

**AMESBURY SCHOOL COMMITTEE
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
AMESBURY HIGH SCHOOL
November 16, 2015**

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

Absent was Katie Veseley, SAC Representative.

Mayor Gray called the meeting to order at 7:04 and Bonnie Schultz 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. Recognition of Retirees – Patrice Pierce, Payroll Coordinator and Walter Brooks, Multi-Purpose Facilities Technician.

Mayor Gray presented both retirees with a proclamation for their years of service (Patrice with 20 years and Walter with 28 years). He then presented them with a Citation from Senator Connor-Ives.

Representative Kelcourse presented both of them with a Citation from the House of Representative.

Dr. Gray thanked them both for their years of service and presented them with a gift from the School Committee (framed picture).

B. MASS Student Achievement Award Presentation

Dr. Reese presented this award to Spencer Moavenzadeh for his academic excellence. Dr. Reese spoke about the criterion that is looked at in choosing the recipient of this award: Three year cumulative average; Rank in class and personal selection by the Superintendent. Spencer was presented with a certificate and a book, *Faster - The Obsession of the World's Fastest Cyclist* - one that will be kept at the Amesbury High School Library with a name plate in it and one for his use.

Spencer thanked Dr. Reese and stated that he was honored to be this years' recipient. The committee congratulated Spencer and asked what his future goals were.

C. Principal's Award Presentation

Mr. Hammond first spoke about Walter Brooke's retirement and stated that Walter is a key piece of AHS community. He is respected by the students and has always been willing to help them and support them.

Mr. Hammond presented the Principal's Award to Christopher Cioffi. He explained that this award is very difficult to decide, but every year someone steps up and out-shines. He went on to say that Christopher is a student with great leadership skills and one that gets the job done. He is Vice President of School Council for the state and has put Amesbury on the map. Christopher was presented with a certificate and a book, *Leadership Principles for Graduates*, one book will be in the library with his name on it and the other for him.

Christopher thanked Mr. Hammond stating that this would not be possible without the help of everyone and his mom. He went on to talk about his future goals.

The committee congratulated Christopher, thanked him for his accomplishments and stated that they can both do what they set their minds to.

Mrs. Moavenzadeh also spoke and thanked the committee for what they do and it is with their help that her son and Chris has done so well.

Mayor Gray commented that this committee often meet with mundane agendas, but it is times like this that we see what the system produces - very proud. Thank you and Congratulations.

D. Visit with Representative Kelcourse

Representative Kelcourse spoke about things going on in Boston.

- Bringing as much money back to Amesbury, Newburyport and Salisbury as they can.
- Review report that came out on Nov 11th with recommendation – hoping to fund things like Special Education Funding.
- Always about money, cheerleader for the district, trying to get as much money back to the district as possible.
- Spoke about monies that have come in.
- Working on unfunded mandates.

Committee member questions and Representative Kelcourse answers:

- Regarding Charter Schools, funding not equitable with the public schools – Special Education children do not fit into Charter Schools – other states do not work like that – Charter Schools can maintain millions of dollars vs. Public Schools need to be accountable with municipalities. Need to address these issues. *Representative Kelcourse stated the need to look at revenue source and fund the existing things first.*
- Regarding PARCC vs MCAS – Where does he stand? Feel like we wasted a lot of time and money last month with this issue. Will be a vote tomorrow by the DOE. *Representative Kelcourse responded by saying the need for less testing and if the State is mandating PARCC they need to fund the districts for updating their technology. Need to continue to advocate for Amesbury and have a relationship with the leaders, communicate and let us know. Deb LaValley is a great advocate for this community.*
- Regarding revenue – What is your sense in the Commonwealth? *Representative Kelcourse stated that they are higher than expected and confident that the districts will survive.*

The committee thanked Representative Kelcourse for coming out and answering their questions. They also thanked him for being such a great advocate for his home town.

E. Report of the Assistant Superintendent

Ms. Farrell spoke about the following:

- FY17 – typically now soft freeze – not this year - good financial position at this point. Available balance in out Special Education Out of District Line Item due to: Favorable BSEA Decisions – LEA Assignments; keeping 3 students in district. Will continue to tract this situation.
- Recommend a \$10,000. transfer from the Special Education tuition to maintenance contract services to replace part of the roof at Cashman School and add gutters.
- FY17 budget – draft calendar by month – look over – can be changed only a draft.

F. Report of the Superintendent

Dr. Reese spoke about the following:

- MASS/MASC Conference – Thank you for those that attended– very valuable
- MCAS 2.0 – Aspect of MCAS and PARCC, heavy on PARCC with the questions. DOE will be voting tomorrow, Commissioner recommended this last week. Concerns – time in learning; will be using the technology by 2019; testing development too aggressive in 2017.
- Improving our schools – last year added the following positions and the impact on the school.
 - AES – Fourth Grade Teacher – reducing average class size from 27.3 to 2-.5
 - CES – Special Educator, Adjustment Counselor- Reduction of escalated situations
 - AMS – Foreign Language Teacher – students have full schedules, not as many study halls.
 - AHS – Math Teacher – Reduction in class size.

Mr. Hoyt stated that tomorrow’s vote – MCAS 2.0 - is a disservice to our students – they are use to MCAS.

Ms. LaValley asked Dr. Reese if it would be possible to email them before the vote with their concerns.

Mrs. Schultz echoed the concerns and spoke about the time, energy and expense over these tests. She felt they were back to the beginning.

Mr. Chamberlain spoke about MCAS vs. PARCC vs SAT . High stakes testing – no difference.

IV. COMMUNICATION

A. Student Advisory Council – Katie Veseley - absent

B. Other

Ms. LaValley spoke about the joint conference that she, Mr. Chamberlain and Dr. Reese had attended. Mr. Chamberlain stated that the conference was very informative and learned a lot about roles and responsibility. Ms. LaValley asked if this item could be on the next agenda.

V. ITEMS FOR APPROVAL OR EARLY CONSIDERATION

A. November 2nd Minutes

Motion by Mr. Hoyt, seconded by Ms. LaValley to accept the School Committee minutes dated November 2, 2015. Vote: Yes, Unanimous.

C. School Calendar – Election Days

Discussion regarding the need for school to be in attendance on election days. The feeling was that it involves only the high school and all of the schools are being closed. Pros and Cons in having elections while school in session:

- Lack of parking – high school students can walk, alternative lots to park in for students
- Can we have it in the gym – need to discuss with City Clerk if that space is feasible; concerns with floor in the gym, need to cover it.
- Safety for students – can have barricades for the public to not enter the other parts of the building
- Other venues – new senior center – not large enough and not enough parking
- Good service learning for high school students – Community Service.

Dr. Reese will take these recommendations to the administration and bring back to the committee with their recommendations.

D. Policy Updates – First Reading

a. JFAB – Non-Resident Students

Mrs. Schultz stated this is the first reading to this policy – The new part of the policy is the #5 – students who move during their senior year. If they move out of Amesbury after September 30th they may stay and graduate with their peers.

D. Warrant

\$408,463.97

Motion by Ms. LaValley, seconded by Mrs. Schultz to accept the Warrant in the amount of \$408,463.97 . Discussion: Mrs. Schultz would like to look into signing warrants electronically.

Vote: 6 Yes, 1 abstain (Hoyt).

E. Acceptance of Gifts

1. \$2,000 – from the Newburyport Charitable Foundation for the therapeutic riding program.

Motion by Mr. Hoyt, seconded by Mrs. Schultz to accept the gift of \$2,000 from the Newburyport Charitable Foundation for the therapeutic riding program. Discussion: Mrs. Schultz asked what the cost is for the program for one year. She stated that it seems like we approve this donation more than one time a year. Vote: Yes, Unanimous. Mayor Gray thanked the Newburyport Charitable Foundation for their continuous donation.

VI INFORMATION ITEMS

A. W Subcommittee Reports

1. Finance/Budget Subcommittee

Ms. LaValley spoke regarding information that was provided by Deirdre prior to this meeting.

- Ms. Farrell recommended that we approve the outplacement of \$10,000. from the Special Education tuitions to maintenance contract service for the replacement of a portion of CES' roof and add gutters.

Motion by Ms. LaValley, seconded by Mr. Hoyt to accept the recommendation of Ms. Farrell to transfer \$10,000. from Special Education Tuition to Maintenance Contract Service to replace a portion of the Cashman School roof and add gutters. Vote: Yes, Unanimous.

- AMS – two side of the exterior masonry has been repaired – need to move forward with the remainder of the sections (8-10 sections).
- Replacement of three storage containers at CES; AHS; AMS.
- Budget Calendars – month by month email Gary, Deirdre or Deb with additions.

2. Policy Subcommittee – Bonnie Schultz

Mrs. Schultz stated they met last week – Worked on the Non-Residency Policy that was presented this evening for First Reading. Also spoke about lunch program and what process can be put in place to keep the charges and outstanding balances down. Regarding Student Activity Accounts, limits are way too low, Deirdre is working on that as a results of the MASBO Report. Updated policies coming up.

3. Personnel Subcommittee – Mr. McGee

Mr. McGee stated they met this evening. Spoke about the retirees this year, besides the 2 that were recognized this evening, will have 13 more in June. Spoke with Glen Gearin regarding posting positions in athletics/staffing. Regarding the Interim Superintendent position – need to begin discussion – Next School Committee Meeting, Dec. 7th, will go into Executive Session to proceed.

VII. FUTURE MEETINGS AND AGENDA ITEMS

The Chair read the future meeting and agenda items aloud.

1. Cashman Presentation – Student Council (12/7)
2. South Hampton Visit (12/7)
3. SAC Presentation (12/21)
4. MCAS Accountability Report (TBD)

Add to future meetings: Invitation to the parent groups (one at a time) to speak on what they are doing.

Progress with Goals – Mr. McGee and Helen have worked on it, hoping to finalize it this week and email to members.

VIII. PRESS CONFERENCE

None

IX. EXECUTIVE SESSION

None

X. ADJOURNMENT

***Motion by Ms. LaValley, seconded by Mrs. Schultz to adjourn the meeting at 8:39.
Vote: Yes, Unanimous.***

Respectfully Submitted,


Tom McGee, Secretary