

AMESBURY SCHOOL COMMITTEE
1C – Long-range Planning Subcommittee Meeting of the Whole

WORKSHOP MINUTES

Meeting Date: June 11, 2024

Time: 4:30 – 6:30

Location: Amesbury High School, Superintendent's office

Present: Mayor Gove, Elizabeth McAndrews, Joan Liporto, Greg Noyes, Brock Omohundro, Kate Slater, Kurt Mansperger (joined 4:56) Maryann Welch, Abigail Jurist Levy

Called to order: 4:35

Mayor Gove reviewed the origins and purpose of the 1C – Long-range Planning committee. Abrahams report was a nuts and bolts evaluation of our buildings. Questions remain for us to answer before we make a decision about how to best use the facilities we have. Tenets for decision-making: saving money, educational benefits for students, our vision of our schools 5 years in the future.

Homework assignments reported:

1. Curated list of middle/high schools with 900 or fewer students, not regional or charter schools, and ideally that were adapted to include middle grades (not designed and built especially) provided by Abigail
2. List of items/issues not addressed in the Abrahams report that will need to be addressed provided by Greg:
 - a. Modular buildings (AES)
 - b. Convert classrooms to science labs for the middle grades
 - c. Convert existing space for SPED, etc.
 - d. Crossing guards at AMS
3. City calendar populated with school and city benchmark dates provided by Mayor Gove
4. Cost projections for CES if it is kept open – TBD, although known expenses include new roof, 6 more rooftop units (\$450K+ for two), and drainage problem that must be addressed.
5. Community use of AMS and CES that would be lost if these buildings were altered or closed, in particular the community use of the gyms at AMS and CES – TBD
6. Existing reports for capital outlay for CES – TBD

Discussion included the following topics:

1. What learning experiences and opportunities could be made available with more students in fewer buildings? What opportunities and/or risks are there for SEL by bringing middle grades to the high school? Greater access to higher level courses
2. New and different ways of using space at AHS will have implications for staff and students. E.g., double classrooms are used for faculty meetings, would those need to be broken up to be used

as classroom space? Culture shift if teachers don't have their "own" classrooms. Which electives could include 7th and/or 8th grade students with 9th, 10th and/or higher students?

3. Vision for future could include expanding AIHS to middle grades, offering early childhood program, more room for overflow at Shay.
4. AIHS lease expires 6/25. Other potential sites? What if we include additional space for lower grades? It needs a space that is consistent with its mission and model.
5. Where to locate central office? AHS could hold grades 7 & 8, but not also central office and/or AIHS. Some promote within an existing school building, others promote independent of a school building. CES, if kept open, could hold central office, an expanded AIHS, and preK-K. The costs of keeping the building open need to be clarified but appear to be too high to be feasible.
6. A review of the benchmark events over the coming summer and 2024-25 school year suggest that a decision must be made by mid-October 2024 if any changes in building use are to occur for the 2025-26 school year.
7. Tasks that need to be done to move planning forward include (but not limited to):
 - a. Itemize costs of maintaining building use as-is, and costs of closing CES and moving grades
 - b. Draft schedules for AHS
 - c. Visit sample of middle/high schools to learn from their experience
 - d. Confirm impact of enrollment projections on potential building consolidation
 - e. Clarify benefits for our students, and how we will address questions/concerns from students, families, staff, community
 - f. Other?

Motion to adjourn: Maryann Welch

Second: Brock Omohundro

Meeting adjourned: 6:34