

**AMESBURY SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES  
AMESBURY HIGH SCHOOL  
September 19, 2016**

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Present at 7:00 p.m. were Deb LaValley, Acting Chair; Tom McGee, Peter Hoyt, Rob Chamberlain, Gretchen Marinopoulos, Nicholas Wheeler and Dr. Gary Reese, Superintendent of Schools.

Absent were: Mayor Gray and Sydney Knowlton, SAC Representative.

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Ms. LaValley called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM and Ms. LaValley 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, DELGATIONS**

- Ozzie Morrill and Cassandra Gove addressed the committee promoting the Fireball Run which will be in Amesbury on October 1<sup>st</sup>. They will be addressing all schools, individually, to incorporate this exciting event into the curriculum. The run will begin in western New York and end in downtown Amesbury. The students will be able to follow the run through maps, clues and communicating with individual teams. Students will be able to get involved with the parade, earning community service by helping the day of the event. The parade will begin at 4:00 at All Saints Church and end on Water Street. There will be something going on all day, for everyone to participate in. This event is phenomenal day in Amesbury and it is put together to advocate for missing children.
- Mr. & Mrs. Schultz spoke to the committee regarding overnight field trips, emphasizing on the 8<sup>th</sup> grade Disney trip. They have attended this field trip 3 times and their children and themselves have had positive experiences. They stressed that children learned; friendship, social growth, was very educational, positive experience for students as well as adults. They recommend continuing with this trip, positive experience all around.
- Mrs. Ellen Cronin stated she is representing a large group that is not enthusiastic about the Disney trip. Key points that Mrs. Cronin touched on:
  - Cost – ¼ AMS students are on free/reduced lunches – look at the social economics of this town
  - Lack of educational value – out of 5 days only 2 are educational
  - Eligibility of attending the trip – academics should play a role in the decision
  - No alternative, if they don't go – no day trip scheduled, nothing to do
  - Funding for the trip – Where does financial assistance come from
  - Does PAG contribute
  - Need full disclosure of where funds are coming from

- Can this trip be justified
- A lot of unanswered questions

### **III. PRESENTATIONS AND REPORTS BY THE SUPERINTENDENT AND STAFF**

#### **A. SAC Report – Sydney Knowlton – absent**

#### **B. Report of the Superintendent –**

Dr. Reese spoke about the following:

- Strategic Plan Update – Draft now being reviewed by the administrative team.
- State Testing – Next generation – Had a webinar today with principals regarding paper base testing. Spring of 2017 expectations all students in grades 4 & 8 will take the computer-based testing. Grades 3, 5, 6, and 7 districts may elect to have students take either the computer-based or paper based test for ELS and Math.
- MSBA – second milestone for deliverables to MSBA – Identifying roles, Nick Wheeler, representing School Committee; Joe McMilleon representing City Council. Roles will be delivered by October 1<sup>st</sup>. Next deliverable is the educational profile and school facilities maintenance summary.
- Overnight Field Trip Survey – concerns with parents on the Camp Bournedale trip (5<sup>th</sup> graders) and the Disney trip (8<sup>th</sup> graders). Sent out survey – results are in: - 459 responded
  - Disney - 52% continue trip; 44% different location ;12% day trip; 3% no trip.
  - Camp Bournedale – 90% continue trip; 8% day trip; 2% no trip
  - Disney – Financial Hardship – 40% would not ask for help; 60% would ask for help
  - Camp Bournedale – 25% would not ask for help; 75% would ask for help

Mr. Chamberlain asked the time frame on reviewing the Strategic Plan; regarding state testing computer base; and regarding scoring on testing some students are better with paper and pencils – Dr. Reese stated that the Strategic Plan should be ready by next meeting. Regarding testing, looking at the funding for the computer base testing. Once district decides on computer or paper pencil, no exceptions only for students on IEP's.

Mrs. Marinopoulos regarding state testing stated that hands are tied, will benefit skills of students. She asked about the survey, how that was done. Dr. Reese stated that it was a Connect-Ed and social media and was very pleased with the responses.

Mr. Wheeler asked about the remaining positions to be filled in the MSBA and if there is anything else that needs to be done before October 1<sup>st</sup>. He asked for a list of participants. Dr. Reese stated that the rest of positions are filled, some with Mayor Gray and himself in multiple positions There is nothing else to do, no vote needs to be takes. Will get a list out.

Mr. Hoyt thanked Dr. Reese for his efforts in the survey and all of his time spent on that.

Mr. Chamberlain asked on how the responses are on the exit surveys. Dr. Reese responded by saying this is an open survey and will be reviewing the surveys at the administrative level.

### C. Report of the Director of Finance and Operations

Joan Liporto stated that with only 11 days into her job, she does not have a formal report for the committee. She did give a brief report to the Finance Subcommittee prior to this meeting. She will have a formal report on the second meeting of October.

Mr. Chamberlain stated that Ms. Liporto was being modest. The report that was given to the subcommittee was detailed and he is impressed with it.

### D. Presentation by Mr. Michael Curry, AMS Principal

Mr. Curry presented the committee with a Power Point presentation of the 8<sup>th</sup> grade Disney trip. He touched on:

- History of trip - prior to 9/11 went to DC, then Six Flags, then in 2002 started going to Disney
- Cost – In 2002 \$650 per student; now \$900 per student, a \$18.00 increase per year.
- Statement of understanding – parents and students sign this – look at conduct, grades, attendance and effort.
- Booking of trip – done by teachers (teachers’ pay their own way) – airline tickets are the most costly
- Funding – fundraising program – extra money goes to general fund if needed, others have donated money – have not turned away any child from going on trip if funding is the issue
- What adults attend – 2 RN Nurses; Administrator (Mr. Curry); 6-7 teachers; Ratio is 2-3 students per one adult (45 adults); security guard at the hotel from 11PM to 5AM
- Youth Education Services – offered 16 courses, AMS have participated in 7 of these courses. 3 to 3.5 hours per course; courses are taught by teachers. (Exploring Careers in the Marine Science; Properties of Motion Program
- Educational values – Ambassadors of Amesbury; learning by doing and seeing; conversing with peers; life time experience for students

Questions/comments from the committee:

- Mr. Hoyt thanked Mr. Curry in his presentation and noted that each time he learns something new. Received a letter from a chaperone stated her positive experience of chaperone this trip.
- Mr. Chamberlain spoke about the need for students to earn going on this trip. He stated that his boys were threatened that if they don’t do this, they will not go on the trip. Mr. Curry asked about that concern for specifics and wished Mr. Chamberlain had brought it to his attention at that time.
- Mrs. Marinopoulos stated that this trip is a safe trip, that Mr. Curry’s Intangibles were spot on. She went on to say that all of these experiences can take place anywhere else. There are only 3-3.5 hours academically per day. Local district attend other places and get more academics.
- Ms. LaValley thanked Mr. Curry for his presentation and asked if the 6-7 teachers that attend are from the same or different grade level and

what the need is for substitutes. She went on to ask if teachers are responsible for groups and if the groups have phones with them. Mr. Curry stated that the teachers do have groups and phones (not students). The only ones without a group are Mr. Costello and himself. Ms. LaValley also asked if Mr. Curry felt that Disney was scaling back on instructional value. Mr. Curry stated that programs might be different and replaced with other programs, but the instructional value was still the same. Ms. LaValley asked about the eligibility guidelines and where to find them. Mr. Curry stated they are posted on the website.

- Mr. McGee thanked Mr. Curry and asked what kids do that are left behind. Mr. Curry stated that in the past they have tried to do different activities but the attendance was low, parents just keep their kids home.
- Mr. Hoyt asked if it is safe to assume that other alternatives would be considered, Mr. Curry stated yes.

#### IV. COMMUNICATIONS

##### A. **Other**

Mr. Wheeler stated that the PTO Ice Cream Social will be held this Friday, September 23 at the Cashman School from 6-8. Jessica Ducrow is coordinating this event.

Ms. LaValley stated that AEFI will be held November 7<sup>th</sup> this year.

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

##### A. **Field Trips (IJOA)– Second Reading**

Mr. Hoyt thanked Mr. Wheeler, Mr. McGee and Mrs. Marinopoulos for their help in redoing this policy. Mr. Hoyt stated that this policy does not reflect one trip.

Mr. McGee stated that given the emails he has received, he would like to clarify that this is not a vote on the Disney Trip, this is a vote on the policy of field trips.

*Motion by Mr. Hoyt, seconded by Ms. Marinopoulos to accept policy (IJOA) Field Trips, as a second reading. Discussion: Ms. LaValley stated clarification of the new wording, social media site. Asked if we should state the need to review annually. Mrs. Marinopoulos stated that field trips that occur annually should be reviewed. Mr. Wheeler stated that it does stated that 30 days prior to a field trip, School Committee would be notified. Vote: Yes, Unanimous.*

##### B. **Meeting Minutes – September 6, 2016**

*Motion by Mr. Chamberlain, seconded by Mr. McGee to accept the minutes dated September 6, 2016. Discussion: Amendments –Mr. Wheeler stated that we discussed visiting Whittier Vo Tech. Ms. LaValley amended that the Resolution be added with the meeting minutes. Vote: Yes, Unanimous.*

##### C. **Warrant - \$294,446.53 (9/15/16)**

*Motion by Mr. Wheeler seconded by Mr. Hoyt to accept the Warrant dated September 15, 2016 in the amount of \$294,446.53. Vote: Yes, Unanimous.*

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

Mr. Chamberlains stated met prior to this meeting with Joan Liporto –

- MASBO report – addressed specific items
- Special Education meeting with Mary Houde regarding out of district placements
- Warranty of in district special education vans
- Proposals on the hot water tanks at the high school
- Tennis court repairs
- Bring back School Dude
- Best practice – ¼ financial reports

**2. Policy Subcommittee**

Mr. Hoyt stated next meeting will be Monday September 26<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 – To be discussed school mascot and student activity accounts

**3. Personnel Subcommittee**

Mr. McGee stated they will be meeting prior to next School Committee meeting.

**4. Joint Education Subcommittee**

Ms. LaValley stated will be meeting November 15<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 – agenda TBD

**VII. FUTURE MEETINGS AND AGENDA ITEMS****A. Superintendent's Goals (10/3)****B. MCAS Results Presentation (TBD)****C. Visit with State Senator and Representative (TBD)****D. South Hampton Visit (TBD)****E. MASC/MASS Joint Conference (next meeting)**

- a. Appointment of delegate from the Amesbury Public Schools
- b. Discussion of Resolutions

Additions:

- Whittier Tech visit
- Review of Goals

Mrs. Marinopoulos commended the 8<sup>th</sup> grade students on the “Statement of Interest” regarding the Disney trip.

**VIII. PRESS CONFERENCE**

None

**IX. Executive Session: *Pursuant to MGL c 30A, S21 (a) (2) To conduct strategy sessions in preparations for negotiations with nonunion personnel or to conduct collective bargaining sessions or contract negotiations with nonunion personnel. AFT Teachers, Paraprofessionals, MPFT.***

None

**X. Adjournment**

***Motion by Mr. McGee, seconded by Mr. Hoyt to adjourn the meeting at 8:47 PM.***

***Vote: Yes, Unanimous.***

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tom McGee', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Tom McGee, Secretary