

**AMESBURY SCHOOL COMMITTEE
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
AMESBURY HIGH SCHOOL
MARCH 16, 2010**

Present at 7:00 p.m. were Thatcher Kezer, Chair, Debra Bibeau, Stanley Schwartz, Bonnie Schultz, Gale Hanshaw, Tom McGee, Ann Connolly King, David Jack, Superintendent of Schools and Channele Havey, SAC Representative.

I. The Chair called the meeting to order. Mr. McGee led the Committee in the Pledge of Allegiance.

II. PRESENTATIONS

A. PUBLIC HEARING ON THE FY11 SCHOOL DEPARTMENT BUDGET

The School Committee Chair, Mayor Kezer, handed the gavel to the Chair of the Finance/Budget Subcommittee, Ms. Bibeau, to preside over the public hearing on the FY11 budget. Ms. Bibeau stated that after this meeting there are two additional meetings of the budget/finance subcommittee; March 24th and March 31st followed by the School Committee vote on the FY11 budget at the April 6th meeting. Mayor Kezer summarized the state of the state, town and school department budgets. There is not a spending problem, there is a revenue problem. Leading into the FY11 budget process, Governor Patrick stated that Chapter 70 monies would remain the same for the coming year as they were for this current fiscal year. Most recently the legislature is talking about a 4% decrease in Chapter 70 local aid. The town will not have the exact number until sometime in June.

Ms. Bibeau read the guidelines for participating at school committee meetings. She also introduced members of the town municipal council as well as school administrators who were present. The chair then introduced David Jack, Superintendent of Schools, to make a presentation on the FY11 budget process.

Superintendent Jack gave a PowerPoint presentation on how the FY11 budget was created. Ms. Bibeau invited attendees to come forward to speak to the school committee or school administrators regarding any of their concerns.

- Greg Noyes, 8 Clark's Road, asked if Whittier was part of the town budget
- Janet Higgins, 19 Elizabeth St., asked why there were no cuts in the administration
- Barbara Catino, Paige Farm Road, asked if the students could be charged for parking their cars in order to increase revenue
- Anders Lund, 23 Woodwell Circle, asked the Mayor if he was addressing the unions about the health care costs and why are the numbers between AES and CES different

- Cindy Yetman, 31 Portsmouth Rd., stated she was present as a parent, a teacher and the union president. She stated that the administration had tied her hands in her role as the union president when they cut out the director positions in the FY11 budget. Last year the union agreed to increase the percentage of health care costs paid by employees.
- Meryl Goldsmith, 8 Cleveland St., asked if there was a way that the money spent on special education could be audited for efficiency
- Greg Noyes asked if prop. 2 ½ is increased, why are we level budgeting

Mayor Kezer spoke about increasing insurance costs. He has prepared a memo for all unions regarding these cost increases but every union has to approve the Mayor's proposal or nothing can change.

Mr. Jack explained that it may appear that the high school has two assistant principals, however, .5 of one of these positions is the athletic director position and with that position comes a lot of duties. He commented that special education requires an ever increasing amount of resources. The school district has looked at ways to be more efficient as evidenced with our in-district special education transportation system, which allows hundreds of thousands of dollars in savings. This is very similar to the custodial outsourcing program and the savings accrued through that endeavor. Kathy Glennon, SPED Director, Michael Bergeron, Business Administrator and the Superintendent talked about the possibility of doing an audit of special education to make sure that the school department is handling special education in the most efficient way possible. Other districts have had some success in this area. Ms. Glennon announced that if anyone had any questions about special education that she would be happy to make an appointment to meet with them.

Mr. Schwartz stated that the school committee and school administrators have looked at many innovative ideas and have saved thousands of dollars but there is now nothing left to do to save money.

At 8:20 p.m. Ms. Bibeau handed the gavel back to the Mayor, ending the public hearing, and there was a short recess before the start of the regular school committee meeting.

The meeting reconvened at 8:30 p.m.

B. DISCUSSION ON BULLYING POLICIES WITH PRINCIPALS

The school district's Title IX Coordinators, Elizabeth McAndrews and Roy Hamond, reported that the school department's current policies on civil rights, harassment, bullying, etc. came from the district attorney's office. The policy is part of the high school student handbook and is revisited at the beginning of each school year with employees and students. When an act of bullying is reported, parents are involved as well as the police department.

Mike Curry, Amesbury Middle School Principal, stated that the age of the middle school student population presents more of a challenge in the prevention

of bullying. There are some programs in place to help prevent any type of harassment. One of these is “No Name Calling Week”. Students pledged not to do any name calling during this designated week. There were two presentations on both bullying and cyber bullying. AMS also uses a “Pos-o-meter” to engage teachers in finding students doing something positive.

Donna Georges, Principal of The Amesbury Academy Public Charter School, stated that the Academy has focused resources on training staff in cyber bullying including suicide prevention. The MIIA did a presentation on work place discrimination. The Academy enjoys great relationships with the Amesbury Police Department. Detective Wile spoke to the students about sexual bullying. The Academy staff has gone through training on civil rights.

Mr. Helliesen, Amesbury Elementary School Principal, explained that because there aren’t as many students in the elementary school, teachers and administrators get to know the students very well. When there is something wrong teachers and administrators try to use these times as “teachable moments”. He stated that teachers can no longer assume that kids know what bullying is. In conjunction with the Essex County Sheriff’s Association, Bruce McBrien, technology teacher, communicates with students in the prevention of bullying, especially cyber bullying.

Lou Charette, Cashman Elementary School Principal, stated that CES does social training from three year olds up to fourth graders. Each grade level works on different positive aspects of prevention. Third and fourth graders learn what cyber bullying means.

Motion by Stanley Schwartz, seconded by Bonnie Schultz to suspend the rules so that the committee may vote after 9:00 p.m. Unanimous, Yes, Student Rep., Yes.

Ms. Bibeau stated that she was pleased with the tools the schools are already using to promote civil rights and to address any harassment and/or bullying going on at any of the schools.

III. Comments by Visitors, Delegations

None.

IV. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

A. Curriculum Director’s Report

1. Overview of Common Core Standards (taken out of order)

- Ms. Imel gave an overview of the Common Core State Standards Initiative and timeline.

2. PRT Follow up

- Ms. Imel spoke briefly about the participation by teachers on the March 10th Professional Release Time Day as well as the upcoming March 31st PRT.

B. Superintendent's Report

1. MSBA AES Walkthrough

The superintendent stated that the MSBA conducted their walkthrough of AES. The MSBA will now create a Senior Study. Overcrowding was discussed.

2. MASS Lions All-State Band

The superintendent announced that Nicholas Croce is sponsored by the Amesbury Lions Club and Nicole Pray is sponsored by the Newburyport Lions Club.

3. Race To The Top (RTTP)

The Mayor and Mr. Jack will be going to Worcester State College for another presentation on this program.

V. ITEMS FOR APPROVAL OR EARLY CONSIDERATION

A. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion by Debra Bibeau, seconded by Tom McGee to approve the regular minutes dated March 2, 2010. Unanimous, Yes, Student Rep., Yes.

B. BUSINESS

1. 2nd Reading Policy EEAEB Vehicle Idling Reduction

Motion by Gale Hanshaw, seconded by Tom McGee to approve Policy EEAEB Vehicle Idling Reduction. Unanimous, Yes, Student Rep., Yes.

C. WARRANT

Motion by Stanley Schwartz, seconded by Bonnie Schultz to approve the warrant dated March 25, 2010 in the amount of \$358,218.78. Unanimous, Yes.

VI. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

A. Subcommittee Reports

1. Budget/Finance Subcommittee

Ms. Bibeau stated that there will be two more budget sessions after this school committee meeting. March 24th at 4:30 p.m. and March 31st at 6:00 p.m. both at the Horace Mann School.

2. Policy Subcommittee

This subcommittee will meet on March 17th in the superintendent's office. The bullying policy will be discussed as well as a request to name a facility after an Amesbury citizen.

3. **Personnel Subcommittee**
This subcommittee will have met prior to this meeting. Mr. Schwartz may have a report.
4. **Student Advisory Council**
Chanelle Havey reported that SAC would be meeting again on March 30th at 6:00 p.m.

B. COMMUNICATIONS

- Ms. Bibeau reminded members that the Day on the Hill takes place on March 30th. There is no fee for students on the Student Advisory Council.
- Ms. Bibeau encouraged all citizens to fill out and return the Census forms because federal aid to Massachusetts depends on every citizen sending in a form.
- Ms. Connolly King attended the MASC “Charting the Course” workshop for new school committee members. She stated that there were changes in the Open Meeting Law effective July 1st that will have a large impact on how the school committee conducts business. For instance, there are many changes with regard to the reading aloud of the superintendent’s evaluation.
- Ms. Bibeau announced that the recipient of the Superintendent’s Award, Rebecca Crochiere, was named the MIAA Student of the Month.
- Mr. Schwartz attended the “healthy breakfast” held at the Cashman Elementary School. Representative Michael Costello attended as well.

VII. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

1. Vote on School Choice SY10-11 (4/6/10)
2. Vote on School Budget (4/6/10)
3. Responsive Classroom Presentation – E. Elliott & W. Helliesen (5/4/10)
4. Landry Stadium Committee (May, 2010)
5. AHS & AMS Handbook (5/18/10)
6. Collaboration to Support Our Youth (5/4/10)
7. Day on the Hill (3/30/10)
8. Superintendent’s Evaluation (5/10)

VIII. PRESS CONFERENCE

None.

IX. EXECUTIVE SESSION

The Mayor stated that it was necessary for the School Committee to enter into executive session under M.G.L. Chapter 39, S.23B, for the purposes of discussing contract negotiations.

Roll Call Vote: Kezer, Yes; Bibeau, Yes; Schwartz, Yes; Schultz, Yes; Hanshaw, Yes; McGee, Yes; Connolly King, Yes.

The committee will not reconvene in open session; the meeting will be adjourned following the end of the executive session.

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.