

**AMESBURY SCHOOL COMMITTEE
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
AMESBURY HIGH SCHOOL
August 6, 2018**

Present at 7:00 p.m. were Mayor Gray, Chair; Deb LaValley, Peter Hoyt, Rob Chamberlain, Gretchen Marinopoulos, Amy Sherwood, Tim Kisieleski, Joan Liporto, Ellie Costello, SAC Representative and ~~Dr. Gary Reese~~, Superintendent of Schools.

Tara Fulgoni (handwritten signature)

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

Mayor Gray called the meeting to order at 7:03 PM and Mrs. Sherwood led the committee in the Pledge of Allegiance and read the Mission Statement aloud.

II. COMMENTS BY VISITORS, DELEGATIONS

Twelve community members spoke regarding the grade configuration that is on the agenda tonight for a vote from the school committee. These twelve members were made up of parents, retired teacher, teachers, community members, city councilor. They were all in favor of keeping the same model while bringing grade 5 back to the elementary level (PreK – 5). The following are some of their concerns/statements and thoughts:

- Keep neighborhood schools
- Families not broken up
- Getting rid of AES, would result in a lot of waste
- Student/teacher relationships
- No data comparing the two configurations (Pre-5) (Prek-2 – 3-5)
- Concerns with the process
- Felt it was already a done deal
- With split grades (preK-2, 3-5) – lack of self-esteem; more anxiety; no relationships; not as much support; no consistent experiences
- Survey showed 47% vs. 42% not a major landslide
- Kids are vulnerable
- Base decision on the needs of the students not the structure of the building (old vs. new)
- NV5 (project managers) should be presenting – they are the experts
- Consistent environment
- Either configuration will end up with an old and new building
- Would like a delay on the vote to get more information/data

At this time, the School Committee members did not comment, awaiting the presentation of Dinisco Designs.

III. PRESENTATIONS AND ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

A. Superintendent's Report

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

- Met with people of the community – very engaging
- August 14 from 4:00 – 7:00 there will be a clean up at CES with hamburgers and hot dogs served.
- August 27th first day for faculty and staff – will be sending out an agenda
- Perception is that teachers do not work during the summer months, they do work in getting everything ready. Thank you to the facilities crew for all of their hard work.

B. Presentation by Dinisco Design Partnership

Donna Dinisco, Walter Helliesen, AES Principal and Tom Murphy, NV5 will be collectively doing the presentation speaking on the following:

- Exciting times for Amesbury – a lot to be considered along the road
- Small community, but we are presently not neighborhood school, we are two large schools with boundaries in the center of town
- Equal learning experience for all – one elementary program housed in two buildings - been talking about new school since 2007
- Submit SOI to MSBA with educational goals – grade structure; equity; optimize grade configuration; flex grouping and spaces; accommodate enrollment changes; establish grade structures and relationships.
- Configuration consideration – Grade 5 to elementary; PreK to one or both schools; PreK – 2/ 3-5; K-5 in both; analysis of equity
- Community supports grade 5 back to the elementary
- If K-5 – then PreK would be at AES – space requirements are larger for PK & K with bathrooms in classroom . CES would have 430 to 390 students and AES would have 400 to 540 students – will have to redistrict.
- PK - 2 / 3 – 5 – benefits community; equity; enhance grade level learning; collaboration; same amount of students in each building (465); only one school transition; savings of staff; targeted PD times
- MSBA predicted enrollment for the district has gone from 855 to 930 – working with them
- What is best for Amesbury?
- Need to know who Amesbury is as a community before layout and placement of building will be
- Some people think process is backwards – we support MSBA
- Went over the MSBA schedule – design process after grade configuration has taken place – August 29, 2018 to October 30, 2018 MSBA review; MSBA vote October 31, 2018; MSBA study (PSR) January 13, 2019; MSBA vote to proceed February 13, 2019.

Discussion:

- Mrs. Marinopoulos asked if no vote tonight, what will be impacted? Donna Dinisco said everything will be impacted. She went on to say that a one month postponement could be done, but would have an impact of getting all of the work done and all the information out to the public for the next step (2.5 months).

- Mrs. Marinopoulos asked if a delay of the vote was voted on, would that send a wrong message to MSBA? Donna stated that they have already asked them to relook at enrollment numbers, there might be consequences.
- Mrs. Marinopoulos asked if CES must house grades 3-5, or could they be housed at AES? Donna stated that CES is not a school for 480 students – space at CES is not conducive and does not support space guidelines.
- Ms. LaValley asked if PK-2/3-5 configuration is voted on, can MSBA do improvements on technology at CES? Donna stated that MSBA will not improve the technology at CES. Ms. LaValley asked if the timeline could be posted on the website.

IV. COMMUNICATION

A. Student Advisory Council – Ellie Costello

Ellie stated that she does not have a report.

C. Other

None

V. ITEMS FOR APPROVAL OR EARLY CONSIDERATION

A. Approval of Minutes:

Motion by Mrs. Marinopoulos, seconded by Mr. Hoyt to accept the School Committee minutes dated July 9, 2018. Vote: Yes, Unanimous.

B. Approval of Warrant: 06/29/18 \$32,051.20

Motion by Ms. LaValley, seconded by Mr. Hoyt, to accept the Warrant dated June 29, 2018 in the amount of \$32,051.20. Vote: Yes, Unanimous.

07/19/18 \$90,037.45

Motion by Ms. LaValley, seconded by Mr. Kisieleski, to accept the Warrant dated July 19, 2018 in the amount of \$90,037.45. Vote: Yes, Unanimous.

08/02/18 \$166,015.14

Motion by Ms. LaValley, seconded by Mr. Chamberlain, to accept the Warrant dated August 2, 2018 in the amount of \$166,015.14. Vote: Yes, Unanimous.

C. Grade Configuration

Mayor Gray asked if the committee would like to vote on the configuration this evening, or delay it.

- Ms. LaValley stated the need to have an identity – been talking about this for years, she is against a delay.
- Mr. Chamberlain stated he was okay with a delay, adding that it is unanimous that grade 5 will be returning to the elementary.
- Mr. Hoyt stated he is good with voting this evening.
- Mrs. Marinopoulos asked if PK – 2 could be in CES. She stated that one model is not better than the other; lots of data on smaller size; concern with technology in new building; worried about how to upgrade CES asking if we have a plan? Mayor Gray stated that three years ago the cost of construction was a lot lower

than it is now. This will be a burden on tax payers (\$20 mil versus \$35 mil).

Mayor Gray spoke about the DIFF program which gave investors a tax break. At this point he stated that he does not have any answers with too many variables in the mix.

- Mrs. Sherwood stated that vote or no vote – need to move forward.

Motion by Mr. Hoyt second by Ms. LaValley, to vote on the grade configuration this evening.

Vote: 5 yes; 2 opposed (Chamberlain and Marinopoulos) – motion is adopted.

Motion by Ms. LaValley second by Mr. Hoyt to vote on grade configuration PK-2/3-5.

Discussion: Mrs. Sherwood thanked the public for being here, speaking, their emails and comments on social media. With the research not conclusive, she stated that she spoke with people and listened. Mrs. Sherwood stated that she felt both configurations can work (horizontal vs. vertical), either way kids will learn. Her concern is that this can divide us – it's about delivery and leadership – have to stick together. She stated that she will support either way but stating the lack of documentation from the building committee. Values – schools feel like a community – improve collaboration – limited transitions – mixed interactions with kids. Mrs. Sherwood concluded by stating she believes we will be OK – town is split – she supports K-5 configuration.

Ellie Costello stated that coming into the high school as a freshman was an emotional change stated that most kids go home and cry the first day. She can not imagine being 7 and 8 years old and having to change schools. Need to stay with what is in place now.

Ms. LaValley stated that she has based her decision on students and the community. She went on to say how she has learned to think outside-the-box in the 19 years she has been on the board.

Equity goes a long way. In looking at the needs of the community, financially and saving money a configuration of PK-2/3-5 makes the most sense.

Mr. Hoyt stated that he has thought long and hard about this decision – celebrating and applauding the community. He has based his decision on his personal experience and knowing that Amesbury has the highest quality educators. He has listened to his friends, colleagues and Dinisco Designs and an Early Childhood model puts children and community first.

Mr. Chamberlain thanked the community for their engagement on this issue. He has done research on K-8 configuration – aligns vertically – strengths for the K-5 model which is an important factor. Equity in management – no reason to make a change – stay status-quo.

Mrs. Marinopoulos stated that there is a greater impact in education to stay with the K-5 configuration which she supports.

Motion by Mr. Hoyt second by Ms. LaValley to continue the School Committee meeting beyond 9PM. Vote: Yes, unanimous.

Mr. Kisieleski stated that he does not have the background to support the configurations either way and has never had the personal experiences. He has received a lot of emails favoring both sides and has listened to Dinisco presentation, so with that, he is in support of the K-2/3-5 configuration.

Mayor Gray stated that this is a success for administration and teachers – the community is divided 47% to 41%. He is concerned with equity on who will go to the new school versus the old school. His vote is for the K-2/3-5.

Mrs. Sherwood spoke about having this “red flag” with no traffic survey, no money for CES, who makes decisions, and the financial impact.

Vote: 4 yes; 3 opposed (Chamberlain, Marinopoulos and Sherwood). Motion is adopted.

D. School Year Calendar

Mr. Fulgoni stated that the PRT day in June is an MCAS date, so he is asking for this PRT date to be moved to September 21, 2018.

Motion by Mr. Hoyt second by Mrs. Marinopoulos to accept the 2018-2019 school calendar as presented. Vote: Yes; Unanimous.

Ms. LaValley asked for the calendar to be updated on the website

E. Title I Policy – First Reading

Mr. Hoyt read the Title I Policy aloud. He is asking for the first reading to be waived in order for Ms. Jacques to work on Grants.

Motion by Mr. Hoyt second by Mr. Kisieleski to waive the first reading on Title I Policy. Vote: Yes, Unanimous.

Motion by Mr. Hoyt second by Mr. Kisieleski to adapt the AES Title I Policy as presented.

Discussion: Mr. Chamberlain asked if this is a new or changed policy. Mr. Fulgoni stated that there has never been a Title I Policy. Vote: Yes, Unanimous.

Motion by Mr. Hoyt second by Mr. Kisieleski to adopt the CES Title I Policy as presented. Vote: Yes, Unanimous.

VI. INFORMATION ITEMS**A. Subcommittee Reports****1. Finance/Budget Subcommittee – Rob Chamberlain**

Mr. Chamberlain stated that they met this evening discussing:

- FY18 closed with no surprises
- FY19 budget – Mr. Fulgoni spoke about getting quarterly reports
- Priorities

2. Policy Subcommittee – Peter Hoyt

Mr. Hoyt stated that they will be meeting in the new school year

Mr. Hoyt stated that the Building Committee will be meeting on Thursday, August 23rd at 3:30. Ms. LaValley asked why they meet so early? Donna Dinisco stated that it was not their decision. Mr. Helliesen stated that they agreed on that time so that educators could come to meetings after school hours.

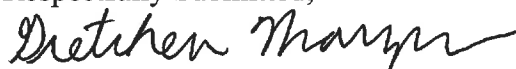
VII. FUTURE MEETINGS AND AGENDA ITEMS

School Committee retreat will be this Wednesday from 4-8.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Ms. LaValley seconded by Mr. Kisieleski, to adjourn the meeting at 9:27PM. Vote: Yes, unanimous.

Respectfully Submitted,



Gretchen Marinopoulos, Secretary