

**AMESBURY SCHOOL COMMITTEE
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
AMESBURY HIGH SCHOOL
May 4, 2015**

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

Absent were: Stan Schwartz and Jill Hadwen, SAC Representative – Sitting in for Jill Hadwen was Charlotte Hyde.

Mayor Gray, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:12 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

1. Mr. Schwartz stepped up to the podium and thanked the School Committee and the community for supporting him for his years of service as a School Committee member. He thanked them for inviting him to this year's Top 10 Dinner at the High School. He shared about his years of service, working with 4 different Superintendents; building trust and relationships with staff in the district; and feeling that he is a recipient of much more than he has given. He went on to speaking about the budget process this year and glad that the committee came together. As the budget process moves forward he commented on supporting the Superintendent's budget and being able to afford it. Mr. Schwartz thanked each School Committee Member personally with accolades. What is next for him: will continue to advocate for the schools; stay healthy, be with family and will help schools to be excellent.
 - Ms. LaValley thanked Mr. Schwartz for his kind words and invited him to come back to the first meeting in June to join the retirees.
 - Mr. Hoyt stated that this was a bittersweet moment and that saying thank you just isn't enough. He wished him the best.
 - Mr. Scorzoni said that he learned a lot from him, sad to see him go, and thanked him for the 15 years of service.
 - Mrs. Schultz stated that he will be missed but he is not far away
 - Mr. McGee stated that he will miss him and he has helped him grow a lot over these years.
 - Mayor Gray commented on his spirited conversation; he is a good man that speaks from his heart.

2. Cindy Yetman, AFT Union President, spoke to Mr. Schwartz on behalf of the staff of APS. She thanked him for his years of service and commented on always having "our backs". She ended on stating that his heart was with the children of Amesbury. Mrs. Yetman presented Mr. Schwartz with a gift.

3. Gretchen Marinopoulos, parent, approached the podium on behalf of the parents in the community. She stated that they will miss Mr. Schwartz approachability and presented him with a gift for his front lawn – *Support Amesbury Schools*.

Motion by Mr. Hoyt to take line item (IV. Communications – A. Student Advisory Council – Charlotte Hyde) out of order, second by Ms. LaValley. Vote: Yes – unanimous.

IV. COMMUNICATION

A. Student Advisory Council – Charlotte Hyde

- Charlotte spoke regarding visiting the middle school eighth graders to speak about freshman activities and clubs. A date will be set after graduation.
- Voted on new officers

Mr. Hoyt and Ms. LaValley commended Charlotte and all of the cast mates on the performance of *Legally Blonde*. The performance was extraordinary, impressive and very entertaining. They also thanked Ms. Myer and Mrs. Shirshac for their directorship and for combining the middle school and the high school on this performance.

II. PRESENTATIONS

None

III. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

A. Director of Student Services

Kevin Pierce spoke about the following:

- Awarded an \$8000. Grant for Pre-K – apply for this grant each year. Will be used for technology (I Pads for Special Education). This amount will be split between AES and CES.
- Teachers Core Academics – ELL – 13 Teachers trained – this is an unfunded mandate from the state – APS has 39 ELL students in the district.
- Melmarc consolidation – Will be taking a look at existing programs – Looking especially at the Middle School programs and thinking of those students' needs.
- Department of Education received LEA (Local Education Authority) assignment – establishing residency – there are a number of cases like this in the district – the state will be looking at this situation with lawyers and other districts.

B. Assistant Superintendent

Deirdre Farrell spoke about the following:

- On April 10th, Ms. Farrell delivered the SOI for AES to the MSBA. She commented that there were at least a 3 foot pile of SOI's from other districts.
- FY16 – Full Day K and Early College. Senator Connor-Ives and Representative Kelcourse support the educational partnership with NECCO. They are both supporting to fund both Full Day K and Early College.
- April Finance committee meeting prior to this meeting- presented a third quarter report – presented 3 new reports: cost center, revenue, and collection of balance to identify the issues and balance reports as of 7-1-14 and how these are managed. Present the munis report that does not report payroll.
- Continue to look at food service FY15 and include payroll in FY16

- Monitoring Special Education costs –
- Some issues in FY15 maintenance of vehicle and need new lawn mower
- Student Activity audit on May 14 & 15 for the high school and middle school – no concerns – good practice.
- MASGO Financial review – received a packet with 6 components presented by John Crafton – includes the scope services and finances. If approved will be doing a site visit on May 27 & 28. A lot of work to be done – advocate that it would happen so that changes could happen for FY16.
- Fee recommendations – current fees for transportation (\$360. Single - \$540. Family cap) recommend that fees do not increase – a lot better on collecting fees. Preschool Tuition – current tuition (\$2997. 4days & \$1498. – 2 days) a bit high, empty seats – recommend that we decrease the fees (\$2800. 4 days & \$1400. 2 days).
- FY16 budget – meeting with all principals – making sure all salaries are captured.
- Softright – new financials – replacing Munis – converting on July 1st – will be in line with DESE and have more efficient reports. Will be loading up Softright with past years expenses – will look at encumbering payroll.
- Excel Bootcamp for the next four Tuesdays will be offered to the central office secretaries – taught by Wally Helliesen – appreciate his willingness to teach the course – will help with day to day operations in the business office. In line with the recommendations that were made for change in the business office.
- Power Point presentation: - 5 year technology needs – the technology team meet 1-2 times a month. Looking for a replacement for Kathy Fowler – Last presentation was March 2014 – needed to be updated. Taken out of the FY16 budget is \$106,000. For the hardware of technology. Funded differently next year – will be funded by the city.
 - No change in goals.
 - Continue 6 year upgrade cycle for computers
 - Wireless Access points
 - Computers that are over 7 years old in the district (249)
 - The hub at the high school for the district
 - Lease as a method to replacements
 - Mobile carts
 - Expand teaching and learning opportunities
 - 5 year technology capital plan breakdown

Thank you to the extraordinary Team – John Dubuc, Marine Fabre, Susan Lang and Kathy Fowler (left - will have a replacement recommendation in the near future).

Mrs. Schultz asked about the life span switch of the mobile carts – Ms. Farrell was not sure but will look into it. She also asked about the use of phones as an educational tool. Will be building on this.

Mr. Hoyt asked about the status of hiring a replacement for Kathy Fowler. Ms. Farrell responded that she has a phone call into the candidate.

C. Superintendent's Report

Dr. Robinson spoke about the following:

- Regarding Mrs. Schultz comment about bringing in own devices for an educational tool – a lot of discussion – needs a policy/infrastructure and culture around that and that will take time.
- Brief overview of Education Evaluations – state has responded to concerns and the unrealistic time line. State has proposed flexibility and an alternative pathway. Giving 3 different ways to move forward in Phase 2. Need to respond by June 30th to take advantage – will keep the committee updated.

- *Legally Blonde* – performance at the high school – very impressive – AHS and AMS working together – congratulations.
- FY 16 budget – Wednesday, May 13th at 7:00 at City Hall.
- School Committee meeting on Monday, May 18th will be moved to Tuesday, May 19th
- Innovation Grant final proposal will be submitted by Lyn Griffin after the approval of the committee
- Channel 18 –shows – John Lyman, Roy Hammond and a lot of other daily shows worthy of checking out.
- Pettingill House – open house this Wednesday at their new location
- Friday, May 8th AEFI – Hall of Honor – can buy tickets at the door, on line or call Carol Bartlett.
- June 1st meeting will be celebrating our retirees – need to change the times of the finance meeting.

Ms. LaValley and Mr. Hoyt thanked the Finance Committee and stated they will not be able to attend the meeting at the City Hall on the 13th because of prior commitments.

Ms. Schultz suggested that a letter be drafted to present to the City Finance Committee stated of their support of the Superintendent budget.

IV. COMMUNICATION

B. Other

Ms. LaValley spoke about attending the AEFI Hall of Honor on Friday, May 8th. She also stated that the FY15-16 school calendar needs to be looked at again because of the PRT day on March 2nd with March 1st being the Presidential Election. Dr. Robinson stated that she will look at the date and vote on it next meeting.

Mr. McGee asked where we are in the Strategic Planning Process and School Committee Goals. Need to look at our goals in a different light.

Ms. LaValley stated that would be a great discussion – need to form a foundation and bring in teachers and community members in a forum. Goals do not need to mirror Strategic Plan but it does help.

Mr. Hoyt stated that regarding Strategic Plan – busy time of year – need to convene meeting with school council members, PAG and PTO.

Mrs. Schultz stated there needs to have a timeline and formulate that plan. – Regarding Stan Schwartz' resignation – What is the process to have position appointed? Mayor Gray explained the process: City Clerk declares a vacancy; clerk accepts application; city and school committee meet; position can be filled immediately. Needs to be within 30 days of receiving letter of resignation that a meeting is held. City council can ask for a special meeting.

VI. ITEMS FOR APPROVAL OR EARLY CONSIDERATION

A. 1. April 6, 2015 Minutes

Motion by Ms. LaValley, seconded by Mr. McGee to approve the regular minutes dated April 6, 2015. Vote: Yes, Unanimous.

2. April 2, 2015 Minutes

Motion by Mr. Hoyt, seconded by Ms. LaValley to approve the regular minutes dated April 2, 2015. Vote: Yes, Unanimous.

3. School Choice Vote – Five Ninth Grade

Motion by Ms. LaValley, seconded by Mr. Hoyt to accept the opening of Five Ninth Grade School Choice slots – Discussion: Mrs. Schultz commented that the reason the revenue is down for school choice is because the choice opening are limited and harder for students to transition at the older grade levels. This is not the fault of the district. Ms. LaValley would like to see a policy to look at what is capacity in our district and align it with the budget process in March.
Vote: Yes, Unanimous.

4. FY16 Fee Recommendation(s)

Motion by Mr. Hoyt, seconded by Mrs. Schultz to have the transportation fees remain the same (\$360.00 single & \$540.00 family cap). Vote: Yes, Unanimous.

Motion by Mr. Hoyt, seconded by Ms. LaValley to decrease the Pre-K tuition to \$2800.00 for 4 days and \$1400.00 for 2 days. Discussion: the committee realizes the negative effect on increasing the tuition and hopes that this decrease will fill the seats and have the same net income.. **Vote: Yes, Unanimous.**

B. Warrant

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

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

2. \$310,191.69 (4/30/15)

Motion by Mr. Hoyt, seconded by Mrs. Schultz to accept the Warrant dated April 30, 2015 in the amount of \$310,191.69. Vote: Yes, Unanimous.

VII. INFORMATION ITEMS

A. Subcommittee Reports

1. Finance/Budget Subcommittee –Mr. Hoyt

Mr. Hoyt reported about the MASBO.

Motion by Mr. Hoyt, seconded by Ms. LaValley to support the MASBO overview.

Discussion: Mr. Scorzoni began the lengthy discussion regarding supporting the MASBO that the Mayor would like to see happen for the City and the schools. Mr. Scorzoni questioned who will be paying? Great tension with all parties involved. All of the committee member commented on their take on this audit. Mayor Gray stated that it is not an audit but an operation review on finances to give a base line of the finances. Ms. LaValley commented it is a check and balance situation – should have a policy to have these types of reviews – look at the scope and move in the right direction. May 19th is the meeting with MASBO – can add to the scope.

Motion by Mr. Hoyt, seconded by Ms. LaValley to suspend the rules and continue with the meeting after 9:00 PM. Vote: Yes, Unanimous.

Mrs. Schultz welcomes MASBO and added that should have a cycle to do this every 2 years. Ms. LaValley commented that different districts are following suit at different costs. The conversation went on with everyone's input until the final vote:

Motion by Mr. Scorzoni, second by Mr. Hoyt to support article 2015-032 – MASBO overview in conjunction with City Council, if City Council will not finance, school committee will provide the funds in the amount of \$5900.00 (school cost) in co-ordination with the Mayor’s office. Vote: Yes, unanimous.

Ms. LaValley stated that there was one more warrant to vote on in the amount of \$326,529.71 (4-16-15).

Motion by Mr. Hoyt, seconded by Mrs. Schultz to accept the Warrant dated April 16, 2015 in the amount of \$326,529.71. Vote: 5 Yes, 1 abstain (Ms. LaValley – reimbursement).

2. Policy Subcommittee – Bonnie Schultz

Mrs. Schultz reported that they are looking at the student activity reports and considering interest earning accounts. Next meeting May 12th at 8AM.

3. Personnel Subcommittee – Mr. McGee

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

Mr. Scorzoni asked about having a meeting on the findings of the DESE report and what the next step is. Dr. Robinson stated that there is not a next step – working on the items listed and setting goals. The DESE will come out and explain if that is the committee’s wish. Mr. Scorzoni would like them to attend one of the school committee meetings to explain. Mrs. Schultz felt that there was no need for a meeting, can just highlight points of interest. Other members added that they would like the them to come to a meeting – Dr. Robinson will set that up.

Ms. LaValley asked the committee to bring their calendars next meeting to set up dates of goals and summer meetings.

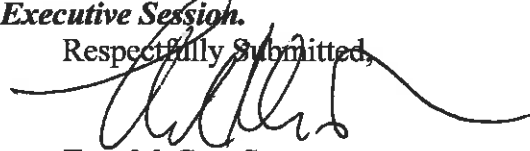
VIII. PRESS CONFERENCE

None

IX. EXECUTIVE SESSION – Pursuant of M.G.L. c.30A, s. 21 (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. AFT Amesbury local 1033 Teachers/Nurses; Para-professionals and Maintenance and Facilities Technicians.

Motion by the Chair to go into Executive session. Roll Call was taken. Unanimous, Yes. Meeting adjourned at 9:24 into Executive Session.

Respectfully Submitted,



Tom McGee, Secretary