

**AMESBURY SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES  
AMESBURY HIGH SCHOOL  
July 27, 2015**

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Present at 6:00 p.m. were Mayor Gray, Chair; Debra LaValley, Bonnie Schultz, Tom McGee, Peter Hoyt, Christian Scorzoni and Rob Chamberlain

Mayor Gray called the meeting to order at 7:14 and Rob Chamberlain led the Committee in the Pledge of Allegiance and read the Mission Statement aloud.

**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

Mayor Gray introduced the newest member of the School Committee, Rob Chamberlain and welcomed him.

**III. ITEMS FOR APPROVAL OR EARLY CONSIDERATION:**

**1. Status of Current Superintendent's Transition**

*Motion by Mr. Hoyt, seconded by Ms. LaValley to take line item III. 1. (Status of Current Superintendent Transition) out of order and add to the end of the agenda. Vote: Yes, unanimous.*

**2. Interview Interim Superintendent Candidates**

The forum:

Mike Gilbert, MASC, will introduce all the candidates and their Titles at the beginning of each of their interviews.

Mayor Gray will then welcome them and (for the external candidates only) have each committee member introduce themselves. He will state, to each candidate, the format which consists of three parts lasting 45 minutes: (opening statement, questions by each committee member and ending with questions for the committee/closing statements).

First Candidate – Lyn Griffin-Jacques – Director of Teaching & Learning, Amesbury.

Second Candidate – Dr. Gary Reese – Assistant Superintendent, Woburn

Third Candidate – Roy Hamond – Amesbury High School Principal

Fourth Candidate – Dr. Harry Fensom Jr. – Former Superintendent

After opening statements, all four candidates, were asked the same questions during their individual interviews. A copy of the questions that were asked are attached.

### **3. Selection of Interim Superintendent**

At the conclusion of all interviews the School Committee discussed their options. Mayor Gray suggested that the Committee reconvene on Thursday or Monday to make their decision. After much discussion, the Committee felt that they were ready to move forward and make a decision.

***Motion by Mr. McGee, seconded by Mr. Hoyt to suspend the rules and continue with the meeting past 9:00pm. Vote: Unanimous, Yes.***

Mayor Gray explained that there are two ways to proceed – 1. Ballot method; or 2. Motion method. Once the method is established, the Committee can proceed for the discussion and will need 4 votes to recommend a candidate. After a brief discussion:

***Motion by Mr. Chamberlain, seconded by Ms. LaValley to proceed using the ballot method. Vote: Unanimous, Yes.***

Each School Committee member had a turn to give their opinion of each candidate one at a time beginning with the first candidate, Lyn Griffin. Once the discussion was completed, Mayor Gray did a Roll Call of who each Member chose as their top pick.

Before the Roll Call began, Mike Gilbert announced that Dr. Reese was a finalist at another district.

Mayor Gray proceeded with the Roll Call:

- Ms. LaValley – Dr. Reese
- Mrs. Schultz – Mr. Hamond
- Mr. McGee – Mr. Hamond
- Mr. Hoyt – Mr. Hamond
- Mr. Scorzoni – Dr. Reese
- Mr. Chamberlain – Dr. Reese
- Mayor Gray – Dr. Reese

Tally: 4 = Dr. Reese; 3 = Mr. Hamond

Mr. Hoyt added that he also supports Dr. Reese. Mr. Scorzoni suggested that a vote be taken for the next candidate in case Dr. Reese does not accept the position.

***Motion by Mr. McGee, seconded by Mr. Hoyt to offer the position of Interim Superintendent to Dr. Gary Reese. Vote: Unanimous, Yes.***

***Motion by Mr. Hoyt, seconded by Mr. Scorzoni to offer the position of Interim Superintendent to Mr. Hamond in the event that Dr. Reese does not accept the offer. Vote: Unanimous, Yes.***

Mr. Scorzoni asked Mr. Gilbert if he would be touch with Dr. Reese and the other 3 candidates. Mr. Gilbert stated that he will call Dr. Reese to get in touch with Mayor Gray, and then will be touch with the remaining candidates.

**1. Status of Current Superintendent's Transition**

Mayor Gray stated that on July 20<sup>th</sup> he was informed that Dr. Robinson had told her staff that her last day in the district would be July 21, 2015 and that her employment status was on vacation without pay until someday that was unclear. Mayor Gray was reminding the committee that the Superintendent's contract runs until September 8<sup>th</sup> and that there is no such status as vacation without pay. The only way that Dr. Robinson could change her contract is with a public vote of the School Committee.

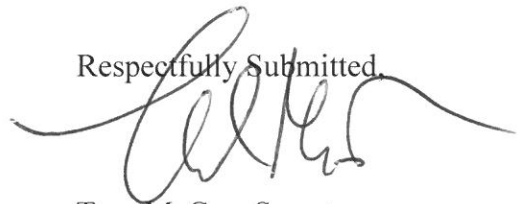
**IX.. EXECUTIVE SESSION** – Pursuant to M.G.L. c.30A, s. 21 (a) (2) To conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with nonunion personnel and to conduct contract negotiations with nonunion personnel being the Interim Superintendent of Schools

*Motion by Mayor Gray to go into Executive session. Roll Call was taken.*

*Vote: Yes, Unanimous.*

*Meeting adjourned at 10:17 into Executive Session.*

Respectfully Submitted,

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

Tom McGee, Secretary

## Questions for Interim Superintendent Candidates

Monday, July 27, 2015

### **Mayor Gray**

1. As interim Superintendent, you will be the face of our school district, community and outside world. With over 300 employees in our district, it is imperative that first and foremost we select an individual who has demonstrated successful leadership and management skills in a high visibility work environment. What management and leadership skills do you believe are required and please demonstrate why you think you have them.
2. What do you see as the top challenges Amesbury will face over the next year? Why do you think you are best equipped to handle them? i.e. annual budget challenges, upcoming collective bargaining agreement, Special Education costs, SOI for the elementary school.

### **Deb LaValley**

Please describe the way that you will communicate to the community, faculty and staff on the accomplishments and happenings of the Amesbury Public Schools?

### **Bonnie Schultz**

1. "What is your experience with strategic planning. How would you solicit input from students, teachers/staff and the community at large?"

### **Peter Hoyt**

1. Working with the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Educator Evaluator System, Amesbury's District Determined Measures will play an important role in the determination of Educators' Student Impact ratings, according to trends and patterns in student learning, growth, and achievement. As Amesbury's Interim Superintendent of Schools, how will you support students, staff and faculty, and building principals in this effort, ensuring that opportunities for authentic performance exhibitions are not lost?
2. As you reflect on your career working in the field of public education, what do you count as your greatest accomplishment and conversely, your greatest disappointment to date and why?

### **Christian Scorzoni**

1. **Roy Hammond:** From our preliminary conversation, I understand that you may be retiring from the district within the next year or so. Two questions, how would you intend to backfill for your role as you serve a new position for one year? And do you plan to retire at the end of this role?

2. **Lyn Griffin:** We've heard from the City Council that there needs to be a strong emphasis on classroom and building experience as well as a history of managing others. Can you speak to these two issues in particular? In addition, I would like to better understand how you envision backfilling your existing role. Is your intention to move back into that position or are you interested in serving as permanent as well?

**3. External Candidates (I would also ask this question to the internal candidates):**

I am sure that you both did your homework on our community before applying for the position. From my perspective, we've had a fairly tumultuous year as far as strained relationships between the previous Superintendent, the Mayor, the School Committee, as well as our City Council. From all accounts, morale seems to be at an all-time low within the school leadership. But despite this, we continue to see strong academic progress within the district.

My question is, given this backdrop, what specifically, would you do to help repair some of these relationships, improve communications, and help rally parents to move the district forward?

**Tom McGee**

1. Share with me your methodology for assessing the strengths and limitations of people for the purpose of matching the talent to the task. Tell me how you applied your methodology to a specific situation.
2. In spite of our best planning, unexpected events can throw our plans off track. Describe a time when you established priorities and target dates for yourself and others and also developed contingency plans for potential roadblocks or challenges. What potential roadblocks or challenges did you identify? What contingencies did you put in place? How did the plan ultimately play out?
3. Think of a time when you were part of a tense situation that needed to be diffused. What made it tense? What role did you play in diffusing it? What were the results?

**Rob Chamberlain**

1. What specifically would you hope to accomplish as an interim Superintendent. If you can reflect about a previous role, how did you assess whether you were successful in reaching your goals and can you explain how the goal was reached.