

AMESBURY SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES  
AMESBURY HIGH SCHOOL  
JUNE 24, 2013

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Present at 7:00 p.m. were Thatcher Kezer, Chair, Debra LaValley, Stanley Schwartz, Bonnie Schultz, Gale Hanshaw, Tom McGee, Peter Hoyt and Michele S. Robinson, Superintendent of Schools.

I. CALL TO ORDER

The Chair called the school committee meeting to order. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Mr. Hoyt.

II. COMMENTS BY VISITORS, DELEGATIONS

- Amesbury Elementary Principal, Walter Helliesen, spoke about the need for an additional teacher in grade 3.
- A group of AHS students passed out a list of signatures from students who would like to take Honors Spanish 5. One of the student's mothers also spoke in favor of another year of Honors Spanish 5. There are two Spanish 4 classes.

III. PRESENTATIONS

- A. Steve Bastien went over the summer reading lists for the high school. He explained what was required of students at each grade level. There was a question and answer period following this presentation.

IV. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

- A. Superintendent's Report  
Dr. Robinson reminded the committee and the community that the special Senate vote would take place tomorrow in the high school cafeteria and school will be in session. The Superintendent said that we are wrapping up a successful school year.

V. COMMUNICATIONS

None.

VI. Items for Approval or Early Consideration

- A. 1. June 3<sup>rd</sup> School Committee Minutes

***Motion by Ms. LaValley, seconded by Mr. Schwartz to approve the minutes of the June 3, 2013 School Committee meeting. Vote: 6, Yes; 1, Abstain (Hoyt).***

B. Business

1. FY14 Budget Discussion

The results of discussion on the budget that took place during the Finance Meeting of the Whole will be reported out after Ms. Farrell updates the numbers as a result of decisions made at the previous meeting.

\*Ms. Farrell told the committee that the amount of the entire school department is \$27,243,496. There was discussion regarding the fact that Mr. Hoyt needs to abstain from voting the budget of the Cashman School due to a family connection.

***Motion by Ms. Hanshaw, seconded by Mr. Hoyt to accept the finance/budget subcommittee recommendation of \$27,348,496 minus the Cashman School total of \$105,000.***

Ms. Farrell corrected the full Cashman School budget to \$3,466,858, making the amount of the total budget, without CES is \$23,881,638.

Mr. Schwartz reviewed the changes that the subcommittee voted on prior to this meeting. The AES will not be getting a 3<sup>rd</sup> grade teacher, there will be no In School Suspension Tutor at AMS and there will be an increase in some fees.

For Athletics the cost will be \$325/sport, \$80/clubs with a cap of \$1,055. Transportation will increase from \$300 to \$360/year, 2 or more \$540. There will also be a change in the collection of transportation fees. Collection times for transportation fees will be announced on the website, cable and Connect Ed. Bus passes must be pre-paid prior to the beginning of the school year. Pre-K amount will increase from \$2430 to \$3000.

Mr. Schwartz explained that the subcommittee struggled with increasing the fees. They wanted to accomplish a lot more but it was not possible to fund all of the needs. He said again that they have to get better at the process. He felt decisions about the budget need to happen much earlier in the year and not at the last minute.

Mr. Hoyt agreed with Mr. Schwartz. He said that all administrators have worked tirelessly and it is a shame that not all of the needs can be funded. Ms. LaValley wanted students and parents to know that there will still be band at the high school. Two library assistants at the high school will not be returning in the fall.

Ms. Hanshaw stated that she was very disappointed in the budget put forth. It was an enormous task to cut \$900,000 of very important programs and staff. She feels that we are constantly pulling the school department apart instead of building it up.

Mr. McGee said that this was the hardest budget process that he has seen. Ms. Schultz agreed with her colleagues in their comments about this budget process. She recommended that years back the two finance committees; school committee and City Council used to meet on a regular basis. She said if this was started up again the budget process would start a lot earlier and the needs of the school department would already be known.

The Mayor spoke about what the economy has done to this process over the last 10 years. The City is not taxing what they are allowed in property taxes. We are trying to plug a \$1.9 million hole with \$900,000. He said that the economy is improving which will help new growth for next year. This year there was only \$250,000 in new growth. Hopefully, next year we can begin to fill that \$1.9 million hole.

Ms. LaValley said that this budget is a blueprint. Chapter 70 information is on the website as well as the unfunded mandates. She encouraged people to get in touch with legislators and tell them we need more help from the state and the federal government.

*(Previous motion) Motion by Ms. Hanshaw, seconded by Mr. Hoyt to accept the finance/budget subcommittee recommendation of \$23,881,638 which is minus the Cashman School. Unanimous, Yes.*

*Motion by Ms. LaValley, seconded by Ms. Schultz to approve the Cashman School budget of \$3,466,858. Vote: 6 Yes, 1 Recues (Hoyt).*

- C. Warrants
  - 1. \$435,241.31 (6/27/13)

*Motion by Mr. Schwartz, seconded by Mr. McGee to approve the warrant dated June 27, 2013 in the amount of \$435,241.31. Unanimous, Yes.*

## VI. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

### A. Subcommittee Reports

- 1. Budget/Finance Subcommittee – Mr. Schwartz  
Mr. Schwartz expressed his displeasure with the entire budget process. He commended the school administration for all of their hard work. He also thanked the City Council for coming to the budget workshops and meeting with Ms. Farrell so they could get a handle on how the school department puts their budget together. He said that this process should begin much earlier in the year to avoid last minute decisions. Rushing to reduce staff, supplies and services does a disservice to the City of Amesbury and the community. It is his hope that at the next budget season, changes in the process will have been made that will help move the process to begin early.

2. Policy Subcommittee – Ms. Hanshaw  
Ms. Hanshaw said that the policy subcommittee met last week and will be meeting next Thursday, June 25<sup>th</sup> in the Superintendent’s office.
3. Personnel Subcommittee – Mr. McGee  
Mr. McGee said that the subcommittee needs to set up a future workshop.

VII. FUTURE MEETINGS AND AGENDA ITEMS

1. Review Academy MOU (8/5/13)
2. District-wide Technology Overview (8/5/13)
3. GLEC Director, Kim Oliveira (9/13)
4. Special Education Facilitators (10/13)
5. ASPEN/X2 Full Utilization Update (9/13)
6. Request to Retire Athletic Jersey Numbers (8/5/13)
7. Final Athletic Report (8/5/13)
8. So. Hampton School Board (9/13)

Mr. Hoyt recommended that the Special Education Facilitators should come to a school committee meeting in October, not September. Ms. LaValley reminded members that there is a large savings if they sign up now for the MASC Conference in November.

At this point, the committee returned to the Business Item of FY14 Budget.\*

A moment of silence was observed honoring the passing of Coach Mike Farmer.

VIII. PRESS CONFERENCE

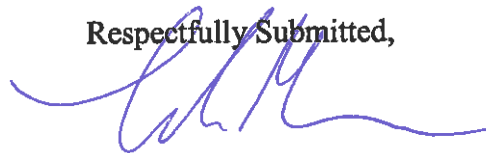
None.

IX. EXECUTIVE SESSION

None.

***Motion by Ms. Schultz, seconded by Mr. Schwartz, to adjourn the meeting at 8:15 p.m., Unanimous, Yes.***

Respectfully Submitted,



Tom McGee, Secretary

**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.***