

**AMESBURY SCHOOL COMMITTEE
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
AMESBURY HIGH SCHOOL
April 1, 2014**

Present at 7:00 p.m. were Mayor Ken Gray, Chair, Debra LaValley, Tom McGee, Bonnie Schultz, Stanley Schwartz, Christian Scorzoni, Liam Gallagher, SAC Representative. Michele S. Robinson, Superintendent of Schools.
Absent: Peter Hoyt

The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:08 p.m. Tom McGee led the Committee in the Pledge of Allegiance.

II. COMMENTS BY VISITORS, DELGATIONS

The chair, Mayor Gray, opened the comments by visitor by explaining the rules.

- The public comments will be limited to 20 minutes with a 3 minute cap per person
- Mr. McGee will be the time keeper.
- Mayor Gray also stated that cutting kindergarten to half day is off the table as well as cutting music at the high school.
 - Citizen 1 commented about getting choice students back to our district stating that we are losing a lot of money with choice and also spoke about the use of free cash.
 - Citizen 2 spoke about how the athletics have been cut which is affecting the Booster Club and other organizations in town. They are now paying for equipment and uniforms with the addition of scholarships and sweatshirts.
 - Citizen 3 explained how important the ARTS are for the students and that there is life outside of math and science classes.
 - Citizen 4 spoke about Tech Ed and Life Science and how important those programs are for the students
 - Citizens 5, 6 & 7 spoke about the Early College Program and how the students are eager to participate in those courses. Would like the committee to look at the administration budget so that the students do not have to suffer each year. They stated that APS is the only area town that participates in the program. They would be willing to pay more if that would help.

The time allotted was up and the comments by visitors ended.

III. PRESENTATIONS

- A. Dr. Robinson spoke regarding ELA MCAS ending and PARCC began with some technical difficulties. She echoed what the chair had stated about the kindergarten and music programs not being cut. As for the Early College Program they are looking at different options that are not as costly. She also stated that they will continue to look at programs and options.

IV. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

A. Curriculum Assessment and Accountability

None.

B. Assistant Superintendent's Report

Ms. Farrell commented to the audience that there were handouts on the table regarding the power point presentation that she will be speaking about.

Power Point Presentation:

- Reorganization Efforts: Central office – reduction of Secretary, reduction of Nurse Leader, reduction of Transportation Coordinator.
- Special Education Programming to be implemented, additional Pre-School program CES; Hire Special Education Teachers verses paraprofessionals to work with students.
- Options NOT considered: Full day kindergarten to half day; HS Music/Performing Arts Reduction; Elimination of Athletic Programs; Increase of fees.
- Reductions: MS Family Consumer Science; HS Tech Education; MS Tech Education; HS Foreign Language (retirement not replacing); Early College (looking at other options).
- Reduction from March 31st workshop; Athletics 10,000 (will not eliminate sports, look at line items); HS supplies 7,400; Tech Switches 20,000 (hardware replacement); Special Education Continue Services 10,000 (OT, PT not reduce services just reorganizing)
- Total FY15 \$28,148,498 (increase over FY14 2.93%)

Mr. Schwartz commented on the Early College Program and how Mr. Hammond has tried to work with current institution. The cost per credit is more than going to college so they are looking at different institutions.

Ms. LaValley disclosed she will not be voting on the HS budget because she is employed by NECCO

C. Superintendent's Report

V. COMMUNICATION

A. Student Advisory Council – Liam Gallagher

Liam spoke about the cuts and how he is happier than he was 2 weeks ago.

VI. ITEMS FOR APPROVAL OR EARLY CONSIDERATION

A. 1. March 18, 2014 Minutes

Motion by Ms. LaValley, seconded by Mr. McGee to approve the regular minutes dated March 18, 2014. Vote: Unanimous

2. FY15 Budget Vote

- *Motion, by the chair, to accept appropriation of 010 District Administration of \$641,329. Objected by Ms. LaValley.*

- *Motion, by the chair, to accept appropriation of 010 Horace Mann Charter of \$631,691. Accepted by Mr. McGee, seconded by Ms. LaValley. Vote: Unanimous.*
- *Motion, by the chair, to accept appropriation of 011 Transportation of \$408,000. Accepted by Mr. McGee, seconded by Ms. LaValley. Vote: Unanimous.*
- *Motion, by the chair, to accept appropriation of 012 Amesbury Elementary of \$3,246,931. Accepted by Ms. LaValley, seconded by Mr. McGee. Vote: Unanimous.*
- *Motion, by the chair, to accept appropriation of 013 Cashman Elementary of \$3,600,679. Accepted by Ms. Schultz, seconded by Mr. Schwartz. Vote: Unanimous.*
- *Motion, by the chair, to accept appropriation of 014 Amesbury Middle School of \$5,310,280. Accepted by Mr. McGee, objected by Mr. Schwartz*
- *Motion, by the chair, to accept appropriation of 015 Amesbury High School of \$4,028,504. Accepted by Mr. McGee, seconded by Mr. Scorzoni. Vote: 5 yes; 1 abstain (LaValley)*
- *Motion, by the chair, to accept appropriation of 015 Athletics of \$235,931. Accepted by Ms. LaValley, seconded by Ms. Schultz. Vote: Unanimous.*
- *Motion, by the chair, to accept appropriation of 016 District Technology of \$378,200. Objected by Ms. LaValley.*
- *Motion, by the chair, to accept appropriation of 017 District Maintenance of \$1,544,986. Accepted by Mr. Schwartz, seconded by Ms. Schultz. Vote: Unanimous.*
- *Motion, by the chair, to accept appropriation of 018 District Curriculum of \$295,796. Objected by Ms. LaValley.*
- *Motion, by the chair, to accept appropriation of 019 District Special Education of \$3,327,550. Objected by Mr. Scorzoni and Mr. Schwartz.*
- *Motion, by the chair, to accept appropriation of 020 District Benefits of \$3,336,551. Accepted by Ms. LaValley, seconded by Ms. Schultz. Vote: Unanimous.*
- *Motion, by the chair, to accept appropriation of 911 Employee Benefits of \$1,128,089. Accepted by Mr. McGee, seconded by Mr. Schwartz. Vote: Unanimous.*

The following were revisited of all the objections which need clarification and voted on.

- 010 (District Administration) – Previously objected by Ms. LaValley. Ms. LaValley asked Ms. Farrell for a explanation/job description for the 2 resource officers and the truancy officer. Ms. Farrell explained that the truancy officer will still be responsible for residency checks, and working with principals. He will also continue to check in with Ms. Farrell every 6 weeks to update administration. Resource officers were interviewed last week and they will be moving forward to get this position in place for the fall.
Ms. LaValley withdrew her objection stating that she wanted the public to hear the rationale for having both the resource and truancy officers.

➤ ***Motion, by the chair, to accept appropriation of 010 District Administration of \$641,329. Accepted by Mr. Schwartz, seconded by Ms. LaValley. Vote: Unanimous.***
- 014 (Amesbury Middle School) - Previously objected by Mr. Schwartz. Mr. Schwartz asked Mr. Curry for an explanation of what the middle school will look like with the proposed cuts on the table. Mr. Curry stated that he does not agree with the cuts and that it is a number's game. The class sizes will probably increase with more study halls.
Ms. LaValley asked Mr. Curry for an explanation of administration at his school and their roles. Mr. Curry stated that at this point his administration team gives the MCAS, does guidance, PARCC Field Test, day to day operations, covering lunch groups for 2.5 hours each day, scheduling and much more. He went on to say that at the middle school, there are a lot of changes with the students and is a difficult time developmentally.
Mr. Schwartz withdrew his objection.

➤ ***Motion, by the chair, to accept appropriation of 014 Amesbury Middle School of \$5,310,280. Accepted by Mr. Schwartz, seconded by Mr. McGee. Vote: Unanimous.***
- Mr. Scorzoni went back to object 011- Transportation
- 016 (District Technology) – Previously objected by Ms. LaValley. Ms. LaValley stated to the committee the need to look at this line item and if additional revenues come in, need to start to update so that we can keep the technology current.
Ms. LaValley withdrew her objection.

➤ ***Motion, by the chair, to accept appropriation of 016 District Technology of \$378,200. Accepted by Mr. Schwartz, seconded by Mr. Scorzoni. Vote: Unanimous.***
- 018 (District Curriculum) – Previously objected by Ms. LaValley. Ms. LaValley stated that APS has made academic progress with the hire of Ms. Griffin. Ms. Griffin explained about the balance of literacy and the benefit for the schools. She went on to explain the 3 year math contract and the cost of it. She recommended to continue with the three years having only gone through the first year and having a base line. Unfortunately, as she stated, she was unaware of the PARCC testing that came to APS at the last minute.

Ms. LaValley withdrew her objection.

➤ ***Motion, by the chair, to accept appropriation of 018 District Curriculum of \$295,796. Accepted by Ms. LaValley, seconded by Ms. Schultz. Vote: Unanimous.***

- 019 (District Special Education) – Previously objected by Mr. Scorzoni and Mr. Schwartz. Mr. Scorzoni spoke about how Special Education is an important budget driver. In regards to having full time teachers versus para-professionals, he has received good feedback on that. Mr. Scorzoni withdrew his objection.

Mr. Schwartz asked Mr. Pierce to explain why this new restructure makes sense. Mr. Pierce explained that this already exist and will strengthen the special education options. The full time teacher will help students with specific subjects that they are struggling with i.e. Math, ELA, Reading. Mr. Pierce also stated that there will still be 86 para-professionals in classrooms with 480 students and 1:1. Mr. Schwartz explained that APS is catching up and it is important to keep the students in town and avoid those costs. On a side note, Mr. Schwartz asked that we refer to Special Education and just that and not SPED. Mr. Schwartz withdrew his objection.

➤ ***Motion, by the chair, to accept appropriation of 019 District Special Education of \$3,327,550. Accepted by Mr. Schwartz, seconded by Ms. LaValley. Vote: Unanimous.***

- 011 (Transportation) – Previously objected by Mr. Scorzoni. Mr. Scorzoni spoke about how it was a good thing that the fees were not going to increase this year. He called to the attention of the decrease in ridership of students which is a decrease in revenue. Looking forward, maybe we should consider decreasing the fee so that we have more riders resulting in more revenue. He also pointed out that this is the end of a 5 year contract. In moving forward, looking at new vendors and maximizing revenue for the city. Mr. Scorzoni withdrew his objection.

Ms. LaValley stated that they are always relooking at line items. Looking at paying for transportation in June, prepaying and better collection of the monies.

Ms. Schultz noted that the calculations stated by Mr. Scorzoni did not reflect the free and reduced riders.

➤ ***Motion, by the chair, to accept appropriation of 011 Transportation of \$408,000. Accepted by Mr. Schwartz, seconded by Ms. Schultz. Vote: Unanimous.***

Statements from the each committee member followed regarding the budget:

- Ms. LaValley read a letter from Mr. Hoyt (not in attendance). Mr. Hoyt thanked the leadership team, Dr. Robinson, Ms. Farrell and all who have used their voices in the budget process. He went on to say, in his letter, that he supports the FY15 budget and glad for the things that are off the table.

- Mr. Schwartz thanked the Mayor for getting the numbers to them early. He thanked the public for voicing their opinions which gave them information early on in the process. He also thanked Mr. Scorzoni for being the new addition to the board and adding a lot to the discussion.
- Ms. LaValley spoke about this time of the year always being difficult in her 16 years of service with the mandates that keep on coming. She continued with thanking Dr. Robinson for her work here at APS in the past 3 years and has the upmost respect for her. She urged and thanked the public to keep on emailing the committee with suggestions and concerns, for the students to keep on coming to the meetings and voicing their opinions. She stated that they are always looking at and re-examining the budget throughout the year.
- Mr. McGee echoed the thanks for coming out and speaking out. He thanked the leadership team for all of their hard work and how challenging it has been.
- Ms. Schultz echoed her colleagues in thanking everyone, and expressed how hard it is to cut and not add programs. She too thanked the leadership team and also her husband.
- Mr. Scorzoni echoed his colleagues in thanking everyone for coming out and voicing their opinions. He continued with saying that he learning a lot from Dr. Robinson, Ms. Farrell, leadership team, students and citizens in his first year on the committee. He commended Mayor Gray for getting the numbers out early. Mr. Scorzoni express that this has been a pleasure to be on the committee but is a tough balance.
- Mayor Gray stated that it is a pleasure to work with everyone and found it emotional. He is impressed with the young kids that spoke up and that all of their hard work paid off. He went on to say that the spending keeps on increasing and the state keeps increasing the mandates and decreasing the fund, putting pressure on the city year after year. He expressed that he does not have the numbers from the state yet. He ended with thanking everyone for all of the work they did.
 - *Motion, by the chair, to accept FY15 Budget, excluding 015-(High School) of \$24,086,013. Accepted by Ms. LaValley, seconded by Mr. Schwartz. Vote: Unanimous.*
 - *Motion, by the chair, to accept appropriation of 015 High School of \$4,062,485. Accepted by Mr. McGee, seconded by Mr. Schwartz. Vote: 5 yes; 1 abstain (LaValley).*

The chair asked for a 5 minute recess at 9:00.

The meeting resumed at 9:18.

3. School Choice Vote

Dr. Robinson recommended, to the committee, to accept the opening of 5 seats at 9th grade for school choice.

Motion by Ms. LaValley, seconded by Ms. Schultz to accept the recommendation of Dr. Robinson to open 5 seats for school choice in 9th grade. Vote: Unanimous

- Ms. LaValley asked for enrollments at the high school level to see if there could be any more openings for school choice

C. Warrant

Motion by Mr. Schwartz, seconded by Mr. McGee to accept the Warrant dated April 3, 2014 in the amount of \$206,561.23. Vote: Unanimous.

VII. INFORMATION ITEMS

A. Subcommittee Reports

1. Finance/Budget Subcommittee – Stanley Schwartz

None

2. Policy Subcommittee – Bonnie Schultz

Ms. Schultz indicated the next meeting will be April 17th at 8PM which will be on reviewing policies. Ms. LaValley suggested looking, on line, at other districts policies. Mr. Schwartz and Ms. Schultz would like the Building Use Policy looked at in regards to rental fees.

3. Personnel Subcommittee

None

VIII.. FUTURE MEETINGS AND AGENDA ITEMS

The Chair read the future meeting and agenda items aloud.

1. Academy Presentation and MOU (4/14)
2. School Achievement Plans (4/1/14 and 4/15/14)
3. Day On The Hill (4/29/14)
4. Visit with State Representative and State Senator (5/14)
5. Recycling Activities/Polices (5/14)
6. Discussion – Educator and Employ Evaluations (6/14)
7. Retiree Recognition (6/14)
8. Whittier Regional Vocational High School (6/14)

VIII.. PRESS CONFERENCE

None

IX.. EXECUTIVE SESSION

The Chair stated that the committee will meet to discuss:

1. To discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining with the Teachers and Paraprofessionals Unions regarding proposed reductions in force as an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the Committee and the Chair so declares.
2. To discuss strategy with respect to litigation as an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the litigating position of the Committee and the Chair so declares.

Motion by the Chair to go into Executive session. Roll Call was taken. Unanimous, Yes.

Motion by Ms. LaValley, seconded by Mr. Schwartz to adjourn the meeting at 9:34

Vote: Unanimous.

Respectfully Submitted,



Tom McGee, Secretary

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.