

**AMESBURY SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES  
AMESBURY HIGH SCHOOL  
March 6, 2017**

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Present at 7:00 p.m. were Mayor Gray, Chair; Deb LaValley, Peter Hoyt, Rob Chamberlain, Gretchen Marinopoulos, Nick Wheeler, Amy Sherwood, Patrick McCue, SAC Representative and Dr. Gary Reese, Superintendent of Schools.

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Gray called the regular meeting to order at 7:01 PM and Amy Sherwood led the committee in the Pledge of Allegiance and read the Mission Statement.

***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.***

**II. COMMENTS BY VISITORS and DELEGATIONS**

- Michael, President of Little League, approached the podium. He spoke about seeking permission to upgrade the score board at the Cashman School. He presented the committee with the information of where they would like the electronic score board placed. Installation would require trench digging for wires and two holes. Little League will insure all permits and building codes be followed. Construction would be beginning the end of this month with completion by opening day, April 22<sup>nd</sup>.  
Ms. LaValley stated that there is a process to send all requests to building and grounds sub-committee, Joan Liporto and maintenance supervisor, Norm.  
Ms. LaValley stated that a meeting will be set up for next week to review all information with the proper personnel and vote on at next meeting, March 20<sup>th</sup>.

**III. PRESENTATIONS AND ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS**

**A. Report of the Superintendent**

a. **Strategic Plan** – Dr. Reese gave the committee a brief overview of the draft plan. He stated that the Leadership Team has reviewed the plan considering the recommendations from the public, school committee and school staff. He is hoping that the committee will then review the draft and at the next meeting vote on it. He went over the plan highlighting the following:

- Entry process – identifying 3 core strategies aligning with the state.
  - Meet the needs of the learner
  - Promote continuous development of high quality staff
  - Develop, strengthen and promote collaboration, communication and problem solving (most changes in this area)

Mr. Chamberlain asked for the best method to get feedback to Dr. Reese. Dr. Reese stated that phone calls, meetings, emails, whatever works for the members and is most helpful.

**b. Superintendent's Proposed Budget** – Dr. Reese acknowledged the work of the Leadership Team, school staff and office administration feeling the continuation of moving forward. Dr. Reese reviewed the following:

- Assumptions – fixed increases (salaries, out-of-district placements, transportation, health insurance, retirement contributions); one retirement; budget looks different than last year (line items); Circuit Breaker 70% reimbursement rate; supply and expense accounts updated.
- Circuit Breaker calculation examples – explained and reviewed how it works (only a portion reimbursable)
- Level funding vs. level services – explanation
- Initial budget calculation – level services – 1.3 million
- Refinement to budget calculations – level services - \$800,000
- Level Services – maintaining current programming; student outcomes; potential risks/implications (AMS autism program, SPED programming, increased student attrition)
- Recommendation – AMS autism program; out-of-district coordinator; AHS department heads; AIHS SPED staffing adjustment
- Total budget with additions - \$920,000 from FY17 to FY18 (3.10% increase)
- Proposed budget breakdown
- Capital/one time expenditure requests - \$478,000 (SPED tuition; chrome books; hot water heater; security cameras; athletics; roof repairs) proposed to the mayor
- Anticipated entitlement grants – revenue projected (6 grants)
- Revolving funds – circuit breaker; school choice; South Hampton tuition; athletics; preschool; transportation; facility use
- Current fees for services – So. Hampton tuition; Athletics; Preschool; transportation
- Recommended fee review – South Hampton Tuition; preschool tuition; transportation (reduced lunch); facility use
- Overall budgetary requests from city – proposed budget \$30,469,474 (\$919,667 increase); capital/one time expenditure request (\$478,000)

- ❖ Mr. Hoyt commented on the best proposed budget that he can remember. He acknowledged Dr. Reese, Ms. Liporto and Leadership Team's hard work on this budget. Pointing out that next year's budget preparation will be a lot easier with all of this work completed. Good news budget. Thank you.
- ❖ Mr. Chamberlain asked about the roof repairs, should that be bonded or is it even worth it also questioning reimbursement through the MSBA? Dr. Reese referred to the Mayor about the bonding. Regarding the MSBA, he stated that Ms. Liporto is looking into that. Mrs. Sherwood stated that Newburyport has just received reimbursement from the MSBA for their roofs. She also asked if that cost is a patch-work for the roof or a full

replacement? Dr. Reese stated that it is a combination of both. Mayor Gray added that with that low of cost, it is not worth bonding. Mr. Chamberlain asked about the autism program, what the grant time for that, or do we have money. Dr. Reese spoke about the professional development needed to make sure staff will have the training. Mr. Chamberlain also asked about revolving accounts, have you updated this year. Dr. Reese said they are in the budget for FY17 year end, moving forward.

- ❖ Mrs. Sherwood asked how far the technology budget gets the schools and does it get students ready for state testing FY19. Dr. Reese stated that it gets us ready for this year's testing and potentially next year, but need additional request for the following year especially at the elementary level. Mrs. Sherwood asked Dr. Reese about previous years asking for text book, furniture and other areas. Is this still needed? Dr. Reese stated that with the revision of curriculum, text book, which have a line item, we will be taking a closer look at that. She went on to ask for a roll-up of revenue (total revenue picture and trends around that). Hard to vote on if revenue projections are not sustainable. Mrs. Marinopoulos also spoke about revenues, if only a one time payment, what position will we be in the following years. Dr. Reese stated that he feels a lot more comfortable looking ahead to next year, because we are better identified expenses. This budget will allow us to have an accurate picture, moving forward.
- ❖ Mrs. Marinopoulos asked Mary Houde what she was able to do with the request for \$30,000 for the SPED reading program. Ms. Houde stated that she is hoping to use the program improvement grant to align some improvement on that and work with the collaborative.
- ❖ Ms. LaValley asked about the insurance reduction, bill goes to city hall, asking if there is a process to insure that non-employees are off the bill? Dr. Reese stated that they are now receiving those bills and are able to review them on a regular basis. She also asked for the actual insurance increase. Dr. Reese stated that the increase is lower (5.1%) than anticipated.
- ❖ Mrs. Marinopoulos asked the service cost centers, to state what they would like to see in the budget that is not there now? Dr. Charette stated adding full day kindergarten, helping children with social and emotional needs; Mr. Helliesen stated that providing opportunities for kids and meeting needs of all children, continue to move forward as a district. Mr. Curry stated that making sure that we have the right personnel and right programs to meet the needs of the children. Still a lot of work to go, but we are on the right path. Mrs. McAndrews stated that it is meeting the needs of all students.
- ❖ Mrs. Sherwood echoed what Mr. Hoyt had said. Watching this process for many years, you have all done tremendous work. Supportive of the investments that we have put forth, really did hear those needs from the department heads. She asked about a few other areas – do you have the staff you need at the senior level; investments in early childhood education urging the committee to put that forth in the future. Dr. Reese stated that regarding central office staffing; areas to look at moving forward is Human Resources Management and Facility Management. In terms of Early Childhood Education, he believes that they do need to be increased. They looked to increase that this year but it is an increase of \$75,000, did not feel comfortable adding that this year. Maybe next year with the transportation contract up and cutting the 1:30 bus run.
- ❖ Mr. Wheeler spoke about the insurance cost. He will put his questions in an email.
- ❖ Mayor Gary thanked them for their hard work. Glad to see that the work was done together moving forward. Basically, a zero-based budget.

- **Graduation Rates** – DESE recently released a report about the growth in the state in graduation rates – In Amesbury over 5 years – 4-year graduation rate – 7.8% which is an increase from 2012. High needs percentage rate in five years – 18.9% increase – Reflecting the hard work in the district. All graduation rates were above state average.
- **Transgender rights** – legal report – concern – changes at the federal level, leaving it up to the states. We are meeting the state requirements.
- **Early college dual enrollments** – continue to support and providing this to our students
- **Leadership Team** – 2-day training – on “ALICE” – working with our local police to ensure that we are up to date
- **AIHS** – featured in the Boston Globe on Sunday – Real Estate section – regarding 7 school including Amesbury – Great press for AIHS – but they did miss things like social and emotional learning and the way that we are meeting the individual needs of students.
- **Upcoming Events** – tomorrow, Flatbread, AEFI fundraiser

Ms. LaValley spoke about the budget public meeting on Monday, March 13<sup>th</sup> – voting on the budget April 3<sup>rd</sup>. Discussion about having another meeting before April 3<sup>rd</sup> to discuss the proposed budget. March 20<sup>th</sup> before the regular School Committee meeting. Talk to Heather about times.

#### IV. COMMUNICATIONS

##### A. **SAC Report – Patrick McCue – filling in for Sydney**

- Last week had week of free activities after school – all were welcomed to come

##### B. **Other** - Mr. Hoyt spoke about Amesbury community being on the front page of the newspaper. Also spoke about the passing of Gladys Trunquist, 102 years old, a sixth grade Math teacher at Amesbury Junior High. She was one of the first inductees of AEFI Hall of Honor. Mr. Hoyt asked for a moment of silence in her honor. Ms. LaValley and Mr. Hoyt had Ms. Turnquist as their teacher in Middle School.

Mrs. Sherwood recognized Mr. Hoyt as being one of the recipients of this years’ AEFI Hall of Honor. Hall of Honor dinner will be April 28<sup>th</sup> at NECCO.

Ms. LaValley spoke about the girls basketball playing tomorrow night 7PM.

#### V. ITEMS FOR APPROVAL OR EARLY CONSIDERATION

##### A. **Approval of Minutes: 02/06/2017**

*Motion by Mr. Hoyt, seconded by Ms. LaValley to accept the minutes of the School Committee meeting dated February 6, 2017. Vote: Yes, unanimous.*

**B. Approval of Warrant: \$446,987.71 (2/16/17)**

*Motion by Ms. LaValley, seconded by Mr. Wheeler to accept the warrant dated February 16, 2017 in the amount of \$446,987.71. Vote: Yes, Unanimous.*

\$320,953.62 (3/2/17)

*Motion by Mr. Chamberlain, seconded by Mr. Hoyt to accept the warrant dated March 2, 2017 in the amount of \$320,953.62. Vote: Yes, Unanimous.*

**C. Whittier School Committee Representative Appointment**

Mayor Gray stated that there is one letter of reappointment from Charles LaBella.

*Motion by Mr. Hoyt, seconded by Mrs. Marinopoulos to accept the reappointment of Charles LaBella as the Whittier School Committee Representative. Vote: Yes, unanimous.*

**VI. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS****A. Subcommittee Reports****1. Finance/Budget Subcommittee**

Mr. Chamberlain stated he has no updates. He thanked Joan for all of her hard work

**2. Policy Subcommittee**

Mr. Hoyt stated they met last Thursday, March 2<sup>nd</sup> discussion:

- Policy GCAA – first reading at the March 20<sup>th</sup> meeting
- New policy developed by Joan Liporto – DN – first reading on the March 20<sup>th</sup>

**3. Personnel Subcommittee**

Mr. Wheeler stated they met on February 13<sup>th</sup> discussing:

- Department Heads and language
- Met today – scheduling at the high school

**4. Joint Education Subcommittee**

Ms. LaValley stated will be meeting March 22<sup>nd</sup> – the agenda will be dedicated toward the budget.

**VII. FUTURE MEETINGS AND AGENDA ITEMS****A. Budget Hearing – March 13, 2017****B. School Committee Meeting – March 20, 2017****C. Joint Education Committee – March 22, 2017****D. School Committee Meeting – April 3, 2017**

*Additions:*

*March 20<sup>th</sup> shift in committee assignments.*

*Vote on opening Choice.*

*Ms. LaValley asked about the building project and meetings. Mr. Hoyt asked about identifying the lay-out of the building project. Dr. Reese stated that it will be identified during the feasibility study with the architect and the designer.*

**VIII. Adjournment**

*Motion by Mr. Wheeler, seconded by Mrs. Marinopoulos to adjourn the meeting. Vote: Yes, Unanimous.*

Respectfully Submitted,

Gretchen Marinopoulos, Secretary

