

**AMESBURY SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES  
AMESBURY HIGH SCHOOL  
June 18, 2018**

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Present at 7:00 p.m. were Mayor Gray, Chair; Deb LaValley, Peter Hoyt, Rob Chamberlain, Gretchen Marinopoulos, Amy Sherwood, Tim Kisieleski, Joan Liporto, Ellie Costello, SAC Representative 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**

Mayor Gray called the meeting to order at 7:03 PM and Mr. Chamberlain led the committee in the Pledge of Allegiance and read the Mission Statement aloud.

**II. COMMENTS BY VISITORS, DELEGATIONS**

- An AHS student, basketball player, spoke about her disappointment and disheartening regarding Coach Willis being let go for no reason - she is asking that the new Superintendent look into reinstating Coach Willis
- 5 parents of AHS students/girls basketball players spoke to the community and the committee about Coach Willis. They stated that Coach Willis has been nothing but an amazing coach highlighting the following:
  - his commitment/involvement to youth sports
  - scouting the athletes of Amesbury - believed in feeder programs and worked with other coaches
  - brought positive attitude
  - always had encouraging notes for the girls

The parents felt this was a tremendous lose for Amesbury and asked for the committee to look into why this happened and find out answers.

**III. PRESENTATIONS AND ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS**

**A. Spring Sports Team Recognitions-Mr. Glen Gearin**

Mr. Gearin introduced Coach Waters, Girls Softball Coach. Coach Waters called her team the Cinderella Team - had their ups and downs but ended in the Baker division - these girls are hard workers with outstanding Captains and saying this was her favorite team. The two captains spoke about their future endeavors.

Coach Bissaillon, Track Coach, recognized the girls and boys accomplishments this year introducing the 3 boys and 3 girls that were in attendance. Coach thanked his assistant coaches for their commitment and hard work, stating that they make a big difference.

### **B. Whittier Technical High School Report**

Maureen Lynch, Principal at Whittier Technical High School and Tony LeSage, Amesbury Representative presented the committee with a handout. Ms. Lynch stated that Whittier is represented by 11 cities and towns. She highlighted the following referring to the handout:

- enrollment breakdown from 2014-2018 - enrollment down by 33%
- percentage of enrolled students with disabilities (Amesbury 16.5% / Whittier 24.5%)
- percentage of economically disadvantaged students (Amesbury 15.2% / Whittier 29%)
- 2017 four year graduation rate for students with disabilities - 99% highest in state
- high school dropout rate - .3%
- preparing the students for jobs - less than 1 million in grants
- adding LPN and cosmetology programs
- expenditure per in-district students lowest in state at \$17,694

Ms. Lynch stated that there 24 Amesbury students that are currently enrolled for 2018-2019. She thanked Dr. Reese for the time that they have worked together, stated that it has been a pleasure and she wished him well.

Ms. LaValley thanked Ms. Lynch for the great report and asked about their Early College program. Ms. Lynch stated that they have 40 students enrolled, but has been a struggle working with NECC, coming into the school.

Mr. Chamberlain asked about their building needs - Ms. Lynch stated that they have put in a Statement of Interest with MSBA three times, but has not gotten into the pipeline. She stated that even though the building is 50 years old, the building looks great.

Ms. LaValley thanked Mr. LeSage for his involvement, meeting the needs of the community.

***Motion by Mr. Hoyt seconded by Ms. LaValley, to take agenda item V-G Policy Review - IIB Class Size out of order. Vote: Yes; unanimous.***

Mr. Hoyt stated that Policy Subcommittee met prior discussing Policy IIB- Class Size, which is an MSBA requirement. Mr. Hoyt stated that this is a first reading and he will be reading the policy in its entirety. At the concluding the reading, Mr. Chamberlain asked how the numbers were determined. Dr. Reese stated that they looked into other communities policy and shared with staff and got feedback. Ellie Costello asked if Dr. Reese had received any feedback from students. Dr. Reese and Mr. Hoyt stated that they did not but will. Ms. LaValley asked about class sizes for high school - Mrs. Marinopoulos stated that it would depend on the subject.

### **C. Presentation regarding AES Building Project**

Ms. Donna Dinisco, Dinisco Design, presented the committee with a PowerPoint highlighting the following:

- Educational Goals - District-wide grade structure evaluation PreK - 8; equity across schools; optimized grade configuration; design of building; flexible grouping and spaces; flexibility to accommodate enrollment changes

- Educational Programs - two programs - delivery method the same; class-size guidelines the same; grade configurations vary (PK - 5, K-5 or PK-2, 3-5) - guideline will need to be determined by September; programs vary depending on grade configuration.
- MSBA process and timeline - Educational programs approval - June; Preliminary Design (PDP) - July; enrollment/program review - July/August; evaluation of ed program options - July-August; SC final educational program approval (will define grade configuration - September; evaluation of design options - September; preferred schematic report - October 17th ; MSBA board meeting - December 12th

Ms. Dinisco stated that MSBA has issued enrollment forecast for grades K-5 at 855 students by 2026. She stated that this number is a decrease and does not agree with their findings. She stated this is important information, do not want to construct a building that is already overcapacity before you even open the doors. They are working with MSBA for supporting documents, tracking how enrollment in the past, looking into foster families, demographics and other factors that we need to make them aware of.

Mr. Hoyt stated that the next meeting will be June 28th at 3:30. Dr. Reese stated that they are meeting with OPM and Designer Team every other week - meeting is anywhere from 2-3 hours.

***Motion by Ms. LaValley seconded by Mr. Hoyt, to move agenda item V-D AES Education Plan Approval out of order. Vote: Yes, unanimous.***

***Motion by Ms. LaValley seconded by Mr. Hoyt to approve the 2 proposed Grade Configuration with the proposed class size policy. Vote: Yes 6; 1 abstained (Sherwood) - motion adopted.***

Ms. Dinisco stated that they would be back in September presenting which educational program they will be submitting. She went over the survey results, with only 52 responses - PreK - 2 AES; Grades 3-5 CES - 50% support and 33% opposed. She stated that the survey is still open for input. Mr. Chamberlain stated that this is a really big decision and will need to do our homework, since we will be voting on it in September. The committee spoke about showing the forum on cable, attending the forums, beyond educational concerns, have transportation concerns, equity, the need to hear from everyone.

#### **D. Report of the Superintendent - Dr. Gary Reese**

Dr. Reese stated that this is his last meeting and would like to reflect on his years here in Amesbury:

- Thanked the Leadership Team and all of the SEL work that has been done
- Parental engagement
- Central office support staff
- Teaching staff is wonderful
- This year had to think outside of the box regarding the budget
- Thanking the Mayor for having faith in him
- Thanked the board - appreciated everyone but special thanks to Mr. Hoyt
- Different year for him - great staff

Mrs. Sherwood thanked Dr. Reese and wished him well moving forward. Mr. Hoyt thanked Dr. Reese and stated that he walked the talk and was effective, we are lucky we had you first.

Mrs. Marinopoulos stated that we broke you in and we asked for a lot - always available, approachable and leaving Amesbury in a better place. Ms. LaValley echoed her colleagues and wished him the best - he was embedded in the entire community, Thank you.

#### **IV. COMMUNICATION**

##### **A. Student Advisory Council – Ellie Costello**

Ellie stated that the SAC program has new leadership welcoming 1 freshman and 1 sophomore - great additions. They visited AMS last week to talk about different clubs and the SAC program. They will be having freshman elections in mid-September. Mrs. Marinopoulos asked if she could survey high school students regarding class sizes. Ellie stated that there is really no time to put out a survey, but will in the future.

##### **B. MAP Testing Communications**

Mrs. Marinopoulos stated that they discussed at Finance subcommittee, this evening, regarding the letter from CES and AES staff to revisit funding MAP. This letter had 11 signatures from CES staff supporting it, AES staff were never given the opportunity to sign the letter. Mrs. Marinopoulos read the letter aloud.

Mr. Hoyt initially made a motion to reconsider his April 9th vote to eliminate MAP stating that his vote was in error. He later withdrew his motion.

Mrs. Marinopoulos asked to hold off and have a conversation and get questions answered by staff who use MAP, by Lyn Jaques and look at data. There is an inequity of staff between the elementary schools.

Ellie stated that, as a students, we are not in favor of MAP testing. There is a lot of pressure and takes a week out of class time.

##### **C. Other**

- Ms. LaValley stated that Gary, Gretchen and herself met with Russ and Tony regarding the reconfiguration of the School Committee meeting set-up - they have a plan and it will begin in the fall with a U shape meeting set up.
- Mrs. Marinopoulos stated that she received a letter from a AHS student supporting Coach Willis.

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

##### **A. Approval of Minutes:**

None

##### **B. Approval of Warrant:           06/21/18                   \$279,719.42**

*Motion by Ms. LaValley, seconded by Mr. Hoyt, to accept the Warrant dated June 21, 2018 in the amount of \$279,719.42. Vote: Yes, Unanimous.*

### **C. Interim Superintendent Selection**

Mayor Gray stated that he is accepting nominations from the committee for an interim Superintendent.

Ms. LaValley and Mr. Hoyt nominated Joan Landers.

Mr. Kisielecki, Mrs. Marinopoulos, Mrs. Sherwood, Mr. Chamberlain and Mayor Gray nominated Jared Fulgoni.

*Motion by Mrs. LaValley seconded by Mrs. Sherwood, to accept Mr. Fulgoni as the new Interim Superintendent of Schools for Amesbury. Discussion: Mrs. Marinopoulos stated that all candidates were impressive, not an easy decision, a lot of thought went into the decision. Mr. Chamberlain thanked Russ and Tony for videotaping the interviews, was very helpful, watched them this weekend. Mayor Gray stated he appreciated all 4 candidates. Ms. LaValley thanked MASC and Mike Gilbert for the help in the search. Vote: Yes, Unanimous.*

**8:44 PM - Mayor Gray asked for a 10 minute recess**

**9:54 PM - meeting reconvened**

### **D. AES Education Plan Approval agenda item moved up**

### **E. Handbook Approval (2018-2019 School Year)**

Mr. Hoyt stated that both elementary schools and AIHS handbooks are in the drop box for review. The only changes are the school calendar and dates.

*Motion by Mr. Hoyt seconded by Mr. Kisielecki, to accept the Elementary Schools and AIHS handbooks as presented for the 2018-2019 school year. Vote: Yes, unanimous.*

### **F. FY19 Budget**

Mr. Chamberlain stated that Finance Subcommittee met prior discussing the proposed budget. They would like to wait till July when the new Superintendent is here to approve any of the line items recommended by Dr. Reese. The Finance Subcommittee discussed the following:

- 26 additional choice seats filled
- \$50,000 from city recreation program
- Original proposal - 3 paraprofessionals gone - now all back using one to help out in CES' 4th grade
- Enrollment numbers
- Special Education van - lease - \$170,000
- New bus routes and elimination of 3 buses - Joan 100% confident with her figures - \$150,000 savings
- Facility Director - need to discuss as a group - if not hired this year, \$50,000 (carried over) will then be looking for \$75,000 the following year
- Additional one year bus contract
- AHS additional Science teacher
- Placeholder of \$608,775 in the employee benefit line item in order to present the budget to the Mayor - can do a transfer later.

***Motion by Mrs. LaValley second by Mrs. Sherwood, to suspend the rules and continue the meeting after 9PM. Vote: Yes, Unanimous.***

Discussion: Mr. Hoyt asked Mayor Gray about merging the Facility Director city/school. Mayor Gray stated that he was apprehensive on both sides. Mrs. LaValley stated that the MASC had information regarding joint ventures.

Ellie spoke regarding the additional Science teacher, important upcoming field (STEM). Science classes at the high school are 27+ students - too large.

Joan Liporto stated that she needs to submit the budget to the city - need to have it balanced.

***Motion by Mr. Chamberlain second by Mrs. Sherwood, to move \$608,775 from line item Employee Benefit as a placeholder. Vote: Yes, Unanimous.***

***Motion by Ms. LaValley second by Mrs. Sherwood, to approve the bottom line item of the FY19 budget, as presented, of \$31,613,694. Vote: Yes, Unanimous.***

**G. Policy Review - IIB: Class Size  
agenda item moved up**

**VI. INFORMATION ITEMS**

**A. Subcommittee Reports**

**1. Curriculum Subcommittee – Gretchen Marinopoulos**

Mrs. Marinopoulos stated they have not met recently.

**2. Finance/Budget Subcommittee – Rob Chamberlain**

Mr. Chamberlain stated they met this evening discussing the budget. Will need the approval of a 1 year extended bus contract with Salter Transportation with an increase of \$25,970.

***Motion by Mr. Chamberlain second by Ms. LaValley to extend the bus contract by one year with Salter Transportation as presented. Vote: Yes, Unanimous.***

**2. Policy Subcommittee – Peter Hoyt**

Mr. Hoyt stated they met discussing Policy IJOA; Policy on Allergies, differences in expectations in different grades; Class Size Policy, working with Dinisco Designs and Title I Policy specific to each school. Next meeting will be June 30th at 6:00PM.

**3. Personnel Subcommittee – Amy Sherwood**

Mrs. Sherwood stated she has nothing to report.

**4. Joint Education Subcommittee – Deb LaValley**

Ms. LaValley stated she has nothing to report.

**5. Building and Grounds Subcommittee – Tim Kisieleski**

Mr. Kisieleski stated he has nothing to report.

**6. AES School Building Committee – Peter Hoyt**

Mr. Hoyt stated he has nothing further to report - next meeting will be June 28th at 3:30


**VII. FUTURE MEETINGS AND AGENDA ITEMS**

None

**VIII. ADJOURNMENT**

*Motion by Ms. LaValley seconded by Mr. Kisielecki, to adjourn the meeting at 9:15PM. Vote: Yes, unanimous.*

Respectfully Submitted,



Gretchen Marinopoulos, Secretary