

**AMESBURY SCHOOL COMMITTEE
RETREAT MEETING MINUTES
NEWBURYPORT FIVE CENTS SAVINGS
October 15, 2018**

Present at 5:00 PM: Mayor Gray, Deb LaValley, Rob Chamberlain, Jared Fulgoni, Peter Hoyt, Tim Kisielewski, Gretchen Marinopoulos (left at 5:40 pm), Amy Sherwood
Special guest: Mike Gilbert

Mayor Gray called the meeting to order at 5:08 pm.

1. Budget Process

- Budget is not just about the bottom line number but about how efficiently we use the money. (i.e. \$660,000 on out of district tuition)
- Ms. Liporto provided a suggested timeline for review and comment.
- It was suggested that perhaps we hold budget workshops.
- With spending efficiency, more careful consideration will be given to how to spend funds to achieve specific goals. We need to build a sustainable budget.
- Set up cost centers – when funds are moved between cost centers, school committee would need to approve transfers.

2. Monthly Meeting Agendas

- What is our purpose as a school committee? This should drive the agenda.
- How do we provide a governance role with limited time?
- We need regular topics/updates – perhaps three or four priorities.
- It was requested that meeting materials be distributed a week ahead.
- It was suggested that Mayor Gray, Mr. Fulgoni and Ms. Liporto meet a week prior to School Committee meeting to review agenda and prepare for meeting.
- Following were suggested agenda items:
 - Regular budget updates – particularly high level variances
 - AMS progress – the state will send in a team from DSAC/DESE to assess why the students are not performing. They will facilitate training for the teachers.
 - School building project – as this ramps up, it will take more time from other things.
 - Update from leadership team about how we are doing with SPED, ELA, Budget, etc.
 - Curriculum metrics
 - Mobility (our churn rate is 7%)
 - More focused goal-based strategies
 - Enrollment

3. Strategic Plan Next Steps

- Is our mission statement backed up by the vision statement? Are they both still valid?
- The mission and vision need a baseline criteria to measure progress toward our objectives.
- What are our goals? How do we measure success? The community will look to us for the information, not DESE.
- Agenda items should come back to the mission and vision.

- Current mission statement is too long and unachievable. It should be short and to the point, clearly stating what the committee will do. The community should be invested in this as well.

4. AES Building Project

- This school belongs to the community– the School Committee needs to ensure that they consider the community feedback but also recognize that we have the responsibility to vote on the location based on the information we have and what is the best option for the students.
- Post-forum, the survey is scheduled to go live on October 18th through October 24th.
- The project needs to be socialized as much as possible.
- The project cost of ~\$60M – should a question be included in the survey about this? Share cost data about schools built in other communities for reference.
- Request for DiNisco to be present at next School Committee meeting to answer questions about the proposed locations.
- School Committee will hold a special meeting for the vote.

5. Subcommittee Meeting Times and Locations

- Subcommittee meetings previously met directly before School Committee meetings.
- It was suggested that all of the subcommittees may not need to meet monthly.
- Finance would meet monthly with the other subcommittees meeting quarterly.

6. Spotlight Presentations

- These were usually done at the beginning of School Committee meeting
- Promote good things happening in the schools, educate the community on things going on, highlight successes.
- Perhaps bring them back in a different and more prescribed format – interspersing co-curricular activities with academic spotlights.
- Do we know how many people watched? We need to find out how many hits there were to help determine the value of bringing back the presentations.

- ❖ Discussion was held about the budget and what factors into budget changes. School choice has a huge effect on the budget and we need to keep our eyes on the enrollment numbers. Our Choice In numbers are increasing and Choice Out is decreasing but we need to identify the students that decide to Choice Out, meet with them, ask why they made that decision and what would have been needed for them to stay in Amesbury. Choice Out students are at a variety of levels. Slide of funding going toward SPED - some lines are very clear, some lines are less clear; (i.e. effort from general ed teacher to inclusion kids, part of her salary should be allocated to SPED spending). We have limited classes for kids who excel but are mandated to have classes for SPED kids. The cost is affected by the number of instructional aides in a classroom at any time and the number of referrals (drives number of IEPs). The referrals numbers are decreasing as interventions becoming more effective. More work with tier 1 and 2 to keep them from getting referred-earlier interventions.
- ❖ Discussion was held about the current focus on Special Education and how that affects Tier 1 and 2 students. We need to define what excellence looks like for our schools and how to include supporting all student needs. Amesbury is known for having a great SPED program but could strengthen tier 1 and tier 2 support. A part of this support is vertical

alignment of curriculum. To support this across the district, we need to prioritize the areas that are really important to us. We need math and ELA leads at the elementary level, team leaders at the middle school level and department heads at the high school level.

Adjournment - Motion by Mr. Hoyt, second by Mr. Chamberlain to adjourn the School Committee Retreat at 8:05 PM. Vote: Yes; Unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Gretchen Marinopoulos".

Gretchen Marinopoulos