

**AMESBURY SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES  
AMESBURY HIGH SCHOOL  
February 17, 2015**

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Present at 7:00 p.m. were Mayor Ken Gray, Chair; Debra LaValley, Stanley Schwartz, Bonnie Schultz, Tom McGee, Peter Hoyt, and Michele S. Robinson, Superintendent of Schools.

Absent were: Christian Scorzoni, and Jill Hadwen, SAC Representative

The Chair called the meeting to order and Ms. 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, DELGATIONS**

None

**II. PRESENTATIONS**

None

**IV. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS**

**A. Assistant Superintendent's Report**

Deirdre Farrell spoke about the following relating to finances:

- Spoke regarding the snow and how the no school calls are made – have had 6 snow days –
- Have been proactive regarding removal of the snow on the roofs. Have had the cleaning crew helping with the removal, per their contract (hourly wage). Have worked with the Building Inspector, Denis Nadeau and Norm Fredette, Lead Maintenance at APS, determining what needs we have. Also work closely with EOC, Chief Brickett and Rob Demarias regarding no school and delays.
- Concerned with bus stops and look into where the stops are and making sure everyone is safe. Crossing guards have done a great job as well as everyone else in the city.
- Adjusted winter stops for the students. Working with Salter transportation, if too cold and they see a student waiting for a bus without a bus pass, pick them up anyways.
- Last day of school right now is June 26<sup>th</sup>.

Ms. LaValley stated her concerns with narrow streets, especially Highland Ave. and Childs Ave. She thanked everyone for all the work that has been done keeping up with snow. Mayor Gray spoke regarding clean up and hauling snow.

- New Governor came into office last week with a deficit. The 9C cuts affects Amesbury – non local aid – full day kindergarten was affected – looking at how to fund.
- Circuit Breaker Audit was done last month – no news is good news. They are looking at a few claims of services that were rendered with unsigned IEP's. Should have a final report to you once that impact is reported.
- Converting from Munis (software that runs our financials) to Soft Right. Met with the city CFO this week, joined by Joy (accounts payable). Meeting was to speak about revamping the entire accounts to align ourselves with DOR and DESE chart of accounts.
- Met with Stan and the Mayor regarding budget documentation. Would like to present a more focused report on the previous year. Another goal is to pull out revenue from the documents. Will be presenting a different report to the public in the upcoming meetings.
- Kathy Fowler has moved on from APS to Andover. Kathy worked with the two elementary schools. We wish her well and congratulate her.
- Outstanding National Grid bill - was presented to the City Council for funding consideration. Settlement amount is \$50,000. This morning Dr. Robinson, Ms. Farrell, Bob Lavoie and Anne Ferguson met to look at all of the documents that was found and to answer questions – why, when, and how.

Ms. LaValley asked if the outstanding National Grid bill was from the High School Building Project. *Yes* – Alexander Construction Company. Very complicated with various documents. With Shauna Ring's assistance, the settlement amount is \$50,000. Ms. LaValley went on to state that even though it was for the high school building project, the building committee is appointed by the city not the school committee. *Yes*.

Mr. Hoyt commented on the loss of Kathy Fowler for APS and it is a great gain for Andover Schools. With Governor Baker's reduction with the full day kindergarten, what impact does that mean for this year and next fiscal year. Dr. Robinson stated that this information is "hot off the press" and we need to look at how it will impact this current year first.

Mrs. Schultz stated that the "Innovation Grant" is also one of the cuts of Governor Baker. Dr. Robinson stated that yes, that was one of the line items that were cut \$265,000. Dr. Robinson then stated that she received a letter that there will be no changes to APS Grant that was awarded. Good news!

## **B. Director of Teaching and Learning**

Lyn Griffin spoke about the following:

- Reported on the number on the 9C cuts. Original amount this year was \$77,900. and the amount cut is \$9,796. This grant covers the cost of the full day kindergarten para-professionals. These para-professionals are also shared with the Title 1 Grant which helps with the impact of their positions.
- Academic Support Grant for the high school, for MCAS help. With a cut of the summer program, these monies might be able to be rolled into the school year. If we can't, it will be a loss of \$3,800.
- Happy that the Innovation Grant was not impacted.
- Have had an opportunity to sit with principals and teachers and talk about the data of the students. Finding interesting trends in students with interventions. The para-professionals are a key component in working with these students for success. She is finding that teachers are saying that they use to have these things, but not now. Ms. Griffin is asking about which programs have had the greatest impact of students that have been lost. This has been very stimulating to have answers to all the questions. It seems that there is a lot of fatigue with the teachers as she met with them. In thinking, when will we stop in meeting the basic needs of the children and think about transforming education. Ms. Griffin handed out a chart on her thoughts. Traditional learning, transitional learning and transformational and the difference in these components. Please keep in mind a vision for Amesbury through this budget season.

Mr. Schwartz stated that there was a conversation with the teachers, regarding these learning components. Need to have a better understanding of what the needs of the students. Looking forward to the forum for feedback and understanding. Mr. Hoyt stated that our staff and faculty are by far transitional component despite all of the years of cuts. This speaks of the high quality of APS faculty.

## **C. Superintendent's Report**

Dr. Robinson spoke about the following:

- Excited about the transformational steps that Lyn Griffin has pointed out. Encouraging to look at the components and stated that we do have items in the transformational component. We need to realize the exceptional faculty that APS has. Already doing a lot of these components. Thanked Lyn for pointing this out.
- Making up snow days – we have gotten out later than June 26<sup>th</sup> which is the last day of school as of today. Parents have asked if we will be looking at making up some days.

The Commissioner has provided some information.

- Changing the amount of days in which students attend (he has the authority to change the amount of days for the entire state).
- Blizzard bags (work to bring home) with guidelines – New Hampshire does this.
- Can not extend the hours of the day of school to make up for time
- Extending the windows for MCAS exams
- Can take Good Friday – taking days off for April vacation – Saturday school.

Mr. Hoyt stated that the least impact would be the Good Friday option and leave that to families for religious families. Mrs. Schultz asked how to get community input and how much time do we take before we decide if we will be having school on Good Friday, parents need to know. Dr. Robinson said yes would like input – would have to make that decision quickly to give families time. Ms. LaValley stated that seniors graduate in early June and lose a lot of education, giving them an additional day on Good Friday would be good. Ms. LaValley stated that it is a shame that the state will not let the districts add additional hours to their day with the buses already rolling. Might want to put out in the principals news letters that these options might be a possibility. Mr. Schwartz added his concerns about small storms and calling school off – no easy call. Parents have the last word to send their child to school or not.

- Community Forum will take place the Sunday at the high school cafeteria from 1:00 – 4:00 – babysitting is available. Contact Ms. LaValley ([sclavalley@amesburyma.gov](mailto:sclavalley@amesburyma.gov)) for babysitting. Flatbread is donating pizza, please let us know if you will be attending.

## V. COMMUNICATION

### A. **Student Advisory Council – Jill Hadwen**

Jill absent

### B. **Other**

- Mr. Hoyt spoke about the robot that he encountered in the lobby at the high school. Mr. Casto, Science Teacher, spoke to Mr. Hoyt regarding the robot and stated that he has spent over 200 hours working on. Very impressive. Mayor Gray stated that by the beginning of March the team has to stop building and weekend of March 6 and 7 in Reading is the competition. Encouraged the committee to attend. The team will be presenting to the committee at the next meeting.
- Mr. Hoyt – Tuesday Feb 12<sup>th</sup> – attended Educational Theatre at the high school. Congratulation to Elizabeth McAndrews who organized these performances. Sponsored by some Amesbury businesses and community members.

## VI. ITEMS FOR APPROVAL OR EARLY CONSIDERATION

### A. 1. **January 20, 2015 Minutes**

*Motion by Ms. LaValley, seconded by Mr. Hoyt to approve the regular minutes dated January 20, 2015. Vote: 4 Yes, 2 abstaining Mr. McGee and Mrs. Schultz.*

### 2. **Reappointment of Carl LeSage to Whittier Tech Board**

*Motion by Mr. Hoyt, seconded by Mr. Schwartz to reappoint Carl LeSage to Whittier Tech Board.* Discussion regarding Mr. LeSage attending the meeting before the vote. Dr. Robinson suggested that we do have him in to speak, but to take the vote so that the deadline will be met with Whittier.

*Vote: Yes, Unanimous.*

Mr. Hoyt asked the Mayor if they could discuss the Superintendent contract that was on the original agenda but not on this one. He felt that they were at a point to discuss it and vote on it. Mayor stated that he was not prepared to talk about it at this time and asked Carol to take it off the agenda. Ms. LaValley stated that on the minutes that was just approved, Mr. Scorzoni asked to have it on the next agenda. It was on the Fed. 2<sup>nd</sup> agenda. Ms. LaValley stated that there was a consensus in December and now a vote is needed. She went on to say that under the Mass General Law – Roberts Rules – stands on the agenda. Much discussion from the committee members regarding why that agenda item was taken off, thought it was ready for a vote.

***Motion by Ms. LaValley, to overrule the chair and put the Superintendent's contract on the agenda to discuss, seconded by Ms. Schultz. Vote: 3 Yes, 3 No – Motion not carried out.***

***Motion by Mr. Hoyt to go into Executive session. Roll Call was taken. Unanimous, Yes.***

*The committee then reconvened the meeting with a statement that on the March 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting, Superintendent's contract will be put back on the agenda.*

3. **School Committee Policy JFCB/GBCBC**  
Ms. Schultz stated there are no changes.

**B. Warrant**

1. **\$196,818.91 (2/5/15)**

***Motion by Ms. LaValley, seconded by Mr. McGee to accept the Warrant dated February 5, 2015 in the amount of \$196,818.91. Vote: 5 Yes, 1 abstained (Mr. Schwartz)***

2. **\$231,694.26 (2/19/15)**

***Motion by Mr. Hoyt, seconded by Mrs. Schultz to accept the Warrant dated February 19, 2015 in the amount of \$231,694.26. Vote: 5 Yes, 1 abstained (Mr. Schwartz)***

**VII. INFORMATION ITEMS**

**A. Subcommittee Reports**

1. **Finance/Budget Subcommittee –Mr. Schwartz**

Times for budget workshops @ 6:00 on March 9<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> 23<sup>rd</sup>, and 26<sup>th</sup>  
Public hearing on the budget will be April 2<sup>nd</sup> Vote on first meeting in April.  
First meeting in March will identify what topics at the workshop. Looking forward to the public forum and input.

2. **Policy Subcommittee – Bonnie Schultz**

Met today – Reviewed the Bullying Policy and is current and up to date.  
Domestic Violence Policy - discussing with attorney.  
Next meeting April 2<sup>nd</sup> at 9AM in Dr. Robinson's office.

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

Met tonight – reviewed retiree report and staffing report – Will begin with union reps.

***Motion by Mayor Gray to suspend the rules and continue with the meeting past 9:00pm.  
Motion by Mr. Schwartz, seconded by Mr. Hoyt. Vote: Yes, Unanimous***

## **VIII. FUTURE MEETINGS AND AGENDA ITEMS**

The Chair read the future meeting and agenda items aloud.

1. Technology Update (4/15)
2. Bill Scott, Dept. Dir Office of Community Dev. (3/15)
3. Academy MOU (3/15)
4. MASC/MASS Conference Update (3/15)
5. Visit with State Representative and State Senator (3/15) *Mr. Schwartz stated that he is looking to have the early college program here at this time. Mr. Hoyt commented on Representative Kelcourse appointed to the Education Committee for the state.*
6. South Hampton Visit (4/15)
7. School Committee & Superintendent's Goals (3/16/15) - *Mrs. Schultz pointed out that this meeting is for our initial goals. Noted that they are 6 months behind on their goals.*

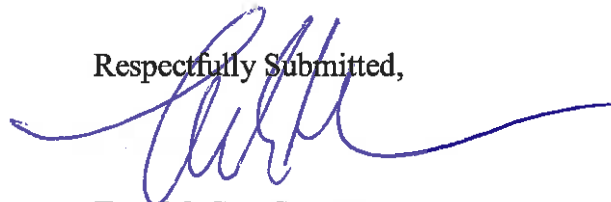
## **VIII. PRESS CONFERENCE**

None

## **IX. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

***Motion by Mrs. Schultz, seconded by Mr. Hoyt to adjourn the meeting. Vote: Yes, Unanimous.***

Respectfully Submitted,



Tom McGee, Secretary