability percentile but have made progress
 - For both ELA and Math, lowest performing and economically challenged as well as students with disabilities have made significant progress
 - Absenteeism is a problem
 - Did not meet target for 2017 but hope to continue trends of growth and improvement

IV. COMMUNICATION

A. **Student Advisory Council – Ellie Costello**

Ellie stated that the freshmen had their elections and Rosie Costello has been elected to the council. SAC held an activities fair in the cafeteria and are looking for a date for the next meeting so that more people can attend. Elections will be held again in the spring.

B. Other

Mr. Hoyt shared that the 350th gala will be held on October 13 – tickets are available online. Additionally, there will be a reunion weekend on Friday, October 12 from 5 – 8 pm.

Mrs. Marinopoulos indicated that she had expressed interest in serving on school building committee and received confirmation that she was moving forward with being on the committee. She has requested that the timing and location of the meetings be reviewed so that they are more community friendly.

V. ITEMS FOR APPROVAL OR EARLY CONSIDERATION

A. Approval of Minutes:

Motion by Mr. Hoyt, seconded by Mrs. Sherwood to accept the School Committee minutes dated September 10, 2018. Vote: Yes, Unanimous.

B. Approval of Warrant: 09/27/18 \$325,348.19

Motion by Mrs. Sherwood, seconded by Mr. Chamberlain, to accept the Warrant dated September 27, 2018 in the amount of \$325,348.19. Vote: Yes, Unanimous.

VI. OLD BUSINESS

A. Childs Avenue

Rob Desmarais shared that the wall is completed and they expect to have the road completed within the next week or two. They were able to complete the work without doing any excavating while the children were in school. The delay in completion of the project was due to the heavy rain storms destroying soils and work that had been started. Thank you to the residents of the neighborhood for sharing their concerns and for their patience.

B. School Physician Role

Discussion was held about the role of the school physician and how he/she can be a more integral part of the school community.

- How do we make decisions regarding student health? (excessive heat, anxiety, allergies, etc.)
 - We have excellent coaches, etc. but these decisions should be up to a physician
- A template of a policy was in the materials distributed to the committee and this matter is being referred to the Personnel Subcommittee for review and further discussion.

VII. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

A. Subcommittee Reports

1. Finance/Budget Subcommittee – Rob Chamberlain

Mr. Chamberlain stated that they did not meet this evening but noted the following:

- Most significant increase was on benefits line but they have only seen July invoices so far
- We will know better in November when we have replacement teachers, salary change information and contract negotiations for individually

contracted employees.

- Transfers in and out were \$1,032,209 .
- We will know more about the bus savings soon. There is only a small group of kids that we need to work with on this.

Motion by Mrs. Sherwood, seconded by Mrs. Marinopoulos, to accept the transfers in the amount of \$1,032,209. Vote: Yes, Unanimous.

2. Personnel Subcommittee – Amy Sherwood

- School Committee Retreat will be held on October 15, 2018
- Will begin conversation about future negotiations on October 16, 2018
- No other meetings scheduled at this time

3. AES Building Committee

Mr. Hoyt was asked to and gave an update on the AES building project including the following:

- A meeting was held on September 27, 2018 and the room was full. Discussed moving the meetings to a different building. The meeting scheduled and location going forward will be reviewed at the next meeting on October 25, 2018 at 3:30 pm
- Next school committee vote related to the project will be to determine the site of the new building at the October 29, 2018 meeting.
- Community Open Forum will be held on Wednesday, October 10, 2018 in the AHS auditorium. Dinisco will do a design presentation.
- Dinisco's presentation will include details about both sites and the feasibility of using either. They have done their due diligence and will demonstrate this during the presentation to the community.
- It was suggested that Dinisco present to the School Committee at the October 29 meeting and then another meeting be scheduled for the week of November 5 for the vote on the site.
- It was suggested that we have a timeline showing the progress and outlining the pros and cons for each site as well as a fact sheet for the October 10 forum.
- There will be a survey available for community members to provide feedback following the presentation.

B. MASC/MASS Joint Conference

This conference will be held from November 7-10, 2018. If anyone plans to attend, please let Mr. Fulgoni know so we can complete registrations. The national conference this year will be held in Philadelphia in March.

Ms. LaValley stated that she will be attending the conference on Friday.

VIII. FUTURE MEETINGS AND AGENDA ITEMS

School Committee retreat will be on October 15, 2018. Please send any retreat agenda items to Mayor Gray, Mr. Fulgoni and Ms. LaValley by Wednesday, October 10, 2018.

It was suggested that we bring back 'Spotlight the Schools' at the school committee meetings. This will be added to the retreat agenda.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Mrs. Sherwood seconded by Mrs. Marinopoulos, to adjourn the meeting at 9:00PM.

Vote: Yes, unanimous.

Respectfully Submitted,



Gretchen Marinopoulos, Secretary