

**AMESBURY SCHOOL COMMITTEE
SUBCOMMITTEE 1C – LONG-RANGE PLANNING
MEETING MINUTES**

Meeting Date: April 11, 2024

Time: 3:30 – 4:30

Location: Amesbury High School, Superintendent's office

Present: Elizabeth McAndrews, Joan Liporto, Mayor Gove, Kurt Mansperger, Greg Noyes, Abigail Jurist Levy

A. Abrahams Group report

Elizabeth and Joan met with Dave to go over the near final draft. They confirmed the importance of elaborating on all findings and providing clear and comprehensive recommendations. The original plan was to leave AIHS and central office out of his deliberations, but he may offer suggestions. A final draft should be delivered in two weeks, after it's been reviewed by Mark Abrahams.

B. AIHS lease

Elizabeth and Joan met with Rev. CN. Ross Kimball. They were reminded that his position is as interim rector, the decision-makers are a lay board. He explained that both the school and church are at a crossroads, and the church is considering several options for the best use of the buildings. Rev. Kimball spoke positively about the good relationship with the school. Both need to figure out best use, the church is considering several options. If a 1-year extension on the lease is of interest to us, we will need to initiate that conversation. Although on paper there is sufficient space there for central offices, Elizabeth and Joan believed that as it's laid out now, it doesn't seem feasible.

C. Gardner's move of 8th grade to their high school.

Mayor Gove and Elizabeth had a lengthy conversation with the superintendent and high school principal of Gardner Public Schools about their move in 2017 of the eighth grade to the high school. Take aways:

- a. It was an idea of the previous superintendent. No one knows why it was important to her, it was a model that she wanted to put in place. It was not driven by financial considerations. There was little discussion or communication prior to enacting the change. The change was made in her last year in the district. It is uncertain if her departure was related to this move.
- b. The first year was very difficult, scheduling was a challenge – options depend on # of classrooms, teachers, and their certifications. There was a lot of pushback from the community. Improvements were made after the first year to better integrate the 8th graders. It took time to create a school culture that embraced this model. Now it is fully accepted.
- c. Some changes include: all students take gym together, departments meet all together (8-12), bathroom doors are locked during passing time, they now do

PBIS across all grades. Older students are seen as role models. Bus routes were not changed.

- d. It's taken a couple of years since the move to see a reduction in the number of students choosing Monty Tech. Similarly, the gap between students choosing out of the district and those choosing in is closing (they were losing students) and it is almost equal now. They believe this is because of their investment in pathway programs
- e. The change was announced in February and the move was made the following September. They now have an elementary school, a 5-7 middle school, and an 8-12 high school. They did not recommend moving one grade at a time but rather do all the moves at once.

D. Fundraising

Kurt reported on our conversation with Mary Mary Myers, Co-Founder and VP of Strategy and Development, Campaign for Catholic Schools. Main takeaways from Mary and our discussion:

- a. Very challenging to find individual donors who want to contribute to public schools, and enough of them to support a large project. We need a specific ask, something individuals feel passionate about and want to support.
- b. Donors often spread their contribution out over multiple years. How would that affect a proposed project such as the AMS performance center?
- c. We may look into the feasibility of a legacy society and rely on our older Amesbury families who are devoted to our community and our schools.
- d. Mary advises finding the right donors is a snowball project. You begin with one and ask them for suggestions of who else to talk to. You start with who you know and build from there. It takes time and detective work.
- e. Amesbury does not have an alumni database. We need to start by identifying potential
- f. The AMS performance center is our best project. We should pursue funding for that renovation. Jim McCarthy is getting estimates on the repairs/replacements now. The renovation needs to include a new sound system.
- g. There are examples from Beverly and Amesbury of individuals making significant donations, sometimes solicited and occasionally spontaneously initiated by the individual. None supported operations but very specific program needs.

E. Next steps

Fundraising

Abigail – reach out to Suzanne Meyer, Johanna Kimball (AMS) to identify alumni who were in theater

Greg – contact Mr Horan, former music director,

Elizabeth – ask Carol to contact Greg Folsom

Reconfiguration

Elizabeth – get name, contact information for the former Gardner superintendent who oversaw the grade reconfiguration, ask for other people to talk to, particularly about how they handled scheduling, and reach out to other high schools with 7/8-12 grades

Motion to approve minutes of 3-26 by Greg Noyes
Seconded by Kurt Mansperger
Unanimous

Motion to adjourn by Kurt Mansperger
Seconded by Greg Noyes

4:55 – Meeting adjourned