

**AMESBURY SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES  
AMESBURY HIGH SCHOOL  
November 2, 2015**

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Present at 7:00 p.m. were Deb LaValley, Acting Chair; Bonnie Schultz, Tom McGee, Peter Hoyt, Christian Scorzoni, Rob Chamberlain, Katie Veseley, SAC Representative and Dr. Gary Reese, Interim Superintendent of Schools.

Absent was Mayor Gray.

Deb LaValley, Acting Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:07 and Tom McGee 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

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

**A. Report of the Assistant Superintendent**

Deirdre Farrell spoke about the following:

- Technology – City Council unanimously appropriated \$106,000 on October 1<sup>st</sup> – much appreciated – purchased 29 Chromebooks per cart, per school and getting quotes on the software needed.
- Softright Reports – provided the finance members with quarterly Expense Account Balance – DESE Function code and a report on Revolving and Grants Funds – All which were highlighted in the MASBO Report
- Civil Rights Data – Submitted to the state last week – massive report – with the help from our IT staff (Martine, Susan Lang, John Dubus and Jon Lombardi) the report was successfully submitted
- Payroll Coordinator – Candice McLane, has taken the position to replace the retirement of Patrice Pierce. She will begin to work with Patrice on November 9<sup>th</sup> and will work closely with her until mid January. Candice previously worked at Andover Country Club and Amesbury Sports Park in HR and payroll. Looking forward to her beginning with APS.

Mr. Hoyt thanked Ms. Farrell for the reports from the Softright Program and for following the recommendation of the MASBO Report.

**B. Report of the Superintendent**

Dr. Reese spoke about the following:

- **Civil Right Report** – Ms. Farrell also worked in conjunction with the IT staff to get this report submitted in a timely fashion. Thank you.

- **MSBA Update** – Tuesday, October 27<sup>th</sup> 9 individuals representing MSBA, Mr. Helliesen, Ms. Farrell, Norm Fredette, Mayor Gray and Dr. Reese met at the Amesbury Elementary School for 2-2 ½ hours asking questions and touring the building. 97 Schools submitted SOI, 35 to 40 schools will have a site visit – MSBA will meet in November to review needs of the districts and then in January the chosen schools (12-18 schools) will get a formal invitation to move forward. Dr. Reese stated that he was pleased with the tone of the meeting, gave a good picture of the needs of the district and the needs of the children.

Mr. Scorzoni asked what the district could do to advocate for the need i.e. reach out to the State Delegates, Treasurer, line up support? Dr. Reese stated that he has asked Senator Ives and Representative Kelcourse for their support and will reach out to the Treasurer. Ms. LaValley suggested writing up a letter. Mr. Chamberlain asked what the timeframe would look like if approved in January. Dr. Reese stated that, at that time, a project manager would have to be identified; find an architect; look at funding– This would all be a process that the district would have 12 -1 8 months to secure.

- **Staffing** – Candice McLane is being hired to replace Patrice Pierce. Kevin Pierce, Special Education Director, will be resigning and going to Shawsheen. We will be advertising for an Interim Special Education Director to fill the position for the remainder of the year.

***Motion by Mr. Hoyt seconded by Mrs. Schultz to accept the resignation of Kevin Pierce as Special Education Director, with regrets. Discussion: Ms. LaValley asked that Mr. Pierce be invited to a School Committee meeting, before his departure, so that the committee could thank him for his work at APS. Vote: Yes, Unanimous.***

### **C. High Stakes Testing (for Informational Purposes)**

Ms. LaValley stated to the public that there will be a public comments regarding High Stakes Testing after the Student Council’s presentation if anyone was interested in coming down to speak.

#### **1. Superintendent Presentation of Possible Options for testing**

- Dr. Reese stated that the Board of Education is expected to make a determination of high stake testing for 2015-16 at their November 17<sup>th</sup> board meeting. He spoke regarding MCAS vs PARCC and the 3<sup>rd</sup> option that they are referring to as PARCC 2.0. (high level thinking skills)

#### **2. Presentation by Student Council**

- Four members of the Student Council presented the committee with a Power Point on why the state should stay with MCAS and not adopt PARCC testing. They went so far as to take practice tests from the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade PARCC test, which they did not do well at. They stated that the clarity of the wording on the test was not precise in math and also ELA and they were very confused. Other supporting factors that they presented was the lack of technology in the schools to complete the PARCC test; the students are familiar with MCAS; 26 states have already pulled out of PARCC and the lack of familiarity.

3. **Public comments – High Stakes Testing**  
None

4. **Committee Discussion**

Mr. Chamberlain thanked the students for their presentation. He agrees that PARCC is not testing subjects and all of the ambiguous questions on the practice test. He noted that these were high school students in honors AP and failed at a 3<sup>rd</sup> grade test – all guess work. Mr. Hoyt echoed the thanks and was grateful to the students for taking the time to do all of this work. Ms. LaValley also thanked the students and encouraged them to attend the public comment session in Malden on Nov. 16<sup>th</sup> with their Power Point.

**IV. COMMUNICATION**

**A. Student Advisory Council – Katie Veseley**

Katie spoke about the following:

- Looking at Landry Stadium and meeting with Mr. Gearin to get the stadium back to the school.

Ms. LaValley stated that she was on the original Landry Committee and everything is public record. She stated that she will be meeting with Amesbury Boosters tomorrow at 6:30 and suggested that the student advisory council join her.

**B. Other**

- Mr. Hoyt spoke regarding the *Be A Buddy Not A Bully* breakfast that was held on October 23<sup>rd</sup> – This year the focus was on Cyber Bullying. Mr. Hoyt thanked Amesbury Chevrolet for donating the green bracelets that all students and staff received
- Ms. LaValley reminded the public that there will be No School tomorrow because of the elections. Elections hours are 7AM to 8PM.
- Ms. LaValley asked the committee to revisit the missing days of schools and what else they could do. Mr. Hoyt and Mrs. Schultz agreed referring to special election days, primary elections and PD days. Mr. Chamberlain asked if legally school could be in session during voting times? Ms. LaValley responded that it is not a legal matter but more of a security and parking matter. Mr. Hoyt commented that 4 buildings are disrupted for the use of one building, interruption of time in learning. Mrs. Schultz asked if the leadership team of the high school could be invited to join in on the discussion.

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

**A. October 20<sup>th</sup> Minutes**

*Motion by Mr. Hoyt, seconded by Mrs. Schultz to accept the School Committee minutes dated October 20, 2015. Vote: Yes, Unanimous.*

**B. Warrant**

**\$194,711.90 (10/29/15)**

*Motion by Mr. McGee, seconded by Mr. Chamberlain to accept the Warrant dated October 29, 2015 in the amount of \$194,711.90. Vote: Yes, Unanimous.*

**C. Acceptance of Gifts**

1. \$5,000 – from the Richard A. Eaton Charitable Foundation, Inc to provide financial assistance to students who families are experiencing financial hardship and can afford to pay some, but not all of the AHS' athletic user fees.

*Motion by Mrs. Schultz seconded by Mr. Hoyt to accept the gift of \$5,000 from the Richard A. Eaton Charitable Foundation as described above. Discussion: Mrs. Schultz asked if students were aware of the donation and asked to have a thank you note sent out to the Foundation. Vote: Yes, Unanimous.*

2. \$3,000 – from the Newburyport Five Cents Savings Charitable Foundation to help fund the Math on the Merrimack program with Lowell's Boat Shop.

*Motion by Mr. Hoyt seconded by Mr. McGee to accept the gift of \$3,000 from the Newburyport Five Cents Savings Charitable Foundation as described above. Discussion: Mr. Hoyt thanked Jessica Regis for her continued work on this project and stated that tonight it will be aired on television from 5-6. Vote: Yes, Unanimous.*

**VI INFORMATION ITEMS**

**A. Subcommittee Reports**

**1. Finance/Budget Subcommittee**

Ms. LaValley and Mr. Hoyt spoke regarding Technology and City Council appropriating \$106,000 toward Chromebooks and software. Also, Amesbury Innovation School and the search for a new location. Thank you to the Amesbury Rotary for their donation that was used to purchase Chromebooks at AIHS, installed by Martine and Jessie – thank you.

**2. Policy Subcommittee – Bonnie Schultz**

Mrs. Schultz stated next meeting will be November 12<sup>th</sup> at 8AM.

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

Mr. McGee stated that they continue to meet with union representatives. They will be meeting every other week, rotating with the Finance Subcommittee.

**VII. FUTURE MEETINGS AND AGENDA ITEMS**

The Chair read the future meeting and agenda items aloud.

1. Visit with State Representative and State Senator (11/16)
2. Mass Student Achievement and Principals' Award Presentation (11/16)
3. South Hampton Visit – (TBD)
4. SAC Presentation – (TBD – 12/7 or 12/21) *Katie stated that Dec. 21<sup>st</sup> would be better for the SAC members.*
5. MCAS Accountability Report (TBD)  
Need to add:
  - a) Revisit closing schools on Election Days
  - b) Acknowledgement of the retirement (Nov. 30<sup>th</sup>) of Walter Brooks (11/16)

**VIII. PRESS CONFERENCE**

None

**IX. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

None

**X. ADJOURNMENT**

***Motion by Mrs. Schultz, seconded by Mr. Scorzoni to adjourn the meeting at 8:05.  
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