

**AMESBURY SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES  
AMESBURY HIGH SCHOOL  
December 21, 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.

Mayor Gray was absent.

Mrs. LaValley called the meeting to order 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**

Mr. Schwartz, former School Committee member, thanked Christian Scorzoni for his service as a School Committee member for the past 2 years. He continued by thanking Bonnie Schultz for her 10 year commitment to this committee. His appreciation for her years of service to the schools, families and children of Amesbury and for sticking it out to the end of her term.

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

**A. School Committee Recognition**

Ms. LaValley recognized Christian Scorzoni for being a part of School Committee member and look forward to working with him in City Council. Mr. Scorzoni was given a gift from the members. Mr. Scorzoni thanked the members for a productive 2 years and look forward to continue the great work with the city side.

Ms. LaValley recognized Bonnie Schultz as first being such a wonderful volunteer for the schools in Amesbury and always willing to help out. Mrs. Schultz carried that on to being part of this School Committee for the past 10 years. Mrs. Schultz was given a Amesbury rocking chair (with plaque) from the members of the board as a token of their appreciation, she will be missed.

Ms. LaValley acknowledged Kevin Pierce, Special Education Director, for his work in the school district as he moves onto another district.

Mr. Hoyt thanked and expressed his honor for working with Mr. Scorzoni. He also thanked Mr. Pierce for all he has done for the city and the schools, he wished him the very best in his new position. He concluded by acknowledging Mrs. Schultz for her dedication to this board and being actively involved in the school district. He thanked her for her years of service and wished her and her family well.

Mr. Pierce thanked the members for the 2 ½ years that he has spent in Amesbury but also for the 5 previous years. He went on to say that this was an opportunity that he could not refuse.

## **B. Student Advisory Council**

Five of the members of the SAC program, Katie, and four athletes introduced themselves. They then proceeded with a power point on Landry Stadium.

- Landry Stadium
  - History of the stadium
  - Repairs and rededication of stadium in 2002 (60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary)
  - Brings the town together – underused resource
  - Soccer team only play once - why? Football plays 4-5 games. Do other schools pay fees to use stadium?
  - Goal – to play more games at stadium
  - Cost – miscommunication and misconception
  - 2011-2015 drop in games at the stadium - Need to have more games to bring in more revenue
  - Practice on other fields, play games in Landry

Open to questions for the committee:

- ✓ Mrs. Schultz asked if playing day games at the stadium would help with no lighting requirements. Also the interest in playing lacrosse and the resting of the field. Hope this discussion will get some more use time in the stadium. One of the students expressed that playing after school would help and a great compromise.
- ✓ Mr. Chamberlain thanked the students for the presentation and stated that what they are asking for makes sense. Who controls the stadium?
- ✓ Ms. LaValley stated that she was the co-founder of “Save Our Stadium”. She stated that it was under the school before a Landry Committee was established. This was established because of under use and not allowing other schools to use it. Ms. LaValley does not agree with the resting periods of the field. The Provident Bank who funded that, wanted to see 2 games for soccer at a minimum. Cashman Field use to move the nets. She asked if the power point could be sent to the committee. Ms. LaValley asked about fees. Team charged? Maybe some miscommunication. Appreciate the SAC members for bringing this issue to the School Committee and she looks forward to sitting with them.
- ✓ Mr. McGee thanked the students for their presentation and their articulation. Mr. McGee stated that he learned a lot from all of the information on the stadium and concerned about the under usage.
- ✓ Mr. Scorzoni spoke about the field hockey fields and will be hearing more on that. Newburyport have tapped into park grants, CPA and Amesbury needs to look into other resources to move forward (artificial turf, what other communities are doing). Need to do some homework and think big and come back to this committee, good opportunity. Presentation had some good information and raised the bar.
- ✓ Mr. Hoyt stated that all of this information was pretty extraordinary and the power of the student voice and their families. “You have planted the seed and need to move forward”.

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

Ms. Farrell spoke about the following from last Monday Finance Sub-committee meeting:

- Involved in a Melanson and Heath audits – Student Activity audit - working with high and middle school staff that oversee student activities. Looking at recommendation and no findings of concerns. Financial practice overview audit – covering 2013-14 and 15. FY 2016 looks different. Will continue to work with and provide information to move forward.
- FY15 end of year report – done every year. Close to finishing report and hope to have it done shortly and submitted to the state.
- FY16 monthly report provided at the finance sub-committee. Looking at transportation (regular and special education), library supplies at AES and CES. Report did not include health insurance charges, still needs 1.5 million (entry from city hall).
- FY17 budget development calendar shared for the second time with leadership. Main focus for this month, staffing lists as well as FTE to establish salary budget.
- Environmental study done at Horace Mann, received 2 proposals. Cost \$10,630. includes indoor air quality and hazardous building materials. Go ahead was given to Smith and Russell, hoping to get the work done within the next two weeks.
- Work – school vacation – standard cleaning, waxing, rug cleaning, windows, Cashman’s roof will be done also – AMS and AHS wireless installation (2 day project).

Ms. LaValley asked, during vacation week, besides rug cleaning, need to clean upholstered chairs. Also, made a recommendation on the additional amount needed for the testing of the Horace Mann. Ms. Farrell stated that the committee had budgeted 10 thousand for architectural design services for 11 Chestnut and \$1500.00 was used for that purpose. Using the remaining fund, does not need a vote.

### **D. Report of the Superintendent**

Dr. Reese spoke about the following:

- AMS – attending a project that sixth grade students working with third grade students for the past 2 months. Created books on Ancient Egypt. Very impressed on the articulation of these students. Dr. Reese brought books in so that the committee could view them.
- Next generation assessment that the state is going forward with. Still defining what the test will look like. Not ready till spring of 2017.
- MCAS vs. PARCC – characteristic on both test to determine which one Amesbury will be using (hand out). Dr. Reese will give his recommendation to the committee for a vote.

#### **PARCC**

- Benefit – accountability results can’t go down based upon assessments; next year’s test will be heavily PARCC – opportunity to expose students
- Disadvantage – time to prep teachers, students and parents to understand

## MCAS

- What we have done – students understand – will have some type of PARCC in the test so that students will be exposed – no training – people will understand the results. Will not do long composition this year – PARCC like question instead.
- Disadvantage – will be held accountable for the scores.

Dr. Reese has spent time with teacher, administration and students – mixed reaction. (If we shift to PARCC, can give students practice). Dr. Reese recommends, to the board, that APS stick with MCAS for the upcoming school year. Do not have enough information of next year's test, too much of a shift in assessments. The state board wanted the vote by December 18<sup>th</sup>, submitted special approval to submit School Committee vote at a later date.

*Motion by Mr. Hoyt, seconded by Mrs. Schultz to administer MCAS as student assessment for this school year. Discussion: Mr. Chamberlain echoed what Mr. Hoyt said that from a practical view switching from one test then another would not be helpful. Have not clarified the technology on the PARCC test. Dr. Reese stated that teachers have exposed students to PARCC testing. Mr. Chamberlain suggested taking some of the PARCC tests to families. Mr. Scorzoni was approached by some parents and had a discussion regarding both sides of PARCC. Have we served our students well. Katie stated that she read an article regarding PARCC being one of the hardest in all of the US. Ms. LaValley stated the concern of the technology in the school. Dr. Reese stated that MCAS was not designed to be college ready assessment, but the new one will be. Vote: Yes, Unanimous.*

- Elections at the high school during school day. Spoke with Norm Fredette who spoke with the custodian and felt that the small elections would be doable for the gym with no harm to the gym floor.
- Numerous retirements this year including Mr. Pierce and Mr. Hamond. Will posting these two critical positions in January. Real key year to fill all positions. Mr. Hoyt commented on the competitive market and thanked Dr. Reese for posting early.

## IV. COMMUNICATION

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

Katie stated that this weekend the United Nations Team and Debate Team had a competition and it was the first time that AHS has been in the top 6<sup>th</sup> in the finals. Although the bus fee was costly so could not stay for the awards ceremony. Plan to speak with AEFI, to possibly getting some help with bus fees.

Ms. LaValley stated that AEFI has a separate line item of donations for things like bus fees. Carol Bartlett from Central can provide contact information.

### B. **Other**

- Mrs. Schultz thanked everyone including her family for the opportunity serve on this committee. It's been a privilege to work with so many talented and passionate people. Her 3 thoughts - Children, educators and ourselves. She ended with how we need to work together toward a common goal.

- Mr. Scorzoni spoke regarding his resignation and the vacancy on the School Committee. This will trigger a 30 day window for a possible candidate to submit their letter of interest. The Feb 9<sup>th</sup> City Council Meeting will possibly have a joint meeting to fill the vacancy. Ms. LaValley thanked Mr. Scorzoni for his promptness in submitting his letter so that we can move forward before budget time.

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

**A. December 7th Minutes**

***Motion by Mr. McGee, seconded by Mr. Hoyt to accept the School Committee minutes dated December 7, 2015. Vote: Yes, Unanimous.***

**B. Warrant**

**\$310,600.75 (12/10/15)**

***Motion by Mr. Hoyt, seconded by Mrs. Schultz to accept the Warrant in the amount of \$310,600.75 dated December 10, 2015. Vote: 4, yes; 2 abstain (Ms. LaValley and Mr. Chamberlain).***

**\$351,702.49 (12/23/15)**

***Motion by Mr. McGee, seconded by Mr. Scorzoni to accept the Warrant in the amount of \$351,702.49 dated December 23, 2015. Vote: Unanimous.***

**C. Acceptance of Gifts - \$2000.00 from the Frank L. Currier Charitable Foundation for support of the therapeutic riding program.**

***Motion by Mr. Hoyt, seconded by Mrs. Schultz to accept the donation of \$2000.00 for the therapeutic riding program from the Frank L. Currier Charitable Foundation. Discussion: Mrs. Schultz stated that this vote comes up a lot throughout the year. How many time, do we accept, (quarterly) and how much the program costs? Vote: Unanimous.***

**D. School Committee Goal Setting**

Mr. McGee stated that there were comments from Mr. Hoyt, Mr. Chamberlain and Mayor Gray that were emailed to Dr. Reese. Mr. McGee handed out a draft of the goals including the suggested changes for a review. He suggested that since it is part way through the school year, that moving forward, we align our goals with the Superintendent's goals. Being late in the year, Mr. McGee suggested that the goals be revisited in June and see how we did.

Mr. Hoyt stated that the dates look good, and stated that these are goals.

***Motion by McGee, seconded by Mrs. Schultz to adopt the 2015-2016 goals as presented.***

***Discussion: Mrs. Schultz stated progress of goals should be on calendar to revisit. Ms. LaValley suggested that the goals should be with the member at all meetings. Put on website and incorporate into principals newsletter and school council. Mr. Hoyt thanked Tom for all the work on these goals. Vote: unanimous.***

## **E. Process and selection of permanent Superintendent of Schools**

Mr. McGee stated that he has been communicating with the attorney to make sure that we have a process that we will be following. Our thoughts on the permanent position of the Superintendent:

- Mr. McGee stated that he is enjoying working with Dr. Reese, having a different approach in selecting a leader for our schools. This is the ultimate interview. Dr. Reese has demonstrated the qualities that we are looking for in a superintendent. Would like to act on keeping Dr. Reese sooner rather than later.

*Motion by Mr. McGee, seconded by Mr. Hoyt to hire Gary Reese pending successful negotiations as Superintendent of Amesbury Schools. Discussion: Mrs. Schultz stated that she is pleased to work with Dr. Reese and the weekly updates are very helpful. Appreciate all the time that you have spent with everyone. Mr. Hoyt echoed Mrs. Schultz comments and added that Dr. Reese has given great opportunity of who he is as an educator and human being (walk the talk). Fortunate for Amesbury and support the motion. Mr. Scorzoni concurs, dynamic leader and goes above and beyond. Mr. Chamberlain also concurs, 3 month interview, good sense of what is going on, good sense of listening, lucky to have you. Ms. LaValley wears another hat at the Innovation High School, Dr. Reese did a great job facilitating a meeting last week. **Vote: Yes, Unanimous.***

## **VI INFORMATION ITEMS**

### **A. W Subcommittee Reports**

#### **1. Finance/Budget Subcommittee**

Ms. LaValley stated there was a meeting last week, apologizes that she did not bring her notes. Regarding the Melanson and Heath audit found out that 8 items were added to the scope, is being worked on. Mrs. Schultz ask to explain the 8 items and stated that everyone should know of any additional items moving forward. Dr. Reese stated that there were only 5 items that were added but do not have in from on him. Mr. Chamberlain echoed the monthly reports are very informative. Would be a good practice to rotate between a few firms and not have the same firm every year. Mr. McGee asked if that finance report could be added to the drop box. Ms. LaValley asked if they could have the finance report electronically Friday before the meeting.

#### **2. Policy Subcommittee – Bonnie Schultz**

Mrs. Schultz stated they met last week. Talk about food service policy, better ways to let parents know about paying on line, Deirdre met with administrators regarding putting FAQ on the website on ways to look at accounts. Deirdre doing a video on how to put money on line. In the policy there will be an alternative meal (same dollar amount) given after all efforts have been made to collect. Alternate meal could be a cheese sandwich, sun-butter sandwich.

Discussed the audit, technology use, new sports procedure – work in progress.

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

Mr. McGee stated they met today and continue to have dialog with the union

**VII. FUTURE MEETINGS AND AGENDA ITEMS**

The Chair read the future meeting and agenda items aloud.

1. MCAS Accountability Report - (1/5/16)
2. AES Presentation, Mr. Walter Helliesen (1/5/16)
3. AMS Parent Advisory Group (1/19/16)

**FYI – next School Committee meeting is January 5, 2016 – Inauguration is January 4, 2016**

**Mrs. Schultz stated with budget around the corner, should have a discussion about Early College with NECC and AHS and its future at Amesbury.**

**VIII. PRESS CONFERENCE**

None

**IX. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Pursuant to MGL c30A, S21 (a) (2) To conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with nonunion personnel or to conduct collective bargaining sessions or contract negotiations with nonunion personnel. *Superintendent*

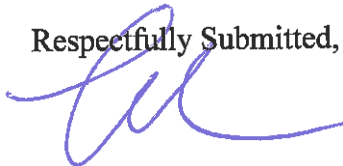
***Motion by Ms. LaValley to go into Executive session. Roll Call was taken.***

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

**X. ADJOURNMENT**

Adjourned

Respectfully Submitted,



Tom McGee, Secretary