

**AMESBURY SCHOOL COMMITTEE
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
AMESBURY HIGH SCHOOL
April 9, 2018**

Present at 6:00 p.m. were Mayor Gray, Chair; Deb LaValley, Peter Hoyt, Rob Chamberlain, Gretchen Marinopoulos, Amy Sherwood, Tim Kisieleski, Joan Liporto, and Dr. Gary Reese, Superintendent of Schools.

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.

I. CALL TO ORDER OF REGULAR MEETING

Mayor Gray called the meeting to order at 6:01 PM and Mr. Hoyt led the committee in the Pledge of Allegiance and read the Mission Statement aloud.

II. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC ON BUDGET

George White, parent and Lacrosse Coach, asked the committee to consider funding a Lacrosse Team at the high school. Their first game is tomorrow.

III. BUDGET DISCUSSION

- Dr. Reese spoke about the additional special education students that have recently enrolled in the district. The need to increase the Special Education line item by \$300,000. Dr. Reese stated that special education costs have jumped to more than \$730,000. He compared FY18 to FY19 budget, stated the increase of \$288,648 plus special education budget.
- Joan Liporto stated that \$170,000 was cut from transportation
- Mr. Chamberlain asked if Joan had projections on Circuit Breaker. Joan stated it would be \$950,000 only if funded at 65%, adding that, they will not see the money till June 30th. Mayor Gray added that the legislation is looking at raising the percentage to 72%. Mr. Chamberlain stated his concern of having no cushion going into the fiscal year.
- Mrs. Marinopoulos asked if this budget proposal reflects level services plus \$300,000 for special education.
- Mrs. Sherwood asked if this proposed budget is a reduction of a CES teacher, 3 para-professionals, central office clerical hours and maintenance raises. Dr. Reese stated it did. Mrs. Sherwood shared her concerns with increase class size. She also was concerned with the cut of 3 para-professionals.
- Mr. Chamberlain spoke about transportation savings. Joan Liporto stated the need for better routes, looking at software to redo routes. Regarding SPED transportation, Mary Houde is working on that, may be able to take over the Methuen and Beverly routes.

- Mr. Hoyt asked for a clarification, stating that FY19 does not reflect any additional hiring as proposed in last week's budget proposal. Dr. Reese stated that it does not.
- Mrs. Sherwood spoke about all the mandates that the state has, with no funding – leaving districts in the ultimate challenge of creating budgets. Mayor Gray agreed, stating that Chapter 70 has been paid by tax payers for years.
- Ms. LaValley stated that before they go on to the budget vote, a vote on the total amount is not possible because Mr. Hoyt, Mr. Chamberlain and Ms. LaValley will need to opt out of some of the line items.

IV. BUDGET VOTE

- *Motion, by the Chair, to accept appropriation of District Administration in the amount of \$705,544. Objected by Ms. LaValley and Mrs. Sherwood (personnel).*
- *Motion, by the Chair, to accept appropriation of Transportation in the amount of \$536,362. Accepted by Mr. Hoyt, seconded by Mr. Chamberlain. Vote: Yes, Unanimous.*
- *Motion, by the Chair, to accept appropriation of Amesbury Elementary School in the amount of \$3,918,565. Accepted by Mrs. Marinopoulos, seconded by Mr. Hoyt. Vote: Yes, Unanimous.*
- *Motion, by the Chair, to accept appropriation of Cashman Elementary School in the amount of \$4,110,490. Objected by Mrs. Marinopoulos (personnel) .*
- *Motion, by the Chair, to accept appropriation of Amesbury Middle School in the amount of \$5,984,690. Accepted by Mrs. Sherwood, seconded by Ms. LaValley. Vote: 5 Yes; 2 abstaining (Chamberlain and Hoyt).*
- *Motion, by the Chair, to accept appropriation of Amesbury High School in the amount of \$4,880,042. Objected by Ms. LaValley (athletics should be separate line item).*
- *Motion, by the Chair, to accept appropriation of District Technology in the amount of \$356,433. Accepted by Ms. LaValley, seconded by Mr. Hoyt. Vote: Yes, Unanimous.*
- *Motion, by the Chair, to accept appropriation of Maintenance in the amount of \$1,601,263. Objected by Ms. LaValley (personnel).*
- *Motion, by the Chair, to accept appropriation of Curriculum and Professional Development in the amount of \$276,031. Objected by Mrs. Marinopoulos (curriculum software).*
- *Motion, by the Chair, to accept appropriation of Special Education in the amount of \$3,115,029. Objected by Mr. Chamberlain (tuition).*
- *Motion, by the Chair, to accept appropriation of Employee Benefits in the amount of \$5,621,345. Accepted by Ms. LaValley, seconded by Mrs. Marinopoulos. Vote: Yes, unanimous.*

- ***Motion, by the Chair, to accept appropriation of Innovation High School in the amount of \$707,900. Objected by Mrs. Marinopoulos (rental).***

Discussion and Vote on objected line items:

District Administration –

- Ms. LaValley spoke about the placeholder of \$50,000 of the retiree, to support the hiring of a Director of Facilities. This is a required position to fill with the building project in the pipe line. She added that in the long run, filling this position will save the district money. Ms. LaValley questioning hiring a part time person for FY19 and the FTE in FY20. Mr. Kisieleski spoke about \$75,000 being only the salary cost not including benefits. He stated that he would support a part time person at this time. Mrs. Sherwood stated that Joan has too much on her plate, getting quotes and overseeing all the maintenance. Mr. Hoyt stated that he is in support because of the building project. Dr. Reese stated that \$75,000 would be for a FTE person, \$50,000 allocated in maintenance plus the \$9,000 for the stipend.

Motion by Ms. LaValley, seconded by Mr. Hoyt to shift \$63,000 from Maintenance to District Administration (\$780,544) line items. Vote: 5, Yes, 2 opposed (Mayor Gray and Kisieleski).

Cashman Elementary -

- Mrs. Marinopoulos spoke about her concerns of the elimination of a teacher and 3 paraprofessionals. She spoke about how Dr. Charette had added paraprofessionals into the budget to support teachers. Cutting a teacher will increase class sizes to 24 students which is higher than state recommendations and school average. Mrs. Marinopoulos stated that by adding the teacher (\$102,817, salary and benefits) back into the budget and adding 3 additional paraprofessionals (\$110,927 salary and benefits) will be beneficial to students and lower class sizes as needed. Dr. Reese stated that he does not agree with the impact of cutting a teacher. He stated that the fourth grade teachers will have 90 students and that they can work effectively with those numbers. Mrs. Sherwood asked if the principal supports this reduction. Dr. Reese stated that she does not.

Motion by Mrs. Marinopoulos, seconded by Mrs. Sherwood to increase Cashman School line item to \$4,275,490, (adding 3 paraprofessionals and keeping 1 teacher) Vote: 5, Yes, 2 opposed (Mayor Gray and Kisieleski).

Amesbury High School –

- Ms. LaValley stated that she supports funding Lacrosse (\$9,000) at the high school. She went on to state that by cutting Freshman sports, this would be a cost savings. She stated that, this year, Freshman softball and baseball teams are currently played by 8th graders. Mr. Kisieleski questioned the long term impact of funding Lacrosse, referring to football costs. He went on to comment on the need to fund a teacher, rather than looking at adding a sports team. Mr. Hoyt agreed with Mr. Kisieleski comment on funding a teacher versus a sport. Ms. LaValley withdrew her objection, adding to look over policy on freshman sports and 8th graders participating on them. Mr. Chamberlain asked if they could have an update from Elizabeth McAndrews, in the audience, on funding Early College. Ms. McAndrews stated that they are at the half way point of affirmation, then she will be able to share the plan. She stated that she is very optimistic that the funding will be going through.

Motion by Mr. Hoyt, seconded by Ms. LaValley to keep line item Amesbury High School as presented (\$4,488,042). Vote: Yes, unanimous.

Maintenance –

Motion by Ms. LaValley, seconded by Mr. Hoyt to decrease line item, Maintenance by \$63,000 (moved to District Administration), making the new line item \$1,538,263 : Vote: Yes, unanimous.

Curriculum and Professional Development -

- Mrs. Marinopoulos stated that, although she is in support of the MAP testing to get real time data, she feels there are other ways that you can get the same results free, this would be a \$17,225. savings.

Motion by Mrs. Marinopoulos, seconded by Mr. Kisieleski to reduce Curriculum and Professional Development line item by \$17,225, making the new line item \$258,031. Vote: 6, Yes, 1 opposed (Sherwood).

Special Education –

- Mr. Chamberlain stated his concerns (2) on this line item. First being the use of stabilization funds to fund line items – concern for FY20 and the need for unexpected expenses. This stabilization account was set up for large unforeseen expenses. Second concern is spending down Circuit Breaker – This gives no cushion for the following years, can't keep counting on the city for \$200,000 each year. He is proposing to cut the revenue offset in Special Education from 1mil to \$800,000.

Motion by Mr. Chamberlain, seconded by Ms. LaValley to reduce the revenue offset in Special Education line item to \$800,00, making the FY19 current proposed line item to \$3,315.029. Vote: 5, Yes, 2 opposed (Mayor and Kisieleski).

Employee Benefits –

Motion by Ms. LaValley, seconded by Mrs. Sherwood to increase line item Employee Benefits by \$40,000. Vote: Yes; unanimous.

Innovation High School –

- Mrs. Marinopoulos spoke about the need for a permanent location and its potential impact on revenue. She went on to state that although she is disappointed on not funding a location, she understands the restriction and expresses her concerns.

Motion by Mrs. Marinopoulos, seconded by Mr. Hoyt to keep line item Innovation High School at \$707,900. Vote: Yes, unanimous.

Reconsideration of High School vote –

- Mrs. Marinopoulos asked the committee to reconsider the funding of Lacrosse Team (\$9,000). She stated with the reduction of 2 teams (freshman) this will be a savings.

Motion by Mrs. Marinopoulos, seconded by Mr. Kisieleski to fund the Lacrosse Team at the high school (\$9,000). Vote: 5, Yes, 2 opposed (Sherwood and Chamberlain).

Dr. Reese stated that the final total on the proposed budget would be \$32, 222,469 – a \$1,633,175 increase over last year (5.3%).

Mayor Gray stated that this is too much money for him, and the need to find another number. He concluded by stating that someone will have to make up the difference and that would be the taxpayers.

Ms. LaValley stated her disappointment with the Statehouse and the legislators for not keeping up with the funding of schools. She has been involved for 20 years and has seen drastic decreases. She concluded by saying that our kids can't afford lack of funding and support.

Greg Noyes, concerned citizen, stated that every year it's the same pressure on schools. He talked about the need to petition the governor and get in touch with Senators and Representative Moulton – It's time for a change.

V. SCHOOL COMMITTEE VOTE – LAST DAY OF SCHOOL

Dr. Reese stated that with the snow days and the use of Blizzard bags, the last day of school would be June 21, 2018 (1/2 day).

Motion by Ms. LaValley, seconded by Mr. Hoyt to have the last day school of (2017-2018) be June 21, 2018 (1/2 day). Vote: Yes, Unanimous.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Ms. LaValley, seconded by Mr. Hoyt to adjourn the regular School Committee meeting at 7:45 and go into Executive Meeting.

Roll Call Taken. Mayor Gray, Yes; Ms. LaValley, Yes; Peter Hoyt, Yes; Mr. Chamberlain, Yes; Mrs. Marinopoulos, Yes; Mrs. Sherwood, Yes; Mr. Kisieleski, Yes.

Respectfully Submitted,



Gretchen Marinopoulos, Secretary