

**AMESBURY SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES  
AMESBURY HIGH SCHOOL  
April 6, 2015**

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Present at 7:00 p.m. were Mayor 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.

Mayor Gray, called the meeting to order at 7:10 and Tom McGee 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**

Mayor Gray explained the rules of comments by visitors – 3 minutes per person total of 20 minutes.

- One parent stepped up to the podium stating her support for the Superintendents' FY16 proposed budget. She thanked Mayor Gray for his involvement in the Robotics Team and for the city agreeing to give funding to that team. She asked for city funding for the 5<sup>th</sup> Grade DI team that will be heading to off to Tennessee for the Global Finals.

**II. PRESENTATIONS: Destination Imagination 5<sup>th</sup> grade team Crayon Crew:**

**Benjamin Blumsack**

**Conor Carmody**

**Declan Carmody**

**David Roberts**

**Ryan Roberts**

**Sean Rodgers**

**Lucas Welling**

**AMS DI Coordinator: Tia Costello – AMS Teacher**

**Parent Managers:**

**Cindy Roberts**

**Maureen Rodgers**

**Parent Volunteers: Peter Blumsack**

**Toni Carmody**

**Christine Harrison**

Mrs. Costello showed the committee a power point presentation and explained all about what DI is.

- DI is - Creative Problem Solving
- There are 2-7 participants in one team
- 13 teams from Amesbury (AES, CES, AMS)
- The team is student driven
- Begins in September and work 2-4 months on central thought with March being the assessment
- Cooperative learning – learning can be fun
- Giving student the chance to learn and experience the creative process
- Recognize, Imagine, Initiate & collaborate, Assess, Evaluate & Celebrate

Mrs. Costello introduced the second place, 5<sup>th</sup> grade winning team – Crayon Crew - who will be attending the Global Finals in Tennessee the week of May 20<sup>th</sup>. This will be the first time that Amesbury is represented. She thanked the team managers, team volunteers and Mr. Curry for their continued support. Mrs. Costello concluded by pointing out the fundraisers that are happening in the city to support the large cost of attending the Global Finals in Knoxville, Tennessee: Hodgies on April 14 from 4:00 – 8:00; Flatbread; Go-Fund-me account and asking for some financial help from the city.

The committee thanked Mrs. Costello and the students for coming out. Ms. LaValley asked how they came up with the name; *a vote and compromises*. Mr. Hoyt asked the students how they felt when they heard they won and if they were nervous; *some of the students stepped up and said they were very excited, happy and screamed – they were also nervous especially when they made some mistakes*. Mrs. Schultz asked how many days the event will be in Tennessee; *4 days, Wednesday through Saturday with competitions, workshops and exhibits*.

#### **IV. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS**

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

Lyn Griffin spoke about the following:

- Innovation Grant – March 24<sup>th</sup> the Academy Board sent out letters to stake holders to be able to go from a Charter School to an Innovation School. Next Wednesday there will be a presentation at the Open House at the Academy for the public. The School Committee will have the final vote to go from a Charter School to an Innovation School. Thirty days after the School Committee vote, it will be official – does not need to go back to the state
- Curriculum – Assessment and Instruction – need to continue with this work
  - Reading Street – LA program which has been updated to Common Core standards
  - Go Math – using for 3 years – on going in grades K – 8<sup>th</sup>
  - Foundation – Grade K – 3<sup>rd</sup> every teacher is trained – very important piece.
  - Assessment – Math - District wide but not as effective at the high school – this is real time data
  - Assessment – MA Kindergarten Early Assessment – observational tool – started this year – assesses social, emotional and cognitive – whole child
  - District Determine Measures – on going – big undertaking
- On Monday, April 13<sup>th</sup> – Triton review team will be coming to Amesbury to look at Go Math
- This year there were 68 offerings at our Professional Development Days.

##### **B. Assistant Superintendent**

Deirdre Farrell spoke about the following:

- Munis to Softright conversion – more in line with DESE – more efficient – will have a lot of training session for the staff.
- Finance – speaking with Senator O’Connor-Ives and Representative Kelcourse regarding funding of Early College at the high school and full day kindergarten
- The House now has the budget then it will go to the Senate around Memorial Day

- April 10<sup>th</sup> – deadline for submission of the SOI to the MSBA for the Amesbury Elementary School – hope to have it signed by the Mayor and submitted by tomorrow.  
Mr. Scorzoni spoke about the SOI submission and with the Mayor abstaining the vote will that hurt our chances – is it a big deal?  
Mayor Gray stated that he abstained because of the two signatures on the submission. He offered for a revote and he would vote on the SOI.

***Motion by Ms. LaValley, seconded by Mr. Hoyt to reconsider the SOI.*** Discussion: *Ms. Farrell stated that a revote was fine but needed the original context of the language, which she has.*  
***Vote: Yes, Unanimous.***

***Motion by Mayor Gray to vote on the SOI, motion by Mr. Schwartz second by Mrs. Schultz to vote on the SOI.***

Mr. Schwartz read the test aloud:

*Resolved: Having convened in an open meeting on April 6, 2015, prior to the closing date, the Amesbury School Committee of Amesbury, MA, in accordance with its charter, by-laws, and ordinance, has voted to authorize the Superintendent to submit to the Massachusetts School Building Authority the Statement of Interest Form dated March 2, 2015 for the Amesbury Elementary School located at 20 South Hampton, Amesbury MA 01913 which describes and explains the following deficiencies and the priority category(s) for which an application may be submitted to the Massachusetts School Building Authority in the future –*

*Priority 2 – Elimination of severe overcrowding;*

*Priority 4 – Prevention of severe overcrowding;*

*Priority 7 – Replacement of or addition to obsolete buildings;*

*And hereby further specifically acknowledges that by submitting this Statement of Interest For, the Massachusetts School Building Authority in no way guarantees the acceptance or the approval of an application, the awarding of a grant or any other funding commitment from the Massachusetts School Building Authority, or commits the City/Town/Regional School District to filing an application for funding with the Massachusetts School Building Authority.*

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

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

Dr. Robinson spoke about the following:

- Transformative learning – DI Team – very proud of the students and teachers.  
April 14<sup>th</sup> – ice cream fundraiser at Hodgies
- Need to enhance the curriculum and professional development and support the learning of our schools.
- Important conferences/workshops that are put on by the state. In May conference of federal reporting of grants – number of staff will be attending.
- State Educator Evaluation – Best practice – Part of the Race-To-The-Top Grant that APS was awarded.
- Spoke to the Chair, will be tabling (V-A-3) School Choice – need to put a lot of thought into the decision.
- MCAS – Long Composition wrapping up – Math will be in May

- Last week – Amesbury Rotary gave out dictionaries to all Third Grade students – great opportunity for students to practice skills
- April 27<sup>th</sup> – Christopher Herren, former Celtics player, will be telling his story at the high school. Powerful presentation – open to the community and encouraged to attend.
- Spring Events – Thursday – High School Spring concert; Fiddler on the Roof just played at the Middle School – Look at the calendar for upcoming events.
- Spring Break will be the week of April 20<sup>th</sup>

Jill Hadwen stated the Spring Concert has been postponed until May 12<sup>th</sup> because of all the snow days.

Mr. Schwartz and Ms. LaValley spoke about the Christopher Herren presentation. It has been an ESPN documentary – amazing story and very powerful. Information is on the website and the event is offered free to the public.

Mr. Hoyt stated that previously he wished the DI Team good luck in Nashville – He wish to clarify that he meant to say Knoxville.

## **V. COMMUNICATION**

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

Jill spoke about the following:

- Thanked the committee for suggesting speaking with the 8<sup>th</sup> graders regarding activities and clubs that offered at the high school. Should have an official date soon when they will be meeting with them.
- Student Council spoke about the status of Landry Stadium – With the fees that are charged to the athletic teams – Where does the money go?

Mayor Gray stated that Landry Stadium is its own business unit – Has a committee that over sees it – He will put them in touch with the committee – Right now Landry Committee is raising money to replace the score board. Ms. LaValley stated that as a past Landry Management Committee – need to invite them to our meeting to see where the money is going – Should do this soon.

### **B. Other**

- Mrs. Schultz stated that the high school top 10 Dinner is schedule on the same date as the School Committee Meeting. Need to reschedule the School Committee meeting.
- Ms. LaValley spoke about the Avocacy Day for School Committee member that is scheduled for April 28<sup>th</sup> which Jill can attend. Math Team League is in the Tri-State Math League. Should have a discussion at the finance committee meeting regarding funding for the DI Team.
- Mayor Gray stated that there will be a Local Heroes Celebration at the City Hall this Thursday at 6:00 PM honoring citizens that have gone above and beyond. There are a number of awards that will be presented.

- Mayor Gray spoke about the budget –
  - Background –appropriated 28.1 million last year - Superintendent’s recommendation this year is 29.247 million – decrease of 29.377 from what was handed down on Thursday
  - Proposed budget by the Mayor – 2 part - appropriation from the city would be \$809,000. plus \$106,000. out of the Superintendent’s Budget for Technology – Total would be \$915,000.
  - No cuts – will be able to reinvest – whether it be Mayor’s budget or the Superintendent’s budget.
  - Level funded from FY15
  - Add back 3-4 teacher depending on the state
  - Fund over 40% above level funding
  - Filed for State Grant for Energy improvement which will be \$50,000. savings.
  - Call for Technology Committee for the entire city
  - Looking at the needs of the entire city
  - 80% - 90% of the budget will go to the schools
  - Avoids cuts in other departments in the city – police, fire, youth services, elderly services to name a few
  - Uncertainty going forward – if we give too much this year – might have to cut next year.

Mayor Gray concluded asking the committee to consider the needs of the entire community and support his proposed budget.

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

**A. 1. March 16, 2015 Minutes**

*Motion by Ms. LaValley, seconded by Mr. Hoyt to approve the regular minutes dated March 16, 2015. Vote: Yes, Unanimous.*

*Motion by Mr. Schwartz, seconded by Mr. Hoyt to take item number 4 (FY16 Fee Recommendation) out of order. Vote: Yes, Unanimous.*

**4. FY16 Fee Recommendation(s)**

Mr. Schwartz made a motion to increase the lunch fees by \$.15 (AMS & AHS would increase to \$3.00 and AES & CES would increase to \$2.75).  
*Discussion – Ms. LaValley noted that lunch fees have not increased in a couple of years.*

*Motion by Mr. Hoyt, seconded by Mr. Schwartz to increase lunch costs by \$.15. Vote: Yes, Unanimous.*

Mr. Schwartz made a motion to increase athletic fees by \$25.00 per sport with a \$1200.00 family cap.

*Motion by Ms. LaValley, seconded by Mr. Hoyt to increase athletic fees by \$25.00 per sport with a \$1200.00 family cap.*

*Discussion – Mr. Scorzoni is opposed to this motion – he recognizes the need but sees no value – This is an out of pocket expense. Need to put more back in the schools and reinvest. This is not the right time to increase. Ms. LaValley is reluctant - double taxed. She read area school*

*systems fees and said that the increase was well within the realm of surrounding communities. The budget cannot sustain the fees as they use to. Revenue use to be in athletics – need to look at that. Mayor Gray agreed with Mr. Scorzoni – need to look at the revenue.*

***Vote: 5 - Yes, 2 –opposed (Mayor Gray and Scorzoni)***

## **2. FY16 Budget Vote**

Mayor Gray asked for a motion to approve his budget of \$915,000.

***Motion by Mr. Schwartz, seconded by Mr. Scorzoni to support the Mayor's budget of \$915,000. as proposed by the Mayor.***

*Discussion: Mr. Schwartz stated that the work that the committee has done together is positive. Mr. Scorzoni stated that in the past we have invested in the school in the 8-9 thousand dollar range. Want more than that, have to be creative. That capital improvement is a one year thing. Pulling \$100,000. off the base. Looks like we are going backwards – what does this number buy us – what are we taking off the list? Can't vote if don't know what is off the list or on. Mayor Gray spoke about the capital of \$100,000. does not have to be for technology – will have capital every year. The only way out of this is economic growth, making a lot of progress but will take time. By FY17 will have a lot of growth (Hotel, Amesbury Heights, Solar project and new businesses) on a good path towards working through this. Administration priorities what comes off the list – 10 positions on the list – 40% back. Mr. Hoyt appreciates the Mayor's efforts but he has the responsibility to Amesbury families – talked about rebuilding – not enough – will not support the Mayor's budget as presented. Mr. Schwartz shares Mr. Hoyt's thoughts. Will be voting no on the Mayor's proposed budget. Worked well together and be role models on the process. Ms. LaValley thanked everyone for the out pouring of emails, thanked the mayor for being involved – not in support of Mayor's budget. A lot of mandates/regulations – reflect on what is needed at each building. Will vote for the Superintendent's budget as proposed.*

***Vote: 1 Yes; 6 No – Motion fails.***

***Motion by Mr. McGee, seconded by Mr. Hoyt to suspend the rules and continue the meeting after 9:00. Vote: Yes, Unanimous.***

**A 5 minute recess – Meeting resumed at 9:07PM**

- ***Motion, by the Chair, to accept appropriation of 010 District Administration of \$716,417. Accepted by Ms. LaValley, seconded by Mrs. Schultz. Objected by Mr. Scorzoni.***
- ***Motion, by the Chair, to accept appropriation of 010 Horace Mann Charter of \$532,781. Accepted by Mrs. Schultz, seconded by Mr. Schwartz. Vote: 6 Yes, 1 Opposed (Mayor Gray)***
- ***Motion, by the Chair, to accept appropriation of 011 Transportation of \$543,000. Accepted by Ms. LaValley, seconded by Mrs. Schultz. Vote: 6 Yes, 1 Opposed (Mayor Gray)***

- ***Motion, by the Chair, to accept appropriation of 012 Amesbury Elementary of \$3,686,118. Accepted by Mr. Hoyt, seconded by Ms. LaValley. Vote: 6 Yes, 1 Opposed (Mayor Gray)***
- ***Motion, by the Chair, to accept appropriation of 013 Cashman Elementary of \$3,923,470. Accepted by Mrs. Schultz, seconded by Ms. LaValley. Objected by Mr. Scorzoni***
- ***Motion, by the Chair, to accept appropriation of 014 Amesbury Middle School of \$5,411,235. Accepted by Mrs. Schultz, seconded by Mr. McGee. Vote: 6 Yes, 1 Opposed (Mayor Gray)***
- ***Motion, by the Chair, to accept appropriation of 015 Amesbury High School of \$4,813,138. Accepted by Mr. Schwartz, seconded by Mr. Hoyt. Vote: 6 Yes, 1 Opposed (Mayor Gray)***
- ***Motion, by the Chair, to accept appropriation of 015 Athletics of \$405,666.. Accepted by Mrs. Schultz, seconded by Ms. LaValley. Vote: 6 Yes, 1 Opposed (Mayor Gray)***
- ***Motion, by the Chair, to accept appropriation of 016 District Technology of \$379,091. Accepted by Ms. LaValley, seconded by Mr. McGee. Vote: 6 Yes, 1 Opposed (Mayor Gray)***
- ***Motion, by the Chair, to accept appropriation of 017 District Maintenance of \$1,705,075. Accepted by Mr. Hoyt, seconded by Mr. McGee. Vote: 6 Yes, 1 Opposed (Mayor Gray)***
- ***Motion, by the Chair, to accept appropriation of 018 District Curriculum of \$310,322. Accepted by Ms. LaValley, seconded by Mr. Hoyt. Vote: 6 Yes, 1 Opposed (Mayor Gray)***
- ***Motion, by the Chair, to accept appropriation of 019 District Special Education of \$4,881,937. Accepted by Mr. McGee seconded by Mr. Schwartz. Vote: 6 Yes, 1 Opposed (Mayor Gray)***
- ***Motion, by the Chair, to accept appropriation of 020 District Benefits of \$3,485,804. Accepted by Ms. LaValley, seconded by Mr. Hoyt. Vote: 6 Yes, 1 Opposed (Mayor Gray)***
- ***Motion, by the Chair, to accept appropriation of 011 Employee-Benefits of \$1,160,000. Accepted by Mr. Hoyt, seconded by Mrs. Schultz. Vote: 6 Yes, 1 Opposed (Mayor Gray)***

The following were revised because of the above objections by Mr. Scorzoni.

- (010) District Administration & (013) Cashman Elementary School – Previously both objected by Mr. Scorzoni. Mr. Scorzoni asked for a clarification from the Cashman principal and/or the Elementary School principal on the \$40,000. difference in the 2 elementary schools. He was also concerned with the increase in staffing at the central office. Thought of allocating resources and looking at the monies. Ms. LaValley asked

Ms. Charette or Mr. Helliesen to clarify the difference in monies. Mrs. Schultz noted that the elementary schools worked as a team not one school against the other. Ms. Charette stated that the Cashman needs were different than AES' and there is a need to support ELL. The ELL population has grown from 7 students to up to 27 with the same staffing. Dr. Robinson spoke regarding the needs at central office. They have made several cuts in the past years to protect the students, but now the staffing is too low and the need is there to rebuild. Mr. Scorzoni withdrew his objection and the vote was taken.

- ***Motion, by the Chair, to accept appropriation of 010 District Administration of \$716,417. Accepted by Ms. LaValley, seconded by Mrs. Schultz. Vote: 6 Yes, 1 Opposed (Mayor Gray)***
- ***Motion, by the Chair, to accept appropriation of 013 Cashman Elementary of \$3,923,470. Accepted by Ms. LaValley, seconded by Mrs. Schultz. Vote: 5 Yes, 1 Opposed (Mayor Gray), 1 abstain (Hoyt)***
- ***Motion, by the Chair, to accept appropriation of total revenue of \$2707,029. Accepted by Mrs. Schultz, seconded by Mr. Hoyt.***  
*Discussion: Ms. Farrell asked if specific wording could be used – Revenue including - Fees; Tuition; Federal, State and Local Grants.*
- ***Motion, by the Chair, to accept appropriation of total revenue of \$2707,029. Accepted by Ms. LaValley with the specific wording from Ms. Farrell as stated above, seconded by Mr. Hoyt. Vote: 6 Yes, 1 Opposed (Mayor Gray)***
- ***Motion, by the Chair, to accept total city appropriation of \$29,247,025. Accepted by Ms. LaValley, seconded by Mr. Schwartz. Vote: 6 Yes, 1 Opposed (Mayor Gray)***

**3. School Choice Vote – Five Ninth Grade - tabled**

**B. Warrant**

**1. \$282,026.04 (4/2/15)**

***Motion by Mr. McGee, seconded by Mr. Hoyt to accept the Warrant dated April 2, 2015 in the amount of \$282,026.04. Vote: Yes, Unanimous.***

**VII. INFORMATION ITEMS**

**A. Subcommittee Reports**

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

**2. Policy Subcommittee – Bonnie Schultz**

Mrs. Schultz stated that they will be meeting tomorrow at 7:30 AM

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

Mr. McGee stated that they continue to meet with the union.



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

The Chair read the future meeting and agenda items aloud.

1. Technology Update (5/15)
2. Academy Innovation Plan (5/15)
3. Visit with State Representative and State Senator (5/15)
4. South Hampton Visit (5/15)
5. School Committee & Superintendent's Goals (5/15)
6. Retirement Recognition (6/1/15)
7. Whittier Regional Vocational Technical Update (6/15/15)

**VIII.. PRESS CONFERENCE**

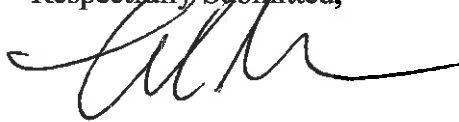
None

**IX.. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

None

***Motion b Mr. Schwartz, seconded by Mrs. Schultz to adjourn the meeting at 9:35. Vote: Yes, Unanimous.***

Respectfully Submitted,



Tom McGee, Secretary