

Andover School Committee
Regular Meeting of October 6, 2011
School Administration Building - School Committee Room

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

Others in Attendance: Dr. Marinel McGrath, Superintendent, and Paul Szymanski, Assistant Superintendent, Finance and Administration

I. Executive Session

At 6:10 P.M. the School Committee entered into Executive Session on a motion by Dennis Forgue with a second by David Birnbach for the purpose of discussing matters related to collective bargaining strategy and to return to Open Session. Roll call vote: A. Gilbert-Y, D. Forgue-Y, P. Colby-Clements-Y, and D. Birnbach-Y. At 6:59 P.M. on a motion by Dennis Forgue with a second by Paula Colby-Clements, it was voted 4-0 to adjourn from Executive Session and to move to Open Session. Roll call vote: A. Gilbert-Y, D. Forgue-Y, P. Colby-Clements-Y, and D. Birnbach-Y.

II. Regular Meeting

A. Call to Order

The Regular Meeting of the School Committee was opened at 7:05 P.M. by Chairwoman Gilbert.

B. Opening Ceremonies

Paula Colby-Clements asked for a moment of silence followed by the Pledge of Allegiance led by Bancroft School students James, Naomi, and Sydney Call. On behalf of the School Committee Mrs. Colby-Clements presented the students with a certificate of appreciation.

C. Recognition

Annie Gilbert recognized the composting team at Andover High School and commented on the article in the Andover Townsman on their success in reducing waste at AHS by almost 60%. The students in the Environmental Club, AHS Science Teacher Melanie Cutler, and all others who have volunteered their time should be commended for their efforts. She also recognized Sandy Gerraughty the Business Manager for the Town's Department of Public Works who sought money from a grant to assist with some of the expenses.

D. Citizen Input

AHS Teacher and resident Mary Robb spoke on behalf of the AEA and the many teachers in attendance to encourage the School Committee to work with them to reach a contract agreement. She compared the current situation to the Andrea Gale – as the perfect storm. Andover Public Schools provides an incredible product at really low price; however we have hit the law of diminishing returns, and the economic recession has affected everyone. Previous cuts to the school budget were made without input from teachers as was the Strategic Plan which has educationally unsound ideas and needs to be re-written with input from teachers. A collaborative effort to reach an agreement is needed.

Jenn Meagher, Vice President of the AEA said faculty has many concerns about the Strategic Plan presented to them and questioned the use of the consulting company hired to assist in development of the Strategic Plan. She stated that Future Management Systems is a for profit company whose mission is to reduce the cost of staff. The AEA wants a product that reflects the values of faculty, this plan is too data driven, and written without faculty input.

David Birnbach spoke in defense of the Strategic Plan and emphasized the goal is to return Andover High School to a higher ranked school as before. Annie Gilbert explained the process they followed in the development of the Strategic Plan, with Future Management Systems hired to facilitate them through this process. Focus Groups, a community-wide information night, community groups, and pin-point committees were established to be inclusive of all venues resulting in input from all groups. The Strategic Plan is an internal working document that is and will be consistently revisited; it is a rolling plan whose course can be corrected along the way. She also stated that technology is a tool for teaching and in no way meant to replace teachers.

Kerry Costello, AEA President said many high-achieving towns have viable and vibrant strategic plans, some towns do spend more dollars per pupil and have smaller class sizes. The class size at AHS averages 29 students per class and the school is at 98% capacity. The infrastructure for technology at AHS is woefully inadequate. The AEA may take a position at their next leadership meeting on the Strategic Plan.

Matthew Bach, AHS Teacher stated the Strategic Plan is not written by educators and questions the purpose of a plan without faculty input. Ann Carlson, Sanborn School K-teacher feels strongly about not reducing planning time at the elementary level. She invites the School Committee to visit the elementary schools to see how planning time is used. Katie Pina, AHS teacher and resident is concerned with the emphasis on technology in the Strategic Plan suggesting it be used in place of a teacher, not as a tool. Online classes are not consistent or always educationally sound and students who participate in on-line classes should first have met graduation requirements. Dennis Fogue said the intent has always been to use technology as a tool and not as replacement for teachers.

AHS Student Andrew Meshneck presented the School Committee with a petition signed by 142 AHS students asking that the School Committee weight all enriched math courses taken by current AHS students regardless of when the course was taken. In June, the School Committee approved a request by Dr. Sharkey to change the weighting of the enriched math course to reflect the rigor of the course for any student taking the course beginning in September 2011. The petition requests that this new weighting be applied to transcripts of current students who completed the class prior to the fall of 2011.

E. Education

1. AHS Intel School of Distinction for Mathematics

AHS Math Teachers, Stephanie Ragucci, Deb Rainha (Casey), Minda Reidy, and former Program Advisor Donna Pappalardo (recently retired), were recognized by Intel as a School of Distinction in Math (1 of 5 nationwide) and attended the awards ceremony held in Washington, D.C. They are here this evening to share their presentation and what they experienced at the ceremony. Donna Pappalardo said there were three main items in their application; choices for students, variety of electives that respond to the needs of students, and the Engineering/Math course. Donna recognized Lisa Glickstein, Grants Coordinator for her assistance in preparing the application.

Stephanie Ragucci said Intel was impressed that they were from a public high school. They were excited to learn more about common planning time, inverted learning, technology/wireless access, virtual learning communities, and students who used iPods, iPhones, and Ipads and just about anything they had to connect to the internet for education. Minda Reidy talked about their day at Capital Hill and their meetings with Senator Brown, Kerry, and Congresswoman Nikki Tsongas. Deb

Rainha said it was an exploratory experience that isn't often afforded to teachers. The environment and structure at AHS enabled them to get to where they are today and they hope the support from the School Department and Community continues. It was an inspiring experience and the start of an exciting partnership with Intel.

2. Bancroft School Project Update

A site walk was held on September 22nd with the Department of Environmental Protection representative, members of the SBC, architects, and residents/abutters to review the Order of Conditions approved by the Conservation Commission. The DEP Representative asked questions, took input, and explained her jurisdiction (wetlands). The DEP representative will write-up her decision which will either confirm, reverse, or alter the Conservation Committee's Order of Conditions.

3. October 1 Enrollment

Dr. McGrath showed the enrollment chart as it stands as of October 1, 2011 which is the official enrollment number submitted to the Department of Elementary & Secondary Education. The total number of students enrolled, including, Out of District Students is 6,290 with 6,208 students on campus. Enrollment has increased by 30 students over last year. At the elementary level, there were 2,877 students last year and this year there are 2,913 students – an increase of 30 students (includes four Special Education Out of District students). The Middle Schools show a loss of three students over last year's enrollment of 1,531 for a total enrollment of 1,528 (includes 18 Special Education Out of District students). Andover High Schools has 1,789 students this year, down 13 from last year's enrollment of 1,802 including 60 Special Education students.

F. Old Business

1. Financials – FY11 End of Year Operating Budget

Paul Szymanski gave an overview of the FY-11 End of Year Operating Budget and the year to date financials, recognizing Janet Wright, Kathy Gilmore, Mary Robinson, Doreen Bille, and Peter DeRoeve for their diligence and attention to detail to come in with a balanced the budget in a very difficult and challenging year. Mr. Szymanski said they are looking at the Special Education Out-of-District contracts and transportation contracts, and actively looking at areas of improvement for efficiencies. Their goal is to run the school department as cost-effectively as possible with a zero based approach for some elements of the budget. In FY-11 they stayed within budget; however, an additional \$121,000 from the Circuit Breaker moves forward into the next fiscal year. Mr. Szymanski reviewed the general fund transfers and explained the offset deficits and said the salary and expenses netted out to zero, congratulations to the team for making this happen.

G. New Business

1. Andover Youth Soccer Presentation

Representatives of the Andover Youth Soccer Association, Carl Grygiel and William Sousa explained the initial proposal to improve the current layout of the soccer fields behind South School and to expand the field area to three fields providing an additional field so that one field can be in a resting state continually alleviating down time and overuse of the fields. The current size of the field is 80 yards x 100 yards and the new proposed field will be approximately 120 yards by 180 yards. They reviewed the landscaping and modular space planning, irrigation and drainage plans and said no work is planned for the fields located on the north side of the school or to install field lights, or expand parking. The next steps include measuring the site, meeting with the town representatives to

configure usage and gifting agreements, returning to the School Committee for review and finally to Town Meeting for approval. The group hopes to begin work on the fields in the spring of 2012 so that the fields will be ready to sue by fall of 2013. The Andover Youth Soccer Association is fully funding this initiative pending agreements with the town. Annie Gilbert said they have received notice that the Andover Fire Department is no longer considering South School as a possible site for the Ballardvale Sub-station.

Motion: Dennis Forgue motioned the Andover School Committee vote to approve the request of the Andover Youth Soccer Association to explore the option of improving the soccer fields behind South School and to work with the South School Principal, Town and School Department and to include the staking of the area. The motion was seconded by Paula Colby-Clements and voted 4-0 to approve.

2. Gifts to Schools

Paul Szymanski explained the proposal that the Athletic Director Chris Bergeron, and members of Plant and Facilities are working on with the Andover Girls Softball League and Softball Booster Club to upgrade the Varsity Softball Field at AHS. The estimated cost of the first phase of the project is \$15,000 to build two permanent dugouts and a storage shed/press box. All labor costs are being donated, and all permits needed for the project have approved by the Town. Upon completion, the project will be donated to the Andover Public Schools and the Town of Andover.

Motion: Paula Colby-Clements motioned the Andover School Committee vote to approve the plan proposed by the Andover Girls' Softball League and the Andover Softball Booster Club valued at \$15,000 to upgrade the Varsity Softball Field at Andover High School as recommended by Mr. Christopher Bergeron, AHS Athletic Director and reviewed by Andover's Department of Plant and Facilitates. The motion was seconded by Dennis Forgue and voted 4-0 to approve.

3. Collins Center Rental Agreement Revision

Paul Szymanski explained the revisions to the Collins Center Rental Agreement. It is important to note that the fee increases for profit and non-profit are being increased by \$20, but there are additional costs incurred by the renters for custodians and fire detail. Mr. Szymanski met with Scott Worthley and Fire Chief Mansfield to review guidelines, new agreement conditions and terms, and contract expectations.

Motion: Paula Colby-Clements motioned the Andover School Committee approve the changes to the Collins Center Rental Agreement as presented. The motion was seconded by Dennis Forgue and voted 4-0 to approve.

4. FY-13 Budget Development Assumptions, Guidelines and Timeline

Dr. McGrath explained the FY-13 Budget Development, Assumptions, Guidelines and Timeline and stated this is a first-reading of the documents and the School Committee will vote their approval at the next meeting. The School Committee budget should reflect the priorities that address the needs of students and schools, provide direction to administrators, and guide staff in developing budget recommendations. The budget should reflect the District's mission, values, and goals, the need for highly-qualified teachers and class sizes within policy limits, refinement of curriculum and instruction and assessment practices, and the need to develop and maintain educational resources, technology infrastructure, and school facilities that support students learning and meets District goals.

The documents include a summary of mandates from the State and Federal Government including: Special Education: Federal-IDEA And Mass General Law 71B & 603 CMR 2800; the Federal No Child Left Behind Act; English Language Learners (ELL) guidelines for Title VI, Civil Rights Act and State laws for bilingual students; Section 504 and Americans with Disabilities Act, the Massachusetts Education Reform Act of 1993; the N.E. Association of Secondary Schools and Colleges, and the Massachusetts Anti- Bullying Legislation.

Dr. McGrath explained the two levels of funding requests: the base budget and the Strategic Plan Improvement Budget. The base budget assumes the same level of services of FY12 and the Strategic Plan Improvement Budget includes the funds for improved service for students.

A draft of the FY-13 Operating Budget Planning Calendar was provided.

5. Bancroft Property

Dr. McGrath explained the approval required to request the Town Manger send a letter to an abutter of Bancroft Property due to an invisible dog fence installed on school property.

Motion: Paula Colby=Clements motioned that the Andover School Committee vote to authorize the Town Manager to send a letter to Thomas Garesche of West Knoll Road, Andover, informing Mr. Garesche that a survey revealed that the cable for an invisible dog fence is installed on school property and it must be removed by October 28, 2011. If the cable is not removed by the specified date, then the Town will hire a contractor to remove the cable at the owner's expense. The motion was seconded by Dennis Forgue and voted 4-0 to approve.

H. Consent Agenda

1. Minutes: Minutes of June 30, July 19, and September 8, 2011
2. Warrants: Assistant Superintendent Szymanski stated that the Warrants are in order and provided highlights of each.

Motion: Dennis Forgue motioned the Andover School Committee vote to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. The motion was seconded by Paula Colby-Clements, and voted 4-0 to approve.

I. Adjournment

On a motion by Paula Colby-Clements and seconded by Dennis Forgue, it was voted 4-0 to adjourn the Regular Meeting at 9:56 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Dee DeLorenzo
Recorder

Documents: FY13 Operating Budget Planning Calendar and FY-13 Budget Dev Guidelines/Assumptions
General Fund Financial Summary
FY11 End of Year Financial Report
Collins Center Rental Agreement
Minutes of June 30, 2011, July 19, 2011, and September 8, 2011