

**AMESBURY SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES  
AMESBURY HIGH SCHOOL  
March 2, 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, Christian Scorzoni, Jill Hadwen, SAC Representative and Michele S. Robinson, Superintendent of Schools.

Absent was Bonnie Schultz.

The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:12 and Jill Hadwen led the Committee in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**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.*

***Motion by Ms. LaValley, seconded by Mr. Hoyt to take Item II Presentation out of order in the agenda and view it first. Vote: Yes, Unanimous.***

**II. PRESENTATIONS**

**Mark Casto: AHS high School Teacher**

**AHS Students: Adrienne Harris, Adam Incontri, Derek Kohnle, Adam Woodsom, Jake Harlow, Sam Stockwood, Sarah DesRoche, Tim Chase, Kyle Mirley, Bradley Kelleher**

**Mark Obremski: AHS First Robotics Rookie Team**

Mr. Casto opened the presentation with stating the name of the Robotics Team = *Carriagetown Robotics Team 5556 "Recycling"*. He went on to state that this is the first Robotics Team that AHS has had. He introduced Mark Obremski who is the supervisor/mentor for the team. Mr. Obremski has 20 years experience and is an alumni of MIT. Mr. Casto presented the committee with a Power Point on:

- How the team evolved
- How the robot was constructed
- How there is more than sports at the high school – this is sports for the mind.
- How this class puts an emphasis on Science and Technology
- Works on team work and compromising
- There are 2908 teams with 350 new teams
- Deadline – 6 weeks to build
- All the different parts of constructing the robot – *web cam, breaking system, elevator, grabbing system*

Mr. Casto announced that the competition will be held at Reading High School the weekend of March 6-8 and then the weekend of March 20-22 at UNH. Mr. Casto thanked the many sponsors in town that have helped (Flatbread, Amesbury Industrial Supply) to name a few.

The students then introduced themselves and made a statement of how this has enriched their studies. The Robot then made an appearance and showed how "He" could stack recycling bins and move them around.

All of the committee members spoke thanking the team for their presentation. Mr. Hoyt asked if there were any disasters during the 46 days of working together. *Yes, worked on problem solving, team work and compromise.* Mr. Scorzoni commented on how this is the 21<sup>st</sup> century learning and asked how the committee can help so that this learning can continue. Ms. LaValley asked for specific times of the competition. *Friday: 6-10 PM; Saturday 8AM to 8PM. There will be 3 Rookie awards and if awarded will be invited to Nationals.*

Carl LeSage stepped up to the podium and introduced himself and thanked the committee for reappointing him to the Whittier Tech Board.

## II. COMMENTS BY VISITORS AND DELEGATIONS

A parent/educator spoke regarding the superintendent's contract and highlighted why this contract should be approved by the committee. She expressed her concerns about how difficult it is to search for a superintendent and to continue to move forward with the 3 year contract.

## IV. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

### A. Director of Teaching and Learning

Lyn Griffin spoke about the following:

- Innovation Grant Planning – 6 steps of approval (Curriculum and assessment; Budget; School calendar and schedule; staffing; policy and procedures; professional development)
- Academy Board will be writing a letter to the state of the intention of changing the Horace Mann Charter School to an Innovation School.
- By September the school will be an Innovation School

Mr. Hoyt thanked Ms. Griffin and the team for all of the hard work.

### B. Assistant Superintendent

Deirdre Farrell spoke about the following:

- Budget calendar - will get the dates of the web site.
- FY15 – Deficit area in school choice – revenue in transportation lower – food service deficit.
- Circuit Breaker is decreased by \$45 thousand
- Expenses – Legal fees for Special Education and added cost for shoveling the roofs at the schools.
- Audits – End of Year pupil report; End of year transaction revolving account; AMS and AHS student activity accounts.
- Outstanding bill for National Grid of \$50,000. Met with the City Council about paying the bill. New procedure will take place at the business office to make sure this does not happen again. (will be initialing each page)
- New Financial program – looking at October to start it up. This program will align with DESE.
- Grants – Green community – improving energy at the middle school

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

Dr. Robinson spoke about the following:

- Thank you for attending the public forum – very successful
- Dr. Seuss' Birthday – wonderful opportunity to read at each elementary school.
- Thank you Mr. Casto for the Robotics presentation – transformational learning – critical thinking skills
- Federal level – Senator Alexander open hearing of drafts proposal giving more flexibility on the *No Child Left Behind Act*.
- MCAS – principals are getting the information to families about the extensions that were granted by the state for the MCAS testing window. (snow days)
- Leadership Team – working of their Improvement Plan and using that data with the budget.
- Upcoming Events –
  - Community Safety Evening – Christopher Herren telling his story on Drug awareness
  - Pettingill House – March 13<sup>th</sup> at Blue Ocean in Salisbury – critical partner with APS giving support to students and families.

Ms. LaValley asked if the MCAS dates could be put on the school web site. *Yes*

### **V. COMMUNICATION**

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

Jill spoke about the Frost Fest and all of the activities that have been happening with the Fest at the high school. The students seem to be enjoying themselves with video night, ping pong, 3D basketball and many more activities. She thanked Vermettes for donating the food for the events.

#### **B. Other**

- Ms. LaValley spoke about reading at the Amesbury Elementary School in Mrs. Pelletier's room honoring Dr. Seuss. She also spoke about the Community forum and thanked the School Coalition for working with this committee. There were 100+ in attendance and about 13 children in child care (thanks to the 4 high school volunteers). Ms. LaValley stated that the first budget workshop will be March 9<sup>th</sup>. She asked if there would be a need to get the information out from the forum before the budget meeting.. Mr. Hoyt and Mr. Schwartz commented that the more information the better – would be helpful.
- Mr. Hoyt spoke about the Jeanne Geiger Crisis Center sponsoring an annual White Ribbon breakfast on March 24<sup>th</sup> at 8:00AM in Ipswich. This event is always a powerful morning. The cost is \$30.00 per person. Senator Ives and Kelcourse will be in attendance.

### **VI. ITEMS FOR APPROVAL OR EARLY CONSIDERATION**

#### **A. 1. February 2, 2015 Minutes**

*Motion by Mr. Hoyt, seconded by Mr. Scorzoni to approve the regular minutes dated February 2, 2015. Vote: Yes, Unanimous.*

**2. Letter to DESE regarding Academy renewal**

The Board of Trustee submitted a letter to DESE for the renewal of the Charter School till August 15<sup>th</sup>.

**3. Statement of Interest**

Deirdre Farrell spoke regarding the Statement Of Interest (SOI) for AES:

- Gave the committee a brief outline of the process and a handout.
  - Need to submit the SOI first to the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) of our interest. A vote is needed by the School Committee and the City Council (March 10<sup>th</sup>) in order to submit the SOI. April 6<sup>th</sup> is the deadline for submission.
  - Priorities included in the SOI for Amesbury Elementary are: elimination of existing severe overcrowding; prevention of severe overcrowding expected from increased enrollment; replacement of addition to obsolete building.
  - Can earn points with the MSBA (Model School Program; Green Innovative; Prevention Maintenance)
  - MSBA will review the needs and compile them
  - Once SOI accepted – go into the Pipeline – start of the formal process – Can be reconfigured at that time

***Motion by Mr. Hoyt, seconded by Ms. LaValley to submit the Statement of Interest (SOI) for the Amesbury Elementary School to the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA). Mr. Hoyt read the document aloud. Discussion: Mr. Scorzoni asked about the budget time lines; department services; how long will the process take. Mr. Scorzoni agreed that a new school is needed and that he was all for it. Ms. Farrell stated that the process is lengthy – MSBA will take the square footage allowances – they make the rules but everyone knows all about it – there will be a project funding agreement with input from the community. She ended with the SOI does not confine anything. Vote: 5 yes with 1 abstaining (Mayor Gray)***

Mayor Gray agreed that a new school is needed. If the SOI is accepted, will be in the pipeline in 4-6 months with no commitment at that time. Mayor Gray asked Ms. Farrell what she thought the cost would be based on her past experience with the process in Newburyport. Ms. Farrell stated 35 million with a 50% reimbursement rate was her thought.

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

**4. Superintendent Contract**

Mr. Hoyt began the discussion with a motion:

***Motion by Mr. Hoyt, seconded by Ms. LaValley to renew Dr. Robinson's contract as previously discussed. Discussion:***

- *Ms. LaValley read her statement regarding Dr. Robinson strengths in supporting the contract. She noted Dr. Robinson's ranking in the evaluation that the committee has given her 3.3 – 3.5 (4 being the highest); implemented the District Determined Measures; evaluating work flows; has worked on the relationship between the two elementary schools; guided the Academy through leadership transitions; invested in*

*the city of Amesbury with her memberships to many boards.*

- *Mr. Schwartz noted that it was a painful process with some of the discussion not comfortable. He noted that with that being said – we are now in a position to take this vote. The previous meeting was tough, but just wanted to get it right – it was done properly.*
- *Mr. McGee read a statement that Mrs. Schultz wrote: She stated that Dr. Robinson has restructured the Special Education Department; has the respect of staff and has built a team.*
- *Mr. McGee stated that he has worked with three superintendents and is closer with Dr. Robinson than any of the others. He stated that there are some changes that need to be looked at.*
- *Mr. Scorzoni asked about reading the contract terms aloud for the public. Ms. LaValley read some of the changes:*
  - *3 year contract (July 14 & June 17)*
  - *Salary - \$170,148.71 = 2015; \$174,442.42 = 2016*
  - *Added language with finger printing and Cori*

*Mr. Scorzoni added that the evaluation process has mutual goals. He stated that he missed the previous meeting – that the vote of this contract has been a long time coming which started in August. The process had a lot of discussion and a healthy exchange. Mr. Scorzoni ended by stating it has been a privilege to work with Dr. Robinson.*

*Vote: Yes; Unanimous.*

*Mayor Gray stated that there were a lot of discussions on Dr. Robinson's contract. He went on to speak of his differences with Dr. Robinson – can be better with room for improvement – will come together and work with improving the differences.*

**B. Warrant**

**1. \$335,799.33 (3/5/15)**

*Motion by Stan Schwartz, seconded by Mr. Hoyt to accept the Warrant dated March 5, 2015 in the amount of \$335,799.33. Vote: 5 Yes, 1 abstained (Ms. LaValley)*

**2. \$196,818.19 (2/5/15)**

*Motion by Ms. LaValley, seconded by Mr. Hoyt to accept the Warrant dated February 5, 2015 in the amount of \$196,818.19. Vote: Yes, unanimous.*

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

*Motion by Ms. LaValley, seconded by Mr. Schwartz to accept the Warrant dated February 19, 2015 in the amount of \$231,694.26. Vote: Yes, unanimous.*

**VII. INFORMATION ITEMS**

**A. Subcommittee Reports**

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

Mr. Schwartz reported that this committee met prior to this meeting. Discussion about improving on reporting DIC Policy – reviewed policy and it is up-to-date. Mr. Schwartz requested a vote to begin the scope of audit of the financial operation MASC.

*Motion by Mr. Schwartz, seconded by Ms. LaValley to audit the financial operation MASC. Vote: Yes, unanimous.*

Mr. Schwartz ended his report by stating the budget workshops will begin next week.

**2. Policy Subcommittee – Bonnie Schultz**

Mr. Hoyt reported on working on the Domestic Violence Policy – will be meeting on April 2<sup>nd</sup>.

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

Mr. McGee reported the dialog with the union has begun.

**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.*
6. South Hampton Visit (4/15)
7. School Committee & Superintendent's Goals (3/15)

**VIII. PRESS CONFERENCE**

None

**IX. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

None

***Motion by Mr. Schwartz, seconded by Mr. Hoyt to adjourn the meeting at 9:42 PM. Vote: Yes, Unanimous.***

Respectfully Submitted,



Tom McGee, Secretary