

AMESBURY SCHOOL COMMITTEE
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

June 16, 2025

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

A recording of this meeting can be viewed here: <https://imd0mxanj2.execute-api.us-west-2.amazonaws.com/ssr/watch/685ae0c2b5137c000264791c>

- I. Call to Order/Moment of Silence/Mission Statement/Pledge of Allegiance (0:30)
- II. Comment by Visitors and Delegations (1:30)
 - A letter from Cindy Collins was read into the record (attached)
- III. Retiree Recognition (5:45)
 - Superintendent McAndrews recognized retiring staff members and presented each with a certificate on behalf of the district and school committee.
- IV. New Business (12:45)
 1. Superintendent's Recommendation Concerning Non-Public School – Superintendent McAndrews summarized the process that has been undertaken by the Heritage Academy in order to obtain approval to open a school in Amesbury. The Superintendent noted the school had completed the DESE checklist and provided the appropriate documentation to the district. Committee members were asked to provide their feedback/questions by July 15th. The Superintendent proceeded to recommend the proposal for approval.
 2. Re-vote of FY26 Budget – Superintendent McAndrews and Ms. Liporto summarized the changes in cost centers between the school committee and city council approved budgets.

The mayor then asked for explanations of the bus and athletic fee proposals so they could be voted on prior to final budget votes. Ms. Liporto summarized the proposed changes. The committee clarified that no one would be denied services based on ability to pay. The committee discussed the proposed fee increases including how they compare to surrounding communities.

Dr. Jurist Levy moved to approve the increase in bus fees as presented, seconded by Dr. Slater. Vote: 6 Yes, 1 Abstention (Gove). Passes.

Dr. Jurist Levy moved to approve the increase in athletic fees as presented, seconded by Dr. Slater. Ms. Welch noted there were non-profits in town that can provide assistance to families that need it. Vote: 6 Yes, 1 Abstention (Gove). Passes.

Mayor Gove then returned to budget discussions and proceeded to read each cost center's total, entertaining either a motion or an objection in order to have further discussion.

- District Administration: \$1,344,838. Objection by Mr. Noyes.
- Transportation: \$732,200. No objection.
- Shay Memorial: \$5,943,532. Objection by Mr. Noyes.
- Cashman: \$4,152,293. Objection by Mr. Noyes.
- Amesbury Middle School: \$5,566,493. Objection by Mr. Noyes.
- Amesbury High School: \$5,807,663. Objection by Mr. Noyes.
- Amesbury Innovation High School: \$805,685. Objection by Mr. Noyes
- Technology: \$205,919. No objection.
- Maintenance: \$2,637,834. No objection.
- Curriculum & Professional Development: \$400,539. Objection by Mr. Noyes.
- Special Education: \$4,913,976. No objection.
- Employee Benefits: \$7,331,739. No objection.

Mr. Noyes moved to approve the following cost centers as presented: Administration, Transportation, Technology, Maintenance, Special Education, and Employee Benefits. Second by Mr. Omohundro. Vote: 6 Yes, 1 Abstention (Gove). Passes.

The committee next took up consideration of the cost centers that had received objections. Mr. Noyes stated his intention to create a “building administration” cost center. Ms. Liporto stated the accounts are set up according to how they are reported to the state. Mr. Noyes stated it was his intention to give the committee more control over the budget. The mayor stated that the committee did not have that authority. Mr. Noyes withdrew his objection to the Shay cost center.

Dr. Slater moved to approve the Shay budget as presented, second by Mr. Omohundro. Vote: 5 Yes, 2 abstentions (Gove, Noyes). Passes.

Mr. Noyes moved to add \$74,000 to the Cashman budget, bringing the total to \$4,226,293, seconded by Mr. Omohundro. Mr. Noyes suggested he would offset this increase using AIHS tuition-in students. The committee discussed the proposal. There is currently 1 tuition-in student expected at AIHS next school year.

Vote: 2 Yes (Noyes, Omohundro), 3 No, 2 abstentions (Gove, Slater). Fails.

Mr. Omohundro moved to approve the Cashman budget in the amount of \$4,152,293, second by Dr. Jurist Levy. Dr Jurist Levy asked about the plan to use additional revenue from tuition-in students. The Superintendent and Ms. Liporto responded that it would be kept in a revolving account. Mr. Noyes confirmed that monies in an AIHS revolving account would be used for AIHS use.

Vote: 5 Yes, 1 No (Noyes), 1 Abstention (Gove). Passes.

Mr. Noyes withdrew his objection to the AMS budget.

The committee discussed the middle school budget as proposed including the position of assistant principal and specialist positions. The committee inquired whether required contracted services would exceed the cost of an eliminated position.

The Superintendent indicated if that were the case the elimination of a position would be re-evaluated. The committee continued discussing impacts of reductions at the middle school.

Dr. Slater moved to approve the middle school budget in the amount of \$5,566,493, second by Dr. Jurist Levy. 3 Yes, 1 No (Welch), 2 abstention (Gove, Noyes), 1 Recusal (Omohundro). Passes.

Mr. Noyes moved to approve a high school budget in the amount of \$5,771,633, seconded by Ms. Welch. Ms. Welch asked about the effect of eliminating department heads at the high school. Superintendent McAndrews spoke about the work they have overseen in the past few years. The committee continued discussing the budget as proposed. Vote: 3 Yes, 2 No (Mansperger, Omohundro), 2 abstentions (Gove, Slater). Passes.

The committee next took up consideration of the Innovation High school budget. Mr. Noyes stated his desire to reduce the innovation budget by increasing the offset in order to add back an MTSS district specialist. Ms. Liporto shared her thoughts on how the committee may do this.

Mr. Noyes moved to approve a budget in the amount of \$757,842. No second.

Dr. Slater moved to approve the Innovation High budget in the amount of \$805,685, second by Mr. Omohundro. Vote: 5 Yes, 1 No (Noyes), 1 abstention (Gove). Passes.

Mr. Noyes moved to approve a Curriculum & Inclusion budget of \$436,539, seconded by Ms. Welch. The committee discussed the proposal by Mr. Noyes to add \$36,000 to the cost center. Vote: 4 Yes, 1 No (Mansperger), 2 Abstentions (Gove, Slater). Passes.

Ms. Welch moved to approve a district budget of \$39,842,711, seconded by Mr. Omohundro. Vote: 5 Yes, 2 Abstentions (Gove, Noyes). Passes.

3. Approval of AIHS Renewal – The Superintendent summarized the changes proposed to the AIHS renewal including changes to staffing, fundraising, and enrollment. The committee discussed the proposed changes as well as potential renewal terms. The committee debated changing the renewal language prior to approval. Incoming AIHS Principal Melanson answered questions from the committee on the proposed renewal. Mr. Noyes suggested adding language relating to the number of tuition-in students as well as annual progress reporting to the school committee.

Ms. Welch moved to approve the AIHS renewal for one year, second by Dr. Jurist Levy. Vote: 4 Yes, 3 No (Mansperger, Slater, Omohundro). Passes.

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

4. Approval of AIHS Lease – Ms. Liporto summarized the proposed lease with All Saints Church. The lease reflected a 5.5% increase over the previous year and similar increases should the lease be extended.

Ms. Welch moved to approve the lease as presented, second by Mr. Noyes. Vote: Unanimous.

V. Presentations & Reports (1:44:54)

- a. Report of Long-Range Planning Subcommittee – Dr. Jurist Levy shared a presentation with the committee that the task force has done to date, their recommendations, and next steps. The task force has decided to pursue further work in three areas: Fund development, consolidation, and advocacy. The subcommittee will form task forces to examine each of these 3 areas of opportunity closer and make recommendations to the full committee in the coming school year.
- b. Math and Literacy Data Review - The Amesbury Public Schools Data Review by Mr. Heath and Ms. Cole provided an analysis of MCAS and MAP assessment results across multiple grade levels in English Language Arts (ELA), Math, and Science. The presentation reviewed statewide trends for MCAS 2024, noting lower academic achievement in ELA but improved third-grade math results, and then compares Amesbury's performance data against state averages, highlighting areas where the district met, exceeded, or fell short of expectations. It also details specific academic goals and moving-forward plans for grades K-10, which often involve integrating new curricula like Desmos-Amplify Math and Wit & Wisdom, increasing professional development, and utilizing flexible grouping strategies like WIN blocks and double-dip interventions. Finally, the review includes takeaways and impacts from MAP and DIBELS data, illustrating student growth and achievement in both Math and Literacy and emphasizing the importance of ongoing data analysis and curriculum alignment. The committee asked questions relating to the trends in Amesbury and ongoing curriculum implementation.

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