

**Andover School Committee**  
**Regular Meeting of March 21, 2013**  
**School Administration Building - School Committee Room**

**Members in Attendance:** Chairwoman Paula Colby-Clements, Vice-Chair Dennis Forgue, Annie Gilbert, Richard Collins, and David Birnbach

**Others in Attendance:** Dr. Marinel McGrath, Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent Nancy Duclos, Assistant Superintendent Paul Szymanski, and AHS Liaison Brian Wivell

**I. Regular Meeting**

**A. Call to Order**

Chairwoman Colby-Clements opened the Regular Meeting of the School Committee at 7:35 P.M.

Dennis Forgue motioned to amend tonight's agenda to include a discussion on adding an additional school day and discuss available options. The motion was seconded by David Birnbach and voted 5-0 to approve.

Mr. Collins asked for a moment of silence followed by the Pledge of Allegiance led by Sanborn Elementary student Sonia Johnson (Grade 5). On behalf of the School Committee, Mr. Collins presented Sonia with a Certificate of Appreciation.

**B. Recognition**

A special recognition was bestowed upon Richard Collins who is retiring tonight from the School Committee after serving on the Committee for 15 years from 1998 to 2013, and also recognizing his service as a Social Studies Teacher and AHS Track and Football Coach. Many members of the community, past and present School Committee Members, School Administrators, members of the Board of Selectmen, former members of AHS Football and Track Teams, as well as local dignitaries spoke highly of Mr. Collins, sharing some memorable moments and thanking him for his service to the community. Paula Colby-Clements presented Mr. Collins with a gift on behalf of the School Committee.

**Snow Days**

Superintendent McGrath said per Massachusetts Law schools they are required to provide 180 school days for students and teachers need to meet their contracted work days as per the teacher contract. At the last School Committee Meeting on March 13, the School Committee voted to hold school on Friday, March 29<sup>th</sup> (1/2 day – and Good Friday) or on Saturday, April 27<sup>th</sup> depending upon sufficient staff on hand to open the schools to make up the additional school day due to an extended number of snow days. As of this morning, 48 staff members have requested to take March 29<sup>th</sup> (Good Friday) off and of those 48 they have secured the 28 substitutes that would be needed to fill-in. The last day of school would have been Thursday, June 27<sup>th</sup>. However, with the additional snow day on Tuesday, March 19<sup>th</sup> schools need to another additional day at the elementary and middle school level and two days at AHS who incurred a loss of a day of school in January due to a gas leak. Per teacher contract, school cannot be in session beyond June 30<sup>th</sup>. Therefore, three options have been presented to the School Committee for their consideration on how to make up the additional school days. All schools could attend school on March 29<sup>th</sup> (1/2 day) to realize the 180 days, but still leaves AHS short one day.

The School Committee had a very long discussion on the options provided which included shortening

April vacation, scheduling or not scheduling school on Good Friday, March 29 with an additional day for AHS to meet the requirements, or scheduling school on two Saturdays. Many members in the audience weighed in with their thoughts, after which the School Committee stated their preferences and voted.

Annie Gilbert motioned for the School Committee to schedule Friday, March 29<sup>th</sup> as an early release day for all schools, and Saturday, April 27<sup>th</sup> as the additional day of school for AHS. Anyone who chooses to keep their child home on Good Friday due to religious reasons will be marked present. The motion was seconded by Richard Collins and voted 3-2 to approve. Dennis Forgue and David Birnbach opposed.

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**II. PUBLIC HEARING – FY 14 Recommended School Budget 8:15 PM**

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Dr. McGrath provided an abbreviated presentation of the School Department Budget for FY-14 highlighting what is in the budget and what is not. She noted that the School Committee will discuss the School Warrant Articles and the change in the appropriation from the Town but will not vote on the Warrant Articles related to the schools with monetary implications until they have more information. The FY14 Budget is based upon the Andover Public School's Vision, Mission, and Strategic Plan.

Superintendent McGrath reviewed the major priorities of the School Department which include ensuring level services, investing modestly in the Strategic Plan, reorganizing where educationally sound, capturing savings where possible and working within available funds. There are no cuts to programs or services and user fees for the choral program are funded within the budget. A 3.5% reduction in expenses over this year was achieved through sustainable changes, contract negotiations, and reduced out-of-district expenses, with the inclusion of Phase I of Transitions, the final in-district Program at AHS. The Strategic phase of the budget recommended encompasses the areas of band, orchestra, chorus, class size reduction, digital learning, program development and coordination, and the new educator evaluation system. The budget meets all State and Federal Regulatory mandates.

The FY-14 Level Services/Strategic Plan Budget requested in the amount of \$70,278,272 includes \$5,394,709 in salaries and \$12,833,563 in expenses. This budget reflects inclusion of the modest investment of the Strategic Plan to move the school system forward. The dollar amount for a level services budget which provides the same services as this year, meeting all contractual and compliance expenses is \$69,402,345; does not include any investment for the Strategic Plan to move the system forward. There is a monetary gap in the Town Manager's Recommended Budget and what the School Department's budget is; the number varies depending upon inclusion of the Summer Chapter 70 amount of \$500,000 for the schools that is not included in the School Department's base budget for FY-14.

David Birnbach expressed his disappointment that the main highlight for AHS is reduced class size without any monies going to the 4 C's (Critical Thinking, Creativity, Collaboration, and Creativity). Dr. McGrath said they need to have digital media in place first before bringing in programs to be supported by Digital Media personnel. Having Digital Learning Specialists at each elementary

school and infrastructure brought up to speed is the first requirement before bringing in programs to support the 4 C's. David is most concerned that AHS should be incorporating new programs that apply the 4C's; if we are making a big investment it should be at AHS.

#### Public Input:

Diane Costagliola said class sizes at AHS are large and the Leadership Team is trying to combine new ideas with what we have lost and move forward and we should support their decision. Cyndi Webber, 9 Gavin Circle, feels the visions for AHS are solid but we have not had solid funding. High school funding was cut and they are trying to dig-out from below level services and fighting for level services before moving forward. They need the \$500,000 from Chapter 70 funds in the education budget. AEA President Kerry Costello also talked about class sizes at AHS especially in the writing classes which are of great concern. She is anxious to see the feedback from the NEASC Report on class sizes. Funding continues to be the main focus as it has not kept pace with expenses and the Town needs to step up. The AEA supports the direction the budget is headed and urges they stay focused on the common agenda, our children.

Erica Nichols, 26 Rock O'Dundee Road, stated that not hiring teachers to staff the Special Education programs would be catastrophic. John Zipeto, Canterbury Street, said level funding has been an issue for several years and it will not be easy to push the budget through Town Meeting but the School Department should hold their ground. Sandy McGravey, who has a child in grade 1 at Sanborn School, doesn't feel there is enough collaboration and suggested they think outside of the box; we won't move forward by digging our heels in.

#### School Warrant Articles

Interim Plant & Facilities Director Maria Maggio and Ed Ataide addressed the warrant articles that impact the School Department.

#### Warrant Article P-30 – DMS School Site Improvements

The site improvement project for Doherty Middle School will be conducted as two separate projects with the Youth Center Project and all parameters set by the Town in the bid documents. The site improvement construction will start July and completed by August 23, 2013. Bid specifications include all DMS site work and digging/backfilling the site for the AYC. Bids will be segregated by cost for the Youth Center and DMS site. Chris Huntress from the Youth Center Building Project said construction of the Youth Center will begin in late August/early September.

#### School-1 School Projects for All Schools in the amount of \$275, 000

#### School-2 School Projects by Building in the amount of \$885,000

School-3 Textbooks in the amount \$375,950 includes World Language, Math, and Social Studies books for Grades 6-12, English Language Arts, Electronic Textbooks, and Intervention (RTI) books for grades PK-Grade 5.

School-4 Comprehensive School Space Needs Study reduced from \$225,000 to \$130,000 and they will not be able to accomplish what the School Committee requested with this reduction in appropriation requiring further discussion.

School-5 Major School Project - the amount of the request was for Major School Projects was \$2,290,000 reduced to \$1,000,000 and now recommended for \$500K having items to be reprioritized.

School-6 DMS/WWI Auditorium Renovations – Original request of \$400,000 reduced to \$330,000 for Phase 3 design, HVAC System, elevator, carpeting etc. for \$330,000 also requires further discussion.

School-7 School Site Improvement original request of \$4,270,000 reduced to \$3,200,000.

School-8 AHS Tennis Court Renovations request for \$400,000.

School-9 WHMS HVAC/Electrical upgrades in the amount of \$1,250,000.

The Town Manager is recommending deferring improvements to the Town playgrounds (not school) which will increase maintenance costs with Ballardvale being the mostly costly.

The School Department did not take positions on any of the Warrant Articles.

**C. Education – Rescheduled**

1. Wood Hill Middle School Media Center Redesign Team
2. Gift to Schools – WHMS PTO: Media Center Redesign Funding

**D. Communications**

1. Bancroft School Project Update - None
2. Budget Subcommittee Report- Paula Colby Clements said the Triboard will meet on March 27<sup>th</sup> with budget discussions continuing with the liaisons from the three boards.

**E. Old Business**

1. Warrant Article P-59 Andover Youth Center Transfer of Land

Information on the placement of the footprint of the Andover Youth Center was explained by Chris Huntress and the alteration in land area required due to wetland regulations to shift the building 35' north, within the box of the square footage approved at Town Meeting but outside of the wetlands buffer zone. The movement north by 35' does not affect the parking situation, it actually adds more spaces.

Annie Gilbert motioned for the Andover School Committee to recommend approval of Warrant Article P-59 entitled Andover Youth Center Transfer of Land as presented. The motion was seconded by Richard Collins and voted 5-0 to recommend approval.

**F. New Business**

1. 2013-2014 School Calendar – First Reading

Four draft calendars for the 2013.2014 School Year have been prepared for consideration of the School Committee and the Andover Educator's Association. The calendars will be posted on the School website for all to review and provide comment. As this is a first reading, no vote by the School Committee was taken.

2. Superintendent Successor Contract

Paula Colby-Clements reported that the School Committee met in three Executive Sessions to discuss the Superintendent's Successor Contract and is happy to report they have come to an agreement for a five year contract for Superintendent McGrath beginning July 1, 2013 through June 30, 2018 with benefits the same as other employees.

Annie Gilbert motioned the Andover School Committee move to approve the Superintendent's Successor Contract beginning July 1, 2013 through June 30, 2018 as presented. The motion was seconded by Dennis Forgue and voted 4-0-1 to approve. David Birnbach abstained.

**G. Consent Agenda**

1. Warrants:

Expense Warrants: SW1314, Payroll Warrants #13S036, 13S037 and 13S038.

Dennis Forgue motioned to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. The motion was seconded by Annie Gilbert and voted 5-0 to approve.

**H. Adjournment**

At 10:15 P.M. on a motion by Dennis Forgue and seconded by Richard Collins, the Andover School Committee voted 5-0 to adjourn the School Committee Meeting of March 21, 2013.

Respectfully submitted,

Dee DeLorenzo, Recorder

Documents:        Warrants  
                      FY-14 Budget Presentation  
                      2013-2014 Drafts of School Calendars