

Andover School Committee
Minutes of June 11, 2020
Virtual Meeting

Participants from the School Committee: Vice Chair Tracey Spruce, Shannon Scully, Susan McCready, Paul Murphy, and Lauren Conoscenti.

Others participating: Superintendent Shelley Berman, Assistant Superintendents Sandra Trach, Paul Szymanski, Sara Stetson, Director of Communications Nicole Kieser, Director of Innovation Stephen Chinosi. Student Government Liaison, Avi Janarthanan.

I. Regular Meeting

Call to Order/Moment of Silence

Susan McCready called the Andover School Committee meeting of June 11, 2020 to order at 7:00 P.M. and opened up the Regular Meeting through a Virtual Meeting Broadcast by Andover TV and on Comcast Channel 99, Verizon Channel 43 or via

streamed: www.andovertv.org **Public Participation via email:**

scremote@andoverma.us Alison Phelan and Shelley Berman will screen the emails.

The meeting began with a Moment of Silence.

A. Committee Service Recognitions

1. Joel Blumstein: 6 years as elected member, including two years as Chair

Susan McCready recognized Joel Blumstein for his service and commitment to the community as a member of the Andover School Committee, his many liaison positions, and committees he has been involved in over the years. Susan read an email from former School Committee member Annie Gilbert thanking Joel for being a fierce advocate for Andover students.

Shannon Scully, Paul Murphy, and Tracey Spruce also recognized Joel for his many years of service and are grateful for his leadership.

Dr. Berman acknowledged Joel for his advice, counsel, fairness, being connected to the community, eye for detail, and his advocacy for education and very much appreciates his support.

Joel thanked the School Committee for the gifts and kind words. He wishes everyone the best especially to those who are also moving on and thanked his past and present friends on the School Committee.

Susan McCready welcomed Lauren Conoscenti, as the newest member of the School Committee.

2. Ben Roldan, AHS 2020 Graduate, 2 years as SGA Rep

Susan McCready recognized Ben Roldan, for his two years as the AHS Student Government Liaison to the School Committee. Dr. Berman said Ben represented students very well and wished him well in the coming years. The members of the School Committee also expressed their appreciation to Ben for his thoughtful questions and comments at the meetings.

Kerry Costello, AHS Student Government Advisor, introduced Avi Janarthanan as the next AHS liaison. Avi said he looks forward to representing the AHS student body as their liaison to the School Committee.

B. Committee Reorganization: Elect Chairperson and Vice Chair: 2020-2021

Susan described Policy BDA, and the opportunity for the Committee to vote to suspend this policy for the current year given the uncertainty of Town Meeting. This would allow the newly elected Vice Chairperson to begin serving in that role immediately. The policy already allows the newly elected Chairperson to begin immediately since the previous Chairperson is no longer a member of the Committee. Per Policy BGF, suspension of policies requires a 2/3rds vote of the Committee.

Paul Murphy moved that the Andover School Committee vote to suspend the language in Policy BDA given the uncertainty around timing of the 2020 Andover Annual Town Meeting so that this year the newly elected Vice-Chair person can begin serving in that position immediately. Motion seconded by Shannon Scully. T. Spruce-Y, P. Murphy-Y, L. Conoscenti-Y, S. Scully-Y, S. McCready-Y. Motion passes 5-0.

1. Chairperson

Tracey Spruce moved that Shannon Scully be elected as the Chairperson of the Andover School Committee. The motion was seconded by Paul Murphy. Shannon Scully indicated she was willing to accept the position of Chair. Roll call: T. Spruce-Y, P. Murphy-Y, S. McCready-Y, L. Conoscenti-Y, S. Scully-Y. Motion passes 5-0.

2. Vice Chair

Paul Murphy moved that Susan McCready be elected as Vice Chair of the Andover School Committee for 2020-2021 effective immediately. The motion was seconded by Tracey Spruce. Susan McCready indicated she was willing to accept the position of Vice Chair. Roll call: P. Murphy-Y, S. McCready-Y, L. Conoscenti-Y, S. Scully-Y, T. Spruce-Y. Motion passes 5-0.

C. Recognitions & Communications

Nicole Kieser reported on the following recognitions:

-  David Grossman, Class of 2020 Valedictorian
-  Henry Chen and Kush Shah Co-Salutatorians for 2020 Class

 Paula Westmacott, YWCA Tribute to Women Award

The School Committee congratulated all of the above on their accomplishments.

AHS Principal Phil Conrad said nearly 400 of the 425 seniors came to Senior Celebration last week and it was a wonderful opportunity for seniors and their parents. Mr. Conrad met with the Chief of Police and Director of Public Health who both have concerns on holding a large-scale outdoor event this summer.

The provisions required would not allow for what is done in a typical year in the Tsongas Center. Phil will be asking for input from parents, students and teachers and hopes that by next Thursday they will be able to decide about having an outdoor graduation event this summer.

Mr. Conrad relayed some of the concerns expressed by Chief Keefe, Tom Carbone, and advice from the Commissioner of Education including the number of attendees, no processional, no program, students not allowed on stage, the area would have to be cleaned just prior and just following and the program would have to be brief. program (under 1 hour). It would be a very abbreviated version. The other option would be to do a traditional graduation in a virtual format.

Dr. Berman thanked all teachers and administrators for all the hard work over the past several months during the closure. He acknowledged some “silver linings” including teamwork, collaboration, and expanded use of technology. Dr. Berman believes APS stands out during the closure, yet there are lessons learned which will help the district improve.

Assistant Superintendents Sara Stetson and Sandy Trach will be co-chairing the Return to School task force. Specific participants will be determined in the coming days and will contain a cross-section of staff and community. The information from DESE is expected to be in the form of directives. Parent survey has just been sent out and all encouraged to respond.

Sandy Trach stated that a professional development catalog will be coming out to support teachers on a number of continued training and topics over the summer. There is work being done with Information Technology that will best serve our students and unify remote learning efforts.

Sara Stetson is pleased with the number of people who have volunteered to help with the Reopening Task Force, including parents with experience in a wide variety of learning differences and teachers with concern of the social emotional well-being of students.

Paul Szymanski reported on food services activities, the volume of meals being distributed to the Andover community and support from federal and state resource. He announced that families are typically signing up for bus passes by this point in the year, but there will be postponement in the process for bus passes for 2020/21.

Paul has worked with town attorney Tom Urbelis on language for an amendment ATM warrant Article 14 (school revolving account) after consultation with Donna Walsh, Town Finance Director and Hayley Green, Town Accountant to reflect requirements in statute that a bylaw be enacted as part of the establishment of the account. The Town Moderator has indicated that she will allow for this amendment to go forward per requirements that she has outlined.

Steve Chinosi reported on the number of teachers who have been able to offer reviews of various technology offerings and work that will inform school reopening plans.

Dr. Berman reported that he worked with the AEA on early retirement and leave of absence proposals in a Memorandum of Agreement. However, the AEA declined.

Susan thanked all the elementary and middle schools for their graduation ceremonies for 5th and 8th graders. She also thanked teachers and administrators for all their work during the closure.

Tracey provided comments on culturally-competent and identity-safe schools, and suggested future topics for SC discussion or presentations including: recruitment for diverse candidates in filling district positions; further updates of policy AC, particularly around hate speech; what more the district can do to add additional anti-racism work to the curriculum; the goals of having a school resource officer; and whether APS should consider a forum on anti-racism.

Paul attended a meeting of the provisional SEPAC and reported that they have completed bylaws. They intend to have a meeting on June 24th to elect officers.

Lauren added her support to discussing the anti-racism topics Tracey suggested. Important issues to students

Shannon announced that the Town Moderator used her discretion to delay Town Meeting. It will not be on June 22nd as had been planned and will be no earlier than July 22nd. As a result, for FY21 the school budget will be approved by the Select Board in 1/12th increments until Town Meeting passes a school budget. Shannon also provided information regarding issues at South School during the 2019/20 school year in order to clear up misconceptions apparent in the recent Townsman newspaper article and related emails the committee has received.

D. Public Input

Shannon reminded the public of Policy BEDH regarding public comment. Susan read public comment in the order it was received:

Mark Stevenson – supports the Superintendent’s decision to reassign staff. It is not a popular or easy decision, but it is necessary.

An email was submitted from Julie Bane-Finckler with a change.org petition attached accompanied by comments stating that they are disappointed in decision by Dr. Berman to transfer South School teachers.

Kathy Meltsakos, former AEA 2nd VP, was aware of issues amongst staff at South School. The AEA has tried to intervene over the past several years but to no avail. Kathy trusts that the School Committee supports Dr. Berman’s personnel decision so that all members can work within a positive work environment.

Peter Otis, former AEA Vice President also supports the Superintendents decision to transfer the teachers. He believes the process will help restore respect, collegiality and the professional work environment.

Kerry Costello, immediate past AEA President, said Andover doesn’t often use involuntary transfers, but it can afford staff a new beginning.

Bill Mounts, 6 Island Way, asked if the School Committee is made aware of all confidential memoranda of agreements into which the Superintendent and administration enter?

E. Response to Public Input

Shannon responded to the question, saying the School Committee does not get involved in personnel decisions and there are certainly agreements which the Committee does not see because they are related to personnel.

F. New Business

1. Signatories for update re anti-racism efforts

A statement regarding anti-racism efforts is on the APS website acknowledging that racism and hatred has no place in the Andover Public Schools, and outlining areas where APS has been and continues to work on anti-racism curriculum, professional development and policy. Currently the statement is signed from Dr. Berman and Joel Blumstein on behalf of the School Committee. Shannon, Tracey, Susan, Paul, and Lauren asked that their names be added to the statement.

2. Sub-committee and Liaison Assignments

Now that elections have occurred and we have a new School Committee member, new subcommittee and liaison assignments need to be made. A draft list of sub-committees and liaison roles was reviewed. Shannon asked the members email her the sub-committees they would like to serve on and assignments will be made at a future meeting. Paul Murphy asked that they discuss the role of school liaisons at a future meeting. The Return to School Task Force may need a liaison too.

3. West Elem Building Project – Mechanical Penthouse

Dr. Berman reported on the responses they received from their submissions to MSBA. One of which indicated that MSBA is no longer supporting Mechanical Penthouses (MP) and therefore, requiring us to deduct the square footage and the gross square footage causing us to withdraw about 12,000 sq. feet from the project. An MP is an enclosed insulated structure affixed to school roofs (Bancroft, HPE/WHMS , have them) that is a best practice in architecture because the equipment lasts longer, is more efficient, and cost saving. As a result, the SBC decided the decision was so significant they delayed their meeting with MSBA and because this is a critical feature of the building, they will write a letter to appeal MSBA's decision. Tracey said it seems extremely unlikely that MSBA will change their view and suggested that for reasons related to the MP and other items discussed they take a critical look at what space they need to determine what will work. Susan said they are asking MSBA for supporting documentation for when they made this decision.

4. Resolution to State Officials – COVID 19 reopening expenses

The Committee is asked to vote on the draft resolution that will be sent to the Governor and state legislators from school districts seeking funding for all the expenses associated with the reopening of schools in fall of 2020. This is the same resolution that has been circulated on the MASC mailing list, initially led by Amherst-Pelham Regional School Committee. Shannon Scully read the statement that will be sent to the state delegation.

Tracey Spruce moved that the Andover School Committee vote to approve the resolution for COVID-19 State Funding as presented. The motion was seconded by Susan McCready. Roll call: P. Murphy-Y, S. McCready-Y, L. Conoscenti-Y, T. Spruce-Y, S. Scully-Y. Motion passes 5-0.

5. Open Meeting Law Complaint (OML) – Authorize Counsel to Respond

Shannon shared information on the OML complaint and the Committee reviewed the complaint. The Committee has an opportunity to authorize legal counsel to respond on behalf of the Committee.

Susan McCready moved that the Andover School Committee vote to authorize legal counsel to respond to the June 5, 2020 Open Meeting Law Complaint. The motion was seconded by Paul Murphy. Roll call: S. McCready-Y, L. Conoscenti-Y, P. Murphy-Y, T. Spruce-Y, S. Scully-Y. Motion passes 5-0.

6. Policy Subcommittee- First and Second Readings

Susan McCready said there have been no comments received on the policies listed for second readings. These policies were reviewed at the May 28th School Committee Meeting.

1. *JIC – Student Discipline*
2. *IGA-Curriculum Development*
3. *JICFA – Prohibition of Hazing*
4. *IC/ICA – School Year/School Calendar*
5. *IE – Organization of Instruction*
6. *IHBEA – English Language Learners*
7. *JB – Equal Educational Opportunities*
8. *JF – School Admissions*
9. *JH – Student Absences and Excuses*
10. *JJH- Travel Regulations*
11. *JRD – Student Photographs*

Tracey Spruce moved that the Andover School Committee vote to adopt updates to policies: JIC, IGA, JICFA, IC/ICA, IE, IHBEA, JB, JF, JH, JJH, AND JRD as presented. The motion was seconded by Paul Murphy.

Roll call: S. McCready-Y, L. Conoscenti-Y, P. Murphy-Y, T. Spruce-Y, S. Scully-Y.
Motion passes 5-0.

First Readings:

Susan McCready reviewed the adoption of a new policy, JBB-Equity. The policy was initially recommended by MASC, but wholly rewritten by the Policy Subcommittee with the assistance of the Superintendent and members of the Cultural Climate Committee (C3). Susan also reviewed the last set of policies to be considered based on the changes recommended in the MASC January 2020 Policy Newsletter.

1. JBB-Equity: - New Policy
2. JFBB-1 School Choice: Change is to use MASC policy for districts who typically do not admit students from another Town to adopt this version, not to admit. This decision needs to be affirmed every year in the form of a public hearing, although not required to be advertised as the annual budget hearings are.
3. JJA – Student Organizations: Change is to add the approval of the superintendent (in addition to the principal) per suggestion of MASC.
4. JLCC – Communicable Diseases: Change: amending language to change terminology from handicapped/disabled students to students with disabilities.

7. Summer School – Bus Contract

Superintendent Berman said the summer Title I and Special Needs Programs will be run virtually and therefore, busses will not be needed initially. Paul Szymanski said this is a work-in-progress that they have been monitoring on a daily basis. The summer contract (in and out-of-district) are separate from the school year contract.

8. Superintendent Contract Amendment Five – Timeline for FY-20 Evaluation

Shannon Scully explained that the language in the Superintendent's contract requires the performance review and potential salary adjustment to be completed by June

30th. Dr. Berman and Joel Blumstein spoke about extending these dates to the end of July 31, 2020 for the current contract year (FY20).

Tracey Spruce moved that the Andover School Committee vote to approve the Superintendent's Contract Amendment five, which defers the Superintendent's performance evaluation and potential salary adjustments for the current contract year until July 2020, as presented. The motion was seconded by Susan McCready. Roll call: P. Murphy-Y, L. Conoscenti-Y, S. McCready-Y, T. Spruce-Y., S. Scully-Y. Motion passes 5-0.

G. Consent Agenda

1. Grants/Donations to Andover Public Schools
2. School Committee Minutes of May 28, 2020

Susan McCready moved to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. The motion was seconded by Lauren Conoscenti. Roll call: T. Spruce, P. Murphy-Y, S. McCready-Y, L. Conoscenti-Y, S. Scully-Y. Motion passes 5-0.

H. Executive Session

Paul Murphy moved that the School Committee move to executive session pursuant to M.G.L. chapter 30A, sec. 21(a) for the following purpose: Purpose 3, to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining with the Andover Education Association Unit A and AEA Secretaries, AEA Occupational & Physical Therapists, Andover Licensed/Practical Nurses, Andover Assistants, Andover School Food Services, Andover School Custodians, and Andover Administrators Associations because an open session may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the Committee and not to return to Open. The motion was seconded by Susan McCready. Roll call: S. McCready-Y, T. Spruce-Y, P. Murphy, S. Scully-Y. L. Conoscenti-Y, Motion passes 5-0.

II. Adjournment

At 9:25 P.M. the School Committee adjourned from Regular Session and moved to Executive Session, not to return.

Respectfully submitted,
Dee DeLorenzo
Recording Secretary