AMESBURY SCHOOL COMMITTEE
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
April 1, 2024

Present were Mayor Gove, Chair, Maryann Welch, Abigail Jurist Levy, Greg Noyes, Kurt Mansperger, Kate Slater, Brock Omohundro, and Elizabeth McAndrews.

A recording of this meeting can be viewed here: https://fb.watch/se_KuKNi5G/

I. Call to Order/Moment of Silence/Mission Statement/Pledge of Allegiance (4:24)

II. Comments by Visitors & Delegations (5:45)

- Jon Boles – 1st St Amesbury – Mr. Boles spoke against the proposed budget cuts
- Karen Brannely – Old Tavern Ln – Spoke in opposition to the proposed cuts and spoke about the issues with teaching at CES with the current building design.
- Leah Pena – Spoke as an AHS Freshman in support if the visual arts dept. at AHS.
- Muriel Pena & Grace Bartlett – Both 5th graders at CES, spoke against proposed budget cuts to staff.
- Haley Gillis – An AHS junior, spoke in opposition to proposed budget cuts.
- Ryan Jackson – Mr. Jackson spoke as an art teacher at AHS in opposition to the proposed budget cuts.
- Andrew Goodwin – Mr. Goodwin spoke as an English teacher at AMS and asked the committee to pass the highest possible budget proposed.
- Cindy Yetman – 6 Newton Rd. Ms. Yetman spoke as President of AFT Amesbury in opposite to the proposed budget cuts and in favor of the proposed level services budget.

III. Communications & Reports (28:55)

1. Superintendent's Report – Superintendent McAndrews updated the committee on recent staffing changes within the district including resignations, open positions, and new hires.
2. Student Advisory Council – A report from Ms. Litwin was read into the record. The report summarized the recent Winter Carnival and organization around opposition to the proposed cuts to the arts department.
3. Whittier Tech Representative(s) Report – Ms. Lowell updated the committee on recent happenings at Whittier Tech including the proposed budget and upcoming hearings. Ms. Lowell answered questions from the committee on the proposed budget.
4. Liaisons – Mayor Gove noted the building committee has been working to wrap up work with the contractor with 30 items remaining on the punch list, work on commissioning, and purchasing of maintenance equipment using contingency funds.
5. Subcommittees
   a. Finance & Facilities – Ms. Welch noted upcoming meeting dates.
   b. Policy & Personnel – Dr. Jurist Levy stated the Wellness policy was currently under review. A new policy review cycle has also begun.
   c. Curriculum & Inclusion – Ms. Welch stated the committee has finalized goals, looked at revising the Spotlight award process, and reviewed testing reports with Lyn Jacques.
   d. 1C: Long Range Planning – Dr. Jurist Levy discussed the background of 1C in relation to the committee goals. The subcommittee is awaiting a full report on building consolidation from the Abraham Group. Mr. Noyes also shared his thoughts on the work of 1C, specifically referencing the underutilization of AHS.

IV. New Business (52:00)

1. Appointment of Whittier Tech School Committee Representative – The Committee interviewed two applicants for appointment to the Whittier Tech School Committee. The applicants, Ms. Patricia Lowell and Mr. Michael Sylvester, each took turns introducing themselves to the committee and answering questions posed by committee members.
   Mr. Noyes nominated Ms. Lowell, seconded by Dr. Slater. Mr. Omohundro nominated Mr. Sylvester, seconded by Mr. Noyes.
   Ms. Lowell received seven votes and was therefore appointed to a 3-year term on the Whittier Tech School Committee.
2. Vote on Last Day of School: June 20th – Superintendent McAndrews summarized the vote for the committee.
   Dr. Jurist Levy moved that the last day of school be an early release day on June 20th, seconded by Dr. Slater. Vote: Approved unanimously.
3. Approval of CREST Collaborative Capital Fund Limit Increase – Superintendent McAndrews summarized the request from Crest for the committee. The committee discussed the request and asked questions of the Superintendent related to future budget implications for the city if the request was approved. The committee opted to vote on the request at a future meeting.
   Mr. Mansperger moved to table, second by Mr. Omohundro. Vote: Passed unanimously.
4. Approval of FY25 Budget – The Mayor summarized the process that would be used for approving the budget. The following votes were taken by the committee on the FY25 budget:

   Mr. Noyes moved to approve the Curriculum & Professional Development and Employee Benefits cost centers as proposed, second by Dr. Salter. Mr. Noyes then moved to amend his motion to only approve Curriculum & Professional Development cost center, second by Dr. Slater. Vote: Approved unanimously.

   Ms. Welch moved to approve the District Administration cost center in the amount of $1,249,445, second by Dr. Salter. Vote: 6 Yes, 1 abstention (Gove). Passes.

   Ms. Welch moved to approve a Transportation cost center budget in the amount of $607,240, second by Dr. Slater. Vote: 6 Yes, 1 abstention (Gove). Passes.

   Mr. Omohundro moved to approve the AES/Sgt. Jordan Shay cost center in the amount of $5,730,369, second by Dr. Slater. Vote: 6 Yes, 1 abstention (Gove). Passes.

   Dr. Slater moved to approve the Cashman cost center in the amount of $4,112,584, seconded by Mr. Noyes.
   Mr. Omohundro moved to amend the motion to approve an amount of $4,184,584, second by Dr. Slater. On the amendment the votes were: 5 Yes, 1 No (Noyes), and 1 abstention (Gove). Passes.
   On the amended motion: 5 Yes, 1 No (Noyes), and 1 abstention (Gove). Passes.

   Dr. Slater moved to approve the Amesbury Middle School cost center in the amount of $5,703,472(add back Art Teacher), seconded by Dr. Jurist Levy.

Mr. Noyes moved to eliminate 1 AMS Assistant Principal and 1 Math Coach for a cost center reduction of $167,724. No second.

Mr. Noyes moved to eliminate 1 assistant principal, second by Dr. Slater. Vote: 2 Yes (Noyes, Slater), 3 No (Welch, Mansperger, Jurist Levy), 1 Abstention (Gove), 1 recusal (Omohundro). Fails.

Dr. Slater moved to amend the motion to add back the Librarian position, second by Mr. Noyes. Vote: 2 Yes (Slater, Jurist Levy), 3 No (Noyes, Welch, Mansperger), 1 Abstention (Gove), 1 recusal (Omohundro). Fails.

On the main motion (Slater/Jurist Levy). Vote: 4 Yes, 1 No (Welch), 1 Abstention (Gove), 1 recusal (Omohundro). passes.

Ms. Welch moved to approve the Amesbury High School cost center in the amount of $5,650,665 (adding back Art Teacher), second by Mr. Omohundro.

Mr. Noyes moved to amend by eliminating a 0.5 assistant principal. No second.
Mr. Noyes moved to eliminate the department head stipends. No second.

On the main motion (Welch/Omohundro). Vote: 5 Yes, 1 No (Noyes), and 1 abstention. Passes.

Ms. Welch moved to approve the Amesbury Innovation High School cost center in the amount of $908,686 (increased by cost of 1 Para), second by Dr. Slater. Vote: 6 Yes, 1 abstention (Gove). Passes.

Dr. Slater moved to accept the District Technology cost center as presented in the amount of $200,606, second by Dr. Slater. Vote: 6 Yes, 1 abstention (Gove). Passes.

After seeking clarity on the proposed increase, Mr. Noyes moved to accept the district maintenance cost center in the amount of $2,916,492, second by Dr. Slater. Vote: Vote: 6 Yes, 1 abstention (Gove). Passes.

Ms. Welch moved to suspend policy BDD, second by Mr. Omohundro. Passes unanimously.

Mr. Omohundro moved to approve the Special Education cost center as presented in the amount of $3,918,353, second by Dr. Slater. Vote: 6 Yes, 1 abstention (Gove). Passes.

Dr. Jurist Levy moved to approve the employee benefits cost center as presented in the amount of $6,947,330, second by Mr. Mansperger. Vote: Vote: 6 Yes, 1 abstention (Gove). Passes.

Ms. Welch moved to approve the FY25 district budget in the amount of $38,616,154, second By Dr. Slater.
Prior to voting the committee briefly discussed the budget and budget challenges both now in the future.
Vote: Vote: 5 Yes, 1 No (Noyes), 1 abstention (Gove). Passes.

V. Consent Agenda *(*2:06:30)

1. *Minutes: Feb 5, Feb 26. Dr. Jurist Levy moved approval, second by Ms. Welch. 6 Yes, 1 abstention.*
2. *Warrants: Feb 9 $650,138.54|Feb 23 $650,561.96|March 7 $382,646.48 | March 8 $678,771.31 | March 21 $480,222.05 | March 22 $652,278.96. Mr. Noyes moved approval, second by Dr. Slater. Approved unanimously.*
3. *Gifts: $100 to the CES Gift Account from Peter & Patricia Hoyt in Memory of Lee Simmons. Ms. Welch moved to accept with gratitude, second by Dr. Jurist Levy. Approved unanimously.*

Dr. Jurist Levy moved to adjourn, second by Mr. Omohundro. Approved unanimously.