

**AMESBURY SCHOOL COMMITTEE
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
AMESBURY MIDDLE SCHOOL
MAY 19, 2009**

Present at 7:00 p.m. were Thatcher Kezer, Chair, Stanley Schwartz, Debra Bibeau, Paula Blair, Bonnie Schultz, Gale Hanshaw, Tom McGee, Charles Chaurette, Superintendent of Schools and Mike Bruno, SAC Representative.

The Chair called the meeting to order. Bonnie Schultz led the Committee in the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. PRESENTATIONS

A. Whittier Vocational Technical High School Representatives

Bill DeRosa, Superintendent and Charlie LaBella, one of Amesbury's representatives to the Whittier School Board were present. Mr. DeRosa gave an update on what is new at Whittier. Their new science labs are online, they are offering more honors classes, Whittier received the Merrimack Valley Community Service Award for all that they do for the communities that come under their umbrella. The fashion and interior design programs have been closed due to the economy and low enrollment, however, the allied health department has expanded. Whittier has six students who are in a co-op program with Raytheon and all six have been offered permanent positions after they graduate from Whittier.

They are gearing up for the summer program for 7th and 8th graders. One third of the students who attend the summer program end up applying to attend Whittier. The program gives these students an opportunity to try most of the programs that Whittier has to offer. The cost is \$125/2 weeks.

Ms. Bibeau congratulated Mr. LaBella for being named to the position of Chair of the Whittier School Board. Mr. DeRosa invited school committee members to take a tour of Whittier and have lunch prepared by the students in the culinary arts program. The possible dates are: 6/4, 6/9, or 6/11.

Motion by Mike Bruno, seconded by Debra Bibeau to move #3, Comments by Visitors, Delegations, to begin after the high school schedule report . Unanimous, Yes, Student Rep., Yes.

4. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

A. Curriculum Director's Report

1. Science Curriculum & Textbook Updates
Telena Imel and Wayne Adams gave a Power Point presentation regarding the science curriculum and new textbooks needed to meet the curriculum's needs. The committee will take a vote to approve the curriculum and textbooks during the business section of this meeting.

B. Assistant Superintendent's Report

1. Transition Plans
Mr. Jack apprised the committee of the plans for bringing two new administrators to the Amesbury Public Schools. Michael Bergeron, Business Administrator, will begin his employment on June 22nd. Lou Charette, CES Principal, has been working with Peter Hoyt and attending some school department functions in working towards a smooth transition at that school.

Mr. Jack reported that he is currently trying to tie up this year's budget but he is still has to wait for the Commonwealth to decide how they will distribute the federal stimulus money. Currently, the state reports that Chapter 70 monies will be held harmless. He will have more information by the end of this week.

C. Superintendent's Report

Dr. Chaurette reported that a NEASC report was included in the school committee packet stating that they will continue the AHS accreditation in response to the work that has been done at the high school. The next accreditation visit from NEASC will take place in 2012.

AMS Principal, Michael Curry, was recognized by the Northeast Counselors Association (NECA) for his support of the many programmatic initiatives to move towards a comprehensive guidance approach.

Dr. Chaurette also reported that the Top 10 Dinner held the previous evening was a wonderful event. The top ten students of the high school senior class choose teachers who have had a profound impact on their lives. The students and the teachers chosen:

- Alyssa Beecy/Jennifer Daileanes
Michael Bruno/Patty Hoyt
Kristopher Bucyk/Tricia Cignetti
Katelyn Goodwin/Tim Angerhofer
Katie Kozacka/Jim Cassidy

Aislyn Schalck/Barb Leary
 Jaclyn Webber/Marybeth Exner
 Jade Weisensee/Steve Bastien
 Allison Whittier/Kristen Walsh

1. High School Scheduling

Dr. Chaurrette introduced Mr. Murray, AHS Principal and Mr. Hamond, AHS Dean of Curriculum/Students who gave a Power Point presentation on the new high school schedule that will go into effect on September 1st.

Last year, with the anticipated completion of the building project, Dr. Chaurrette directed the high school administration to continue its work on analyzing the current high school schedule and developing a new schedule that would provide for maximum use of time for instructional purposes for all students within the existing contractual requirements. This work has resulted in minor changes in this year's schedule relative to scheduling for MCAS test days, mid-term exams and the use of studies, etc. A comprehensive revision of the schedule had to be delayed until the completion of the high school project.

The new schedule provides the equivalent of 13.6 days of additional instruction to over 80% of our students. This will require the elimination of A block with the student day for all students beginning at 7:30 a.m.

No Child Left Behind mandates the goal of 100% proficiency by 2014. Hopefully, with this optimal use of instructional time by all of our students, they will be able to achieve this very demanding goal.

The presentation highlighted that the new schedule will increase student achievement, increase instructional time and stay within the teacher contract.

Dr. Chaurrette made it clear that if the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education were to come to Amesbury Public Schools to conduct an audit of time on learning, we would most likely be declared out of compliance.

The Chair asked if the high school lost their accreditation because of noncompliance, what impact would that have on the students.? Mr. Murray stated that the opportunities for students who graduate from a nonaccredited high school are limited.

The Student Advisory Council had given the school committee a suggested alternate schedule before the meeting. The students who are in band oppose the elimination of the A block.

Motion by Gale Hanshaw, seconded by Bonnie Schultz to suspend the rules so that the school committee could vote after 9:00 p.m. Unanimous, Yes.

3. COMMENTS BY VISITORS, DELEGATIONS

- Dave Conway, President of the Amesbury Youth Music (AYMS) stated that what AYMS wanted was to prevent the change from having a negative effect on band members.
- Renee Pelletier, band member, stated that if the new schedule goes forward, band and chorus participation numbers will decrease.
- Cheryl Conway, parent of a senior and treasurer of AYMS shared her concern for the change in the schedule.
- Matt Knight, student, asked if the administration could make A block a requirement for all kids.
- Julie, parent of a sophomore, stated that taking band in 45 minute blocks will cause band students to take a year to complete a course.
- Derek Cane, band member, stated that with the new schedule there will not be enough time after school to make up academics due to co-curricular activities and jobs.
- Jennifer, band member, stated that the teacher contract seems to be the stumbling block, can we go back and talk to them?
- Sandra Ouellet, parent, stated she doesn't know if this is the right way to do the new schedule or the right time. What do the teachers think? She asked if the community could get a copy of the proposal. Mr. Murray stated that it would be put on the website the next day.
- Mary Jo Noonan, parent, expressed her concern for the new schedule.
- Gale Hanshaw stated that maybe this is not the time to make this change. Perhaps we should wait until next year.
- Dr. Chaurette stated that this matter has been under review for two years and that, due to compliance issues, implementation could not be delayed.
- Bonnie Schultz asked if we could let the DESE know that we are working on improving the high school schedule to increase time on learning and put it off for a year.

The Chair stopped deliberation of this issue at 9:55 p.m.

ITEMS FOR APPROVAL OR EARLY CONSIDERATION

A. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion by Debra Bibeau, seconded by Gale Hanshaw to approve the regular minutes dated May 5, 2009. Unanimous, 5 Yes, 2 Abstain (Blair and Schultz), Student Rep., Yes.

B. BUSINESS

1. Hockey Co-Op Team with Whittier Vo-Tech.

Motion by Debra Bibeau, seconded by Gale Hanshaw, to renew the Hockey Co-Op Team with Whittier for another year. Vote: Unanimous, Yes, Student Rep., Yes.

2. Science Curriculum and Textbook Adoption

Motion by Paula Blair, seconded by Debra Bibeau to approve the Science Curriculum as presented and the textbooks listed below. Unanimous, Yes., Student Rep., Yes.

- **Astronomy – *Explorations: An Introduction to Astronomy***, Publisher: McGraw Hill, Authors: Thomas T. Arny, Stephen E. Schneider, Copyright: 2008, Price: \$97.75, Text Reviewed: 3
- **Forensics – *Forensic Science: an introduction***, Publisher: Prentice Hall, Author: Richard Saferstein, Copyright: 2008, Price: \$89.00, Texts Reviewed: 3
- **Marine Biology – *Marine Biology***, Publisher: McGraw Hill, Authors: Peter Castro, Michael Huber, Copyright: 2008, Price: \$102.75, Texts Reviewed: 1 (no other texts could be identified that meet AHS needs)
- **Environmental Science – *Environmental Science: How the World Works and Your Place in it***, Publisher: Lebel, Author: Jane Person, Copyright: 2007, Price: \$95.00, Texts Reviewed: 3
- **Meteorology – *Meteorology Today***, Publisher: Thomson, Author: C. Donald Ahrens, Copyright: 2007, Price: \$97.75, Texts Reviewed: 3
- **Oceanography – *Essentials of Oceanography***, Publisher: Prentice Hall, Authors: Alan P. Trujillo, Harold V. Thurman, Copyright: 2008, Price: \$102.75, Texts Reviewed: 3
- **Geology: *Essentials of Geology***, Publisher: Prentice Hall, Authors: Frederick K. Lutgens, Edward J. Tarbuck, Copyright: 2006, Price: \$97.75, Texts Reviewed: 3

3. Acceptance of Superintendent's Intention to Retire

Although the committee received Dr. Chaurette's letter in December, 2008, no formal action was taken at that time.

Motion by Stanley Schwartz, seconded by Debra Bibeau to accept Dr. Chaurette's intention to retire letter. Unanimous, Yes.

4. Change Date of June 16th Meeting

Motion by Paula Blair, seconded by Bonnie Schultz to keep the June 16th meeting date with the understanding that, if necessary, the meeting date will change to June 18th. Unanimous.

5. 2nd Reading JJIB Athletic Participation Policy

Motion by Gale Hanshaw, seconded by Debra Bibeau to approve changes to Policy JJIB Athletic Participation. Unanimous, Yes., Student Rep., Yes.

6. 1st Reading Policy EBA Workplace Exposure Control Plan and 1st Reading Policy KCD Gifts and Donations

Ms. Hanshaw gave an overview of the two new policies. The policies will be put on the agenda for the June 2nd meeting for a second reading.

C. WARRANT

Motion by Debra Bibeau, seconded by Stanley Schwartz, to approve the warrant dated 5/21/09 in the amount of \$493,161.15. Unanimous, Yes.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

A. Subcommittee Reports

1. Budget/Finance Subcommittee

Ms. Bibeau reported that the proposal from Youth Basketball was reviewed by principals and Mr. Ford. It was determined that Mr. Jack will call Peter Sydlowski to state that each of the sites proposed by Youth Basketball for the creation of a new outdoor basketball court had problems. Mr. Sydlowski will be referred back to Kathy Crowley at the town's parks and recreation department regarding refurbishing the town basketball court and the addition of a second court.

Discussion regarding a policy that states clearly who in the school department has the right to waive a building use fee. The subcommittee voted to request that the policy subcommittee review the Community Use of School Facilities policy and add clarifying language.

Ms. Bibeau suggested that some of the facility fees collected be used to put the school committee policy manual be put on the web through MASC.

There are two gifts to the school department that need a vote of acceptance.

Motion by Bonnie Schultz, seconded by Gale Hanshaw to accept the gift of \$4,000 for the creation of a smart board classroom at the middle school. Unanimous, Yes., Student Rep., Yes.

Motion by Debra Bibeau, seconded by Gale Hanshaw to accept the gift of a baby grand piano valued at approximately \$3,000 from Mr. Blair to be used at the middle school. Unanimous, Yes., Student Rep., Yes.

2. **Policy Subcommittee**
Will have met on Wednesday, May 13th at 8:00 a.m. The next meeting is scheduled for June 9th at 8:00 a.m.
3. **Personnel Subcommittee**
Ms. Schultz reported that a case in arbitration has received a ruling and is settled. Discussion regarding the superintendent's evaluation for the past year. Dr. Chaurette stated that he would email the school committee a summary of his goals for the past year by Tuesday, May 26th. School Committee members will be emailed a blank evaluation form and should be submitted to Mr. Schwartz by June 4th.
4. **Student Advisory Council**
Mike Bruno stated that SAC is working on sending ambassadors from SAC to the middle school to talk to the 8th grade students about getting involved in co-curricular activities when they enter 9th grade. Also, elections are coming up soon.
5. **High School Building Committee**
Mr. McGee reported that the contractor is still working on punch list items. The lower yard has been seeded.

COMMUNICATIONS

- Graduation will take place on Friday, June 5th at 7:00 p.m. in Landry Stadium (in case of bad weather, it will be held in the performance center). School committee members should meet at 6:45 p.m. by the tunnel.
- Ms. Bibeau thanked David Jack, Bonnie Schultz and Stanley Schwartz for attending the Day on the Hill.
- Ms. Bibeau reported that MASC is holding a "Charting the Course" event for new school committee members at Whittier on June 13th.
- Ms. Bibeau also reported on the Municipal Relief Bill that, if passed, could strip school committees of their roles. She prepared a letter to be sent to legislators opposing this bill. The Chair is a supporter of this bill as Mayor so he suggests that school committee members do lobby as individuals.

Motion by Debra Bibeau, seconded by Bonnie Schultz to send the legislators the letter, read aloud by Ms. Bibeau, in opposition to this Municipal Relief Bill. 5 Yes, 2 Opposed (Blair & Kezer), Student Rep., Yes.

- Ms. Schultz stated that if anyone had any questions regarding the SPED PAC, let her know. She is the liaison.
- The ring ceremony for the football team is scheduled for Wednesday night at 7:00 p.m. at AHS.
- Mr. Schwartz stated that both the AEFI Hall of Honor and the Top 10 Dinner were great events.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

1. Summer Reading List Presentation (6/2/09)
2. Retiree Reception (6/2/09)
3. Information on Essex Agricultural
4. Status Update on GLEC

Motion by Stanley Schwartz, seconded by Bonnie Schultz to adjourn the meeting at 10:39 p.m., Unanimous, Yes, Student Rep., Yes.

Respectfully Submitted,

Tom McGee, Secretary