

**AMESBURY SCHOOL COMMITTEE
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
AMESBURY HIGH SCHOOL
January 5, 2016**

Present at 7:00 p.m. were Mayor Gray, Chair; Deb LaValley, Tom McGee, Rob Chamberlain, Gretchen Marinopoulos, Katie Veseley, SAC Representative and Dr. Gary Reese, Interim Superintendent of Schools.

Mayor Gray called the Organizational Meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. 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.

ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING

II. Election of Vice Chair and Secretary

Motion by Mrs. Marinopoulos, seconded by Mr. Chamberlain to reelect Ms. LaValley as Vice Chair to the School Committee Board. Vote: Yes, unanimous.

Motion by Ms. LaValley, seconded by Mrs. Marinopoulos to reelect Mr. McGee as Secretary to the School Committee Board. Vote: Yes, unanimous.

III. Meeting Days and Times

Motion by Ms. LaValley, seconded by Mrs. Marinopoulos to continue with the School Committee Meetings the 1st and the 3rd Monday of the month (unless there is a holiday on Monday then the meeting will be held the next day, Tuesday) at 7PM, as voted previously. Vote: Yes, unanimous.

IV. Sub-Committee Appointments

a. Budget/Finance Subcommittee – Rob Chamberlain, Chair

Motion by Ms. LaValley, seconded by Mrs. Marinopoulos to elect Rob Chamberlain as Chair of the Budget/Finance Subcommittee. Vote: Yes, unanimous.

b. Personnel Subcommittee – Tom McGee, Chair

Motion by Ms. LaValley, seconded by Mrs. Marinopoulos to reelect Tom McGee as Chair of the Personnel Subcommittee. Vote: Yes, unanimous.

c. Policy Subcommittee – Peter Hoyt, Chair

Motion by Mr. Chamberlain, seconded by Ms. LaValley to elect Peter Hoyt, as Chair of the Policy Subcommittee. Vote: Yes, unanimous.

V. Other Appointments

**SPED PAC Liaison – Gretchen Marinopoulos
Athletic Liaison – Deb LaValley
Legislative Liaison – Rob Chamberlain
Parliamentarian Liaison – Tom McGee
Schools' Handbook Liaison – Peter Hoyt**

Motion by Mr. McGee, seconded by Ms. LaValley to name the above as the Liaisons of the specific areas. Vote: Yes, unanimous.

REGULAR MEETING

I. CALL TO ORDER OF REGULAR MEETING

Mayor Gray called the regular meeting to order at 7:13 p.m.

II. COMMENTS BY VISITORS, DELGATIONS

None

III. PRESENTATIONS

A. Introduction of Interim SPED Director Candidate

Dr. Reese introduced his recommendation for Interim SPED Director to the committee. He stated that Cynthia Joyce comes with 40 years of experience, with experience as SPED Director and Interim SPED Director. A committee that included central office staff and Mr. Hoyt recently interviewed 3 candidates from the pool of 25 applicants and Ms. Joyce was their top candidate.

Ms. Joyce thanked the committee and stated that she is thrilled to be in Amesbury and looking forward to getting started. Ms. Joyce spoke about her background in Special Education and her past experiences.

- Mayor Gray asked if having such a large portion of Amesbury Schools' budget in Special Education is unusual. Ms. Joyce said that was not unusual for a public school district to have over ¼ of their budget into Special Education. She went on to speak about how it is important to define programs, get data, communicate to families and support them, collaborate as a whole in the district, train the staff, make recommendations and look at all case loads.
- Mrs. Marinopoulos stated that Amesbury's needs are not unique and thoughts on collaborating with surrounding communities. Ms. Joyce stated that collaborating with communities do have legal issues, but Professional Development is a way to reach out to areas around Amesbury and extend invitation (cost effective).
- Ms. LaValley asked if Ms. Joyce had worked with Innovation Schools in the past. Ms. Joyce stated that she had not but has had lots of opportunities to work with different schools and the message is the same, it is the relationship that you develop.

Motion by Ms. LaValley, seconded by Mr. McGee to hire Cynthia Joyce as the Interim Special Education Director for the remainder of 2015-2016 school year. Vote: Yes, unanimous.

B. MCAS Accountability Report, Mrs. Lyn Jacques

Mrs. Jacques, Director of Teaching and Learning, introduced herself to the new members of the committee. She presented the committee with a Power Point on Amesbury's Accountability Report and a hand-out on the glossary of 2015 accountability reporting terms. She stated that typically this report was presented in October with MCAS results, but because PARCC was incorporated in some districts, MCAS results were given in October and Accountability Report just came in. She pointed out the following in this report:

- Accountability levels do not equal MCAS scores alone – have seven other criteria
- DESE's Dart Chart best model to use when compare districts
- District above average from the state
- Challenge of meeting high needs population
- District needs 95% of attendance or goes to a Level 2 district
- AHS maintained a level 1 status; CES & AMS maintained Level 2 status; AES dropped to a Level 2 (missing by 3 pts) – ONLY 3 districts in the state have Level 1 status
- Mrs. Jacques concluded her presentation with stating that both 5th and 6th grade needs strategies to address the drop in math scores. There is definitely a pattern in those grades, need to brainstorm and change. Mrs. Jacques stated that MCAS testing will continue for this year in Amesbury and that at 4th and 7th grade levels, the Long Composition component has been dropped this year.

Questions:

- Mr. Chamberlain asked if Mrs. Jacques could come up with the total number of days/hours that are spent on assessments and preparations for the assessments? Mrs. Jacques stated that she did not have that exact information now, but stated that historic data is good. She went on to talk about the MAP testing and how it is real time compared to MCAS results come months later. With MAP, adjustments can be made during a reasonable amount of time. Mr. Chamberlain stated that some teachers feel that they are being judged by these assessments and therefore telling students to not do their best on the first one. Mrs. Jacques disagreed with his statement and asked Mr. Chamberlain to come to her office to see the data and how it established baselines.
- Ms. LaValley asked about the concerns of the 5th and 6th grade math scores. How to address the issues, summer assistance? Parent concerns and understanding of how math is taught now and the thought of an outreach program for families on math. Mrs. Jacques explained that last summer a Math program ran for all grades at the middle school. She went on to talk about the programs and consistencies that are now being taught in all grades in math. She agreed that parents are having difficulties with math with their children and having a math night might be a good idea.
- Mrs. Marinopoulos was concerned with the 95% participation and asked about trends and opting out. She also stated that MCAS scores should be mailed home at the middle school level instead of in backpacks where students are reading them and feeling bad about scores. Mrs. Jacques stated that she does not see a heightened trend of opting out of the test, families are use to it. She will look into results being mailed out.

C. Amesbury Elementary School Presentation, Mr. Walter Helliessen – taken out of order – Presentation was done first.

Mr. Helliessen, Principal of AES, approached the podium and spoke about the new “Spotlight” assemblies that the school is now doing instead of the “North Star” awards. He spoke about how the fourth grade students are heading up the assemblies and using their leadership skills. Every 6-8 weeks a theme is established and the entire school is part of this theme (Respect, Teamwork, Generosity, Courage and Honesty). Four, fourth grade students, Ayva Bezanson, Body Tonks, Sam Guimaraes and Naomi Smith were also present at the meeting and spoke about how the assembly works. They concluded with a video of the last assembly that happened at AES before the holiday.

The committee thanked them for the presentation and asked if they were nervous the first time up in front of their peers. *Yes, very nervous.* Katie, SAC Rep, applauded the four students for their public speaking at a young age, very impressive.

D. Report of the Superintendent

Dr. Reese spoke about the following:

- Welcomed Gretchen Marinopoulos to the committee
- Working of his entry plan and will have a presentation at the next meeting
- Exciting news announced at the inauguration last night – the MSBA will recommend to their board of directors that Amesbury be invited to participate in the school building process (feasibility study, space needs, plans, financing).

Ms. LaValley stated that she forwarded an email to Dr. Reese regarding MSBA 2016. New program on renovation school building and a core program. Need to have a discussion at a later date regarding the Innovation High School.

IV. COMMUNICATION

A. Student Advisory Council – Katie Vesely

Katie spoke regarding this year’s calendar and having a whole day off on December 23rd instead of a ½ day – more productive academically. Should look at next years’ calendar to do the same. Thank you.

B. Other

None

V. ITEMS FOR APPROVAL OR EARLY CONSIDERATION

A. December 21, 2015 Minutes

Technical difficulty with recording, will have at next meeting

B. Warrant

1. \$105,983.41 (1/07/16)

Motion by Mr. McGee, seconded by Ms. LaValley to accept the Warrant dated January 7, 2016 in the amount of \$105,983.41. Vote: Yes, Unanimous.

VI. INFORMATION ITEMS

A. Subcommittee Reports

- 1. **Finance/Budget Subcommittee**
- 2. **Policy Subcommittee**
- 3. **Personnel Subcommittee**



No reports at this time

VII. FUTURE MEETINGS AND AGENDA ITEMS

Mayor Gray read the future meeting and agenda items aloud.

- A. AMS Parent Advisory Group (1/19/16)
- B. Early College Program (TBD)

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

Vote: Yes, Unanimous.

X. ADJOURNMENT

Adjourned at 8:37PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Tom McGee, Secretary