

**AMESBURY SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES  
AMESBURY HIGH SCHOOL  
September 21, 2015**

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Present at 7:00 p.m. were Mayor Gray; Chair, Debra LaValley, Tom McGee, Peter Hoyt, Rob Chamberlain, Katie Vesely, SAC Representative and Dr. Gary Reese, Interim Superintendent of Schools.

Absent was Bonnie Schultz. Mrs. Schultz arrived late.

Mayor Gray called the meeting to order at 7:00 and Deb LaValley 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**

Cindy Yetman, President AFT Amesbury, representing all unions of the Amesbury Public School. Mrs. Yetman first thanked the committee for the work done on the ratifications on the contracts.

In May of 2015, AFT Amesbury brought a resolution to AFT Massachusetts convention floor. She went on to speak regarding the PARCC state testing and how the Massachusetts Teachers Union opposes the implementation of PARCC testing. This resolution has spear-headed state wide conversation on this topic. Tim Angerhofer has crafted the language that was adopted by the convention floor.

Mr. Angerhofer stated that this is a public policy issue. Here is some information: public effort, data not known yet, website has no past exams, do not know if they aligned with the curriculum frameworks, will influence transcripts and what the district looks like and measured (across Massachusetts), will cost money, Mitchell Chester, head of DESE in MA, is the national chair of PARCC board. Already assessed by MCAS. Only, 7% of people want this exam.

Mr. Hoyt, proud of our local for taking a stance. Accustomed to taking the MCAS, a snapshot, would like to stick with the known. Thank you for being pro-active.

Ms. LaValley echoed Mr. Hoyt's comments. In November, will have a joint conference with superintendents. Would like you to share the conversation so that we can share with our colleagues.

Mr. Chamberlain stated that he has followed this issue closely. Do we know what other districts have done with their decision? *No*

Katie stated that from a student's perspective, should stay with MCAS testing. Very used to it, and scores are good. Computer based, where would we take it, not enough computers.

Mayor Gray thanked them for moving forward and is aligned with School Committee views.

### III. PRESENTATIONS:

#### A. Amesbury Innovation High School, Presentation by Eryn Maguire

Eryn McGuire, Principal, distributed a hand out on the Innovation Plan and also had a Power Point presentation. (Technical difficulty)

***Motion by Deb LaValley, seconded by Peter Hoyt to take Item # IV – Communication out of order. Vote: Yes, Unanimously.***

Katie Vesely, SAC Representative, was introduced and reported on the following:

- High school very busy – Sept.14 Fundraising lottery hosted by Ms. Leary – 48 fundraisers were picked for various clubs/committees.
- Last Friday, the 18<sup>th</sup> annual welcome back dance – over 200 students attended. Made over \$1000.00 which will be used for rallies, scholarship for MASC camp
- Freshman elections – September 24<sup>th</sup>.
- First rally supporting fall sports September 25<sup>th</sup>

Ms. LaValley stated that in the past had state representation from School Council, will there be someone representing this year? *Yes, Chris Cioffi.* Ms. LaValley also asked if there was a student discussion on PARCC testing? *Everyone is against it, why do something different when we do so well with MCAS and we are used to it. She will have a conversation with Chris about bringing the topic to the state.*

Eryn McGuire spoke regarding the following:

- Innovation Schools operated in-district and autonomous schools in six key areas; curriculum, staffing, budget, district policies, school calendar and professional development.
- Operate according to an Innovation Plan
- Strive to implement innovative strategies to strengthen student achievement
- School Committee votes to accept plan; superintendent responsible for yearly evaluation of the school; Advisory Board meet monthly for guidance; funds are managed by the district.
- Accountability and goals
- Begun looping classes; new math program; school wide reading program; MAP testing has begun; web based programs available on line; Work study program; Professional Development for the staff; partnership with Pettengill House
- Next year will begin taking out of district students for tuition – funds will be put into revolving account and used for additional programs for AIHS
- Innovation vs. Horace Mann: 5 comparison areas – in the hand-out.

Ms. LaValley asked about tuition for students as we grow. Do you see the School Committee making that vote, or does it just happen? *Not sure, believe it is a vote.*

Mr. Hoyt nice to see your students at the library today. Ms. LaValley suggested that this power point be put on the website so that the public could understand.

#### B. Report of the Assistant Superintendent

Deirdre Farrell spoke about the following:

- Following up regarding the tuition question for the Innovation School, have 3 revolving accounts now for tuition purposes (So. Hampton, School Choice, Circuit Breaker).

- Transportation/road way work - lots of roads under construction – working with Salter Transportation, police and DPW – moving some stops and working with those families. Looking at the paving projects coming up and will be notifying families.
- Facilities projects – summer project AMS and AHS – looks great and bright.
- Enrollments – October 1 report that generates most of the funding in MA – Enrollment down 67 students, 2265 current enrollment – Innovation School down 11 students; AES down 15; CES down 12; AMS down 25 and AHS down 4 students at this time.
- Professional Development Day – Secretary brought together –spoke about the following – No longer using School Dude, now will be using a web based program and it is free. Meeting again in October. Spoke about Aspen and Year end Rollover – New elements to track.  
Virtual Gateway – Tracking Free/Reduced lunches – also digital menus.  
Checked in on Softright – Very productive day with the secretaries.
- New website will be up on September 28<sup>th</sup>. Should be seamless at the school level.
- Technology – Chromebooks are in and working with the staff to use them
- Patrice Pierce has submitted her paperwork to retire February 1<sup>st</sup> – She has been with us for 20 years servicing the APS payroll coordinator. Has done an extraordinary job. We will post that position by the end of the week.

Ms. LaValley asked how much has been saved by not using School Dude? *Approximately \$8000.00.* Mr. Hoyt asked about the drop in enrollment – with a concerning 25 drop at the middle school – is there something we should do to better educate the public regarding the resources available at the middle school, now have foreign language and rebuilding the cuts that have happened. Mr. Chamberlain – what is the demographic change and the attrition change which will be helpful once the October report is done. Mr. Chamberlain commented on how Lois Berry is out there so early in the morning looking after the building and the pride he has for the middle school building.

Ms. LaValley asked about choice numbers and also getting the River Valley Charter School enrollments for Amesbury.

*Ms. Farrell stated that all numbers revolve around the October 1<sup>st</sup> date. She will get the Charter School enrollments.*

### **C. Report of the Superintendent**

Dr. Reese spoke about the following:

1. **CREST Capital Improvement Plan** – have developed a 10 year capital improvement plan – resulting in 1.3 million over the 10 year period. Divided into 3 sections; immediate needs (safety) (\$400,000.), next needs in 2-5 years, and final section in year 6-10. Need to get a Capital Reserve account and need members' vote to reserve it. Need 2/3 majority vote. Looking for the committee to weigh in on the vote and direction for our committee  
Mr. Hoyt stated that the request is reasonable. Mayor Gray asked what our contribution would be and what their revenue is? Dr. Reese stated that it comes from surplus funds, no cost for us and does not know their revenue. Dr. Reese reiterated that it would be the \$400,000 from the surplus fund from the previous year and then \$100,000 annually. Mr. Chamberlain asked when a vote was needed? Dr. Reese stated that it was out there at the end of the school year and a lot of school districts have already voted giving them the 2/3 vote

needed, but feels it is important for APS to vote. Mr. Scorzoni asked how are they generating a surplus and does it grow, would like more information? Dr. Reese stated that part is from the member districts and have always carried a surplus to pay out before the districts pay in. Dr. Reese will be looking at the funding stream and expenditures at the next meeting and discussing the rising costs of Special Education. Ms. LaValley concurred with Mr. Scorzoni about the surplus, and is questioning the \$100,000. annually. Would like to invite the Director of CREST to come to a meeting to explain and give more history of what is happening.

***Motion by Mr. Hoyt, to approve the establishment of the Capital Reserve fund not to exceed \$600,000 balance for the implementation of the Capital plan project at CREST Collaborative.***

***Motion by Ms. LaValley, seconded by Mr. McGee to table this motion until next meeting  
Vote: Yes, Unanimous.***

2. **New Superintendent Induction Program through MASS** – as a member of MASS, Dr. Reese has the opportunity to attend an Induction Program. Will be helpful to him but also to the district as we develop a strategic plan and setting a plan moving forward. Dr. Reese will be attending some Professional Development days and will be working with a coach from MASS. Dr. Tom Kingston, former superintendent, will be Dr. Reese's coach. Dr. Kingston introduced himself to the committee and spoke about the Superintendent Induction Program which adds resources to new superintendents as they move forward. This program helps to build a cohort to support one another as superintendents in the state. Dr. Reese will be speaking on his entry plan.

Mrs. Schultz asked how often does the program meet and how is this paid for? Dr. Kingston stated that he will be meeting with Dr. Reese, in Amesbury, for a minimum of 6 hours in a month; Dr. Reese will be participating in 8 Professional Development in Marlborough working with colleagues and coaches. Will be emailing on a regular basis and can phone at any time. It is paid for by several pots – but as a school committee – 1/3 of the cost is coming from the school committee.

### **3. Superintendent Entry Plan – Three phases**

- look, listen, and review (documents, data, audits)
- take data, compile into entry plan, presentation in January – start to make recommendations and identify patterns
- development of the strategic plan – long term goals for the district and the direction to move forward.

Mr. Hoyt thanked Dr. Reese for the work of the plan – Any surprises? *No surprises but consistencies of the strengths of the district and the needs across the board.* Mrs. Schultz asked about the first phase, community members, how would you organize that? *Looking at small group parent forum at the school, reach out to the group from the forum that was held this past spring.* Mr. Scorzoni asked about the January report versus the Strategic Plan – how will that look? Also as an Interim Superintendent, how do we maximize your work for this year, and coming up with a Strategic Plan at the end of your contract, can we expedite this sooner? *At the October meeting will present my goals, phase two short term, Strategic Plan, would be for the long term, multiple years.* Mr. Chamberlain, are there working models on Strategic Plan that we can look at and what are the terms of the

Plan 3/5 years?. Will be looking a different plans and working together with other districts. Typically it is a 3-5 year plan.

**Motion by Mr. Hoyt, seconded by Mr. McGee to accept Dr. Reese's' Entry Plan for the 2015-16 School Year. Vote: Yes, Unanimous.**

**4. Upcoming Events/Activities**

- 2 students honored in the National Honor Society Fall Induction last evening.
- October 27<sup>th</sup> MSBA will be coming out to learn more about the needs of the school, to get a sense of the district moving forward in the process. Next step is the eligibility stage. At this stage, the School Committee does not need to be present, but can attend. This is a good step, but need to be invited to the next step, we are one of 100 districts.

**Motion by Mr. McGee, seconded by Mrs. Schultz to take Item # IX – Executive Session, out of order. Roll Call - Yes, Unanimously.**

**Pursuant to M.G.L. c. 30A, s. 21 (a) (2) to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining for paraprofessionals and AFSCME, and to reconvene in open session.**

**Motion by Mr. Hoyt, seconded by Mr. McGee to suspend the rules and continue the school committee meeting after 9:00PM. Vote: Yes, Unanimously.**

**IV. COMMUNICATION**

**A. Other**

- Mr. Hoyt – Laurretta Bailin, AHS Special Education Teacher, recently completed an international triathlon representing the United States in Chicago.
- Mr. Hoyt – Amesbury Educational Foundation recently installed, in the lobby of the high school, the weather-vane, *The Stroke of Guinness Award*, Ann Fuller.
- Dr. Reese has agreed to be the Key-Note speaker at this years' *Be A Buddy, Not A Bully* breakfast on October 23<sup>rd</sup> at City Hall – 8:30 – 10, focusing on Cyber Bullying.
- AEFI Night of Giving October 19<sup>th</sup> at 6:30

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

**A. August 31<sup>st</sup> Minutes**

**Motion by Ms. LaValley, seconded by Mr. Hoyt to accept the School Committee minutes dated August 31, 2015. . Vote: Yes, Unanimous.**

**B. Acceptance of Gifts**

1. Rotary Club - \$6800 donation for the purchase of 30 Chromebooks at the Amesbury Innovation high School.

*Motion by Ms. LaValley, seconded by Mrs. Schultz to accept the donation of \$6800.00 for the purchase of 30 Chromebooks for the Amesbury Innovation High School, donated by Rotary Club. Vote: Yes, Unanimous.*

2. Essex National Heritage Commission - \$1,500 to help fund the 'Math on the Merrimack' program

*Motion by Mr. Hoyt, seconded by Ms. LaValley to accept the donation of \$1500 to help fund the 'Math on the Merrimack' program, donated by the Essex National Heritage Commission. Discussion: Mrs. Schultz asked if they are seeking additional funds, or is this amount what they need? Ms. Farrell stated that this will help support the program but is not all of the money needed that is needed. Vote: Yes, Unanimous.*

**C. Warrant  
\$194,059.61 (9/17/15)**

*Motion by Mrs. Schultz, seconded by Mr. McGee to accept the Warrant dated September 17, 2015 in the amount of \$194,059.61. Vote: Yes, Unanimous.*

**VI INFORMATION ITEMS**

**A. W Subcommittee Reports**

**1. Finance/Budget Subcommittee**

Did not meet tonight. Will determine a meeting time after this meeting.

**2. Policy Subcommittee – Bonnie Schultz**

Mrs. Schultz stated they will be meeting on Thursday at 8AM.

**3. Personnel Subcommittee – Mr. McGee**

Mr. McGee will be meeting shortly to discuss additional bargaining unit for teachers union. Have a tentative proposal with the Para-professional that Mr. McGee would like a vote to adopt.

*Motion by Mr. McGee, seconded by Mrs. Schultz to accept the memorandum of agreement for the AFT Para-professional and Tutor Unit. Discussion: Mrs. Schultz stated that the agreement is very similar to the teachers' contract and other units with a 1% increase for one year and some other considerations. Vote: Yes, Unanimous.*

**VII. FUTURE MEETINGS AND AGENDA ITEMS**

The Chair read the future meeting and agenda items aloud.

1. Visit with State Representative and State Senator
2. South Hampton Visit - *Dr. Reese stated that they have reached out, Deirdre and Dr. Reese will be visiting them first. A follow-up meeting will then be set up for them to come here.*
3. MASC/MASS joint Conference
  1. Appointment of delegate from the Amesbury School Committee
  2. Discussion of resolutions – *will vote on the second meeting of October*

**VIII. PRESS CONFERENCE**

None

**IX. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

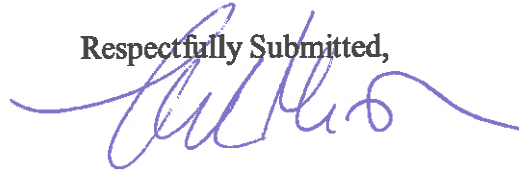
A. Pursuant to M.G.L. c. 30A, s. 21 (a) (2) to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining for paraprofessionals and AFSCME, and to reconvene in open session

**X. ADJOURNMENT**

*Motion by Mrs. Schultz, seconded by Ms. LaValley to adjourn the meeting.*

*Vote: Yes, Unanimous.*

Respectfully Submitted,



Tom McGee, Secretary

