

**AMESBURY SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES  
AMESBURY HIGH SCHOOL  
December 5, 2016**

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Present at 7:00 p.m. were Mayor Gray, Chair; Tom McGee, Peter Hoyt, Rob Chamberlain, Gretchen Marinopoulos, Nick Wheeler, Sydney Knowlton, SAC Representative and Dr. Gary Reese, Superintendent of Schools.

Deb LaValley arriving at 7:06.

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Gray called the regular meeting to order at 7:02 PM and Gretchen Marinopoulos 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**

None

**III. PRESENTATIONS AND ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS**

**A. Report of the Superintendent**

Dr. Reese spoke about the following:

- Substitute training was held last week, reviewing bullying, student safety among other topics. 75 substitutes were in attendance. The session was videotaped so that new recruits will be able to watch it. Thank you to Carol Bartlett for all of her work.
- Attended the Essex County Superintendents meeting with district attorney- Helped with concerns of student needs, ways to support the new regulations on marijuana in the school setting and sexting.
- Santa parade was last Saturday. Represented in the parade was School Committee members and AEFI members.
- Mayor Gray joined Dr. Reese at a MSBA meeting in Boston today on enrollment data on the building project, reviewing birth prediction (2030). Next steps to have enrollment certificate – will need to decide grade levels by the next two weeks, needs to be completed by January. Options that are being considered are: K-4; K-5; K-2 & 3-5 (Pre-k is not part of the configuration). Need to put all options out now, if not presented at this time, cannot be considered in the feasibility study. Mrs. Marinopoulos asked if Pre-K is not a part of the configuration, will APS still offer PreK (yes)

- Received a letter from Whittier Vocational School that Mr. LaBella's term will be expiring at the end of March. This position is appointed by the School Committee.
- House Bill 2319 – the hiring, promotion of none teacher personnel shifting to Civil Service. The Bill is on the Governor's desk to sign. Superintendents concerned on this possible shift. Mr. Hoyt, Mrs. Marinopoulos and Mr. Chamberlain echoed Dr. Reese's concern on this Bill, urged public to reach out to governor's office and local representatives.
- Strategic Plan session December 7<sup>th</sup> in library
- Budgeting session will be Thursday, December 8<sup>th</sup>

**B. Presentation by the Director of Student Services – Mary Houde**

Ms. Houde spoke about the following:

- Transportation evaluation – not sure when final report will be done - due January 11<sup>th</sup>
- Out of District Placement – 42 students in out of district (17 private, 3 residential, 20 public, 2 other towns); 7 of those students are over the age of 18. Ms. Houde went over the specific disabilities.
- Extended School year – Summer months, usually parents do not know till May or June if their child will be in the program – already starting the process so that parents and staff will know sooner.
- SEPAC – met November 1<sup>st</sup>, fantastic new group of parents, going well, next meeting January 18<sup>th</sup>
- Coordinated Program review – self assessment – attended a workshop – window opens in January with a due day of the first week in May.

**IV. COMMUNICATIONS**

**A. SAC Report – Sydney Knowlton**

Sydney stated that they have picked their goals and will be presenting them at the December 19<sup>th</sup> School Committee meeting.

**B. Recap of MASS/MASC Conference – Ms. LaValley and Dr. Reese**

Ms. LaValley spoke about the following regarding the conference:

- Will send out Power Point presentation to all members
- Spoke about transgender – sitting with parents and students to have a discussion. Need to make sure APS buildings are a comfortable place for these students/staff.
- Social Emotional - anxiety
- Curriculum – mid year cycle of goals

Dr. Reese added:

- Focus on Social, Emotional Learning in all associations
- Redoing our curriculum with SEL
- Boston Children's Hospital challenges

**C. Other**

None

## V. ITEMS FOR APPROVAL OR EARLY CONSIDERATION

- A. **AHS Overnight Trip Approval – Music in the Parks Music Festival (AHS Band and Chorus)**  
Cancelled

B. **Approval of Minutes:**

- a. **Executive Session: 11/21/16**

*Motion by Ms. LaValley, seconded by Mr. McGee to accept the minutes of the Executive session dated November 21, 2016. Vote: 5 Yes, 2 abstained (Mrs. Marinopoulos and Mr. Wheeler).*

- b. **Regular Meeting: 11/21/16**

*Motion by Mr. Hoyt, seconded by Mr. Chamberlain to accept the minutes of the Regular School Committee meeting dated November 21, 2016. Vote: 5 Yes, 2 abstained (Mrs. Marinopoulos and Mr. Wheeler).*

C. **Review of School Committee Goals – Public Relations Goal #2**

Ms. LaValley read Public Relations Goal #2. Discussion:

- Mr. Chamberlain has collected full time student enrollment numbers from 2015 (actual enrollment versus potential) gap – need to look at common issues, cost/loss of revenue, net decisions. Need to look at numbers to plan budget.
- Mrs. Marinopoulos was concern with the low response of the exit surveys. How can we reach out and be more effective? Look into best method to get more community members involved.

D. **High School Identifier/Symbol Recommendation**

Dr. Reese stated that in early fall they established a policy on colors and mascot because of concerns of community members. Dr. Reese then reached out to Ms. McAndrews to establish a committee which would include, students, staff, alumni and community members. They met 4 times over the course of three months. They looked into the history of the “Indian” term for Amesbury, how has other districts gone through the process for their mascot, culture of this area for native American. They looked at ways to get feedback from the community; took polls, monkey survey, emails (5000 responses) 80% were for keeping the mascot. Committee has made a final recommendation to keep the mascot as “Indian” and added to look into ways to promote education and cultural ways to incorporate into the curriculum. Based on the work that this committee has done and the research, Dr. Reese stated that he is also supportive of keeping the mascot as Amesbury Indians, adding the educational piece as well.

*Motion by Ms. LaValley, seconded by Mr. Hoyt to accept the final recommendation of the committee to maintain the mascot as Amesbury Indians. Discussion: Mr. Hoyt stated that he was proud of Amesbury for the process of this committee and is grateful to Dr. Reese (leadership) and Ms. McAndrews (heading the committee) for proceeding with this study. Mr. McGee stated that he will be in the minority. He is disappointed in the work that was done, feeling that taking surveys is not the scientific way of doing this. Disappointed in the question of are we keeping it or getting rid of it – there were no in between on their research. Personally, he does not feel that using an ethnic identifier as a mascot is appropriate. He concluded with appreciating all the work that was done on this issue. Ms. LaValley stated that as an alumni, a person that was born and raised in this community,*

*a Mohawk and Abenaki – As a child growing up, you didn't share your heritage, but things have changed now. Always believed Amesbury has respected the heritage and history of Indians and Carriage Town. She fully supports the committee's recommendation of keeping the mascot. Mr. Chamberlain asked if the "straw was pulled before it began", he asked if anyone had changed vote after the process was done.*

*Sharon McAfee, committee member, stated they did take a poll and added that she was close to changing her mind. She went on to say that it was a good process and that the community is not ready for a change at this time. She stated that they were in hopes of suppling a video showing the pro and cons attached to the survey monkey, but was unable to produce it.*

*Ms. LaValley asked if the video could be completed and sharing on Facebook for all to see.*

*Mrs. Marinopoulos stated that this has been a hot topic. She does echo Mr. McGee statement of the credibility of the data. She went on to say she loves this community, chose this community and this community does not like change. She concluded with stating that we need to keep on revisiting this issue.*

*Mayor Gray stated that this was a wonderful process. It shows that our community can do things with dignity and respect. Results were not close and majority rules. Symbol of honor and respect, happy with the process and someday may come up again.*

*Mr. Hoyt stated that he is proud of the community being responsive and respectful. He thanked Bryer Sousa and is proud of him for stepping up and bringing this issue to their attention.*

***Vote: 5 Yes and 2 opposed (Mr. McGee and Mr. Chamberlain).***

**E. Policy – First Reading:**

**a. JFAB – Non-Resident Students**

Mr. Hoyt read Policy JFAB – Non-Resident Students. Mr. Hoyt thanked Ms. Liporto for her input in this policy.

**VI. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS**

**A. Subcommittee Reports**

**1. Finance/Budget Subcommittee**

Mr. Chamberlain stated no report at this time.

**2. Policy Subcommittee**

Mr. Hoyt stated no updates, will be meeting Dec. 12<sup>th</sup> at 5:30.

**3. Personnel Subcommittee**

Mr. McGee stated they met this evening and reviewed the following:

- Elements and Indicators – received feedback from most members – Mrs. Marinopoulos and Mr. McGee went over all of them and came up with six indicators (Diverse Learners' Needs; Alignment Review; Student Safety, Health Social and Emotional Needs; Two-Way Communication; Commitment of High Standards; Consensus Building). Mr. McGee stated if the committee would like others to please contact him.
- Went over staffing report and openings – only 2 retiring this year.
- Continue with job description
- Reviewed Assistant Principal job description (added under Assistant Principal Athletic – evaluate coaches). Mr. McGee asked the committee if they would like to vote on these job descriptions tonight or review and vote next meeting. The committee opted to review and vote next week.

**4. Joint Education Subcommittee**

Ms. LaValley stated they met on the 30<sup>th</sup> and Joan Liporto was in attendance. Ms. Liporto reviewed what she has been working on, committee impressed with her work in such a short time. They spoke about the School Building project. Next meeting will be March 22<sup>nd</sup>.

**VII. FUTURE MEETINGS AND AGENDA ITEMS**

- A. Budget Visioning Session (12/8) – 7:00 PM AHS Library**
- B. South Hampton Visit (12/19)**
- C. Meeting with SAC (12/19)**
- D. Principal's/Superintendent Award (12/19)**
- E. Athletics Fall Season Recap (12/19)**
- F. Presentation by AHS Principal – Ms. McAndrews (12/19) – Mrs. LaValley asked if Dr. Reese had an idea of what Ms. McAndrews presentation would be about. No he did not.**

Ms. LaValley stated that it would have been nice to have a representative from the Mascot Committee attend this meeting. Mr. Hoyt stated that Ms. McAndrews had a prior commitment with the incoming 8<sup>th</sup> grade meeting this evening here at the high school.

**VIII. Adjournment**

***Motion by Mr. Hoyt, seconded by Mr. Wheeler to adjourn the meeting at 8:02 PM. Vote: Yes, Unanimous.***

Respectfully Submitted,



Tom McGee, Secretary