

**Andover School Committee Regular Meeting  
Minutes of January 15, 2015**

**Members in Attendance:** Annie Gilbert, Paula Colby-Clements, David Birnbach, and Joel Blumstein

**Others in Attendance:** Dr. Marinel McGrath, Superintendent, Paul Szymanski, Assistant Superintendent Finance and Administration, and Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum & Instruction, Dr. Nancy A. Duclos.

**I. Executive Session**

At 6:15 PM Annie Gilbert called the School Committee to Order in the School Committee Room located in the School Administration Building. On a motion duly made and seconded, the Andover School Committee moved to enter into Executive Session to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining and to reconvene to Open Session. Roll call: P. Colby-Clements-Y, J. Blumstein-Y, D. Birnbach-Y, and A. Gilbert-Y. At 7:05 P.M. on a motion by Paula Colby-Clements and seconded by Joel Blumstein the School Committee moved to adjourn from Executive Session and move to Open Session not to return to Executive Session. Roll call: P. Colby-Clements-Y, J. Blumstein-Y, D. Birnbach-Y, and A. Gilbert-Y.

**II. Regular Meeting**

At 7:06 P.M. School Committee Chair Annie Gilbert reconvened the School Committee Meeting to order.

**A. Opening Ceremonies**

School Committee Chair Annie Gilbert led the meeting in a Moment of Silence followed by a Salute to the Flag.

**B. Recognition / Communications**

Superintendent McGrath said the start of the New Year brought another tragic loss of an Andover student from a heroin overdose. As a community, we all share a concern for our children. Dr. McGrath will be meeting with Police Chief Keefe and Interim AHS Principal Steve Murray next week to establish a community-wide alliance and will share the outcomes with community.

**1. Report on December 8, 2014 Triboard Meeting**

Annie Gilbert reported that a number of proposed budgets with non-exempt borrowing were discussed at the December 8<sup>th</sup> Triboard Meeting. They also discussed strategies to determine what the priorities will be and will be submitting a \$1.9 Warrant Article for the design and construction costs for renovations to the AHS library which will provide a more definitive overall cost. The Health Insurance bids have been received and are being analyzed with the expectation to have those numbers available this month.

**C. Public Input**

Bob Pokress of Cherrywood Circle read a lengthy statement relating to a list of concerns about the Andover Public Schools. He has concerns about the school budget noting that in his experience, almost all students enter school with the same learning factors and delineating more dollars does not translate into higher academic achievement. Andover seniors pay more taxes now than when their children were in school, and without their tax contributions Andover wouldn't be able to fund school requests. He feels there are serious issues with transparency within the school department and wonders why the high school ranking and student population have decreased, and he asked about the process of evaluating principals.

#### **D. Education**

##### **1. AHS Environmental Sustainability Internship Program**

Annie Gilbert said this is the first year AHS students were paired with mentors to work on specific projects requiring a presentation on the results of the project. As her mentor, Annie introduced Beatrice Choo, a senior at AHS from Melanie Cutler's Environmental Sustainability Internship Class who was assigned the task of developing conceptual components that could be scaled up or down as the district considers ways to use space differently. Beatrice presented the results of her independent study on design options for innovative, interdisciplinary learning space. Her presentation included all the important points and aspects that should be considered for an innovative space including visibility, acoustics, flexibility sustainability, technology, living walls, and floor plans as well as the results of her interviews. The School Committee thanked Beatrice on her informative and extensive presentation.

##### **2. Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC) Presentation**

Members of SEPAC's Executive Council, Sheena Stack and Jean Teichert, distributed a hand-out of their presentation and recommendations based upon the spring 2014 Needs Assessment. They also shared responses with the most concerns from the survey SEPAC conducted. The survey results and presentation can be found at their website at [www.andoverSEAPAC.org](http://www.andoverSEAPAC.org). Mrs. Teichert and Mrs. Stack talked about areas of concern and SEPAC's recommendations on transparency, communication, teacher/staff training, the IEP and 504 processes and SEPAC's role in the Andover Public Schools which is to educate parents and to advise the School Committee on matters pertaining to students with disabilities and participation in the Special Education Program. They wish to create an on-going parent education program that identifies what the school district is responsible for and required to provide under Special Education Legislation.

School Committee members thanked them for taking the time to put together the analysis and list of recommendations that will have the most impact on our students. The School Department takes very seriously the DESE Report and their Corrective Action Plan has been submitted and approved by DESE. The School Department has held lengthy discussions on the process and root analysis and is in the process of making corrections.

Several parents in the audience spoke about the great experience they have had with the LEAP Program at the elementary school level but have concerns with the LEAP Program at the middle school level. Improving communication and transparency can be accomplished with little cost. They would like to see more of a partnership with parents/school.

AEA President, Kerry Costello, urged the parents to attend Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee meetings with them and to unite with the School Committee at Town Meeting to fight for the budget the School Department needs and stressed the importance of doing this together.

#### **E. Old Business**

##### **1. Redistricting Update for September 2015**

Superintendent McGrath reviewed the process of the redistricting plan which they are now ready to implement. Letters to the families that will be affected by the redistricting will be sent out within the next ten days. There have been many requests and questions about exceptions, and

**E. Old Business (Cont'd)**

1. Redistricting Update for September 2015 (Cont'd)

criteria for grandfathering in fifth grade students. Grandfathering requests will be considered for Grade 5 students only; however, not all fifth grade students can be grandfathered in due to limited space. Grandfathering criteria is comparable to those used in the 2002 redistricting with overarching goal for all students to have equitable access to educational programs and facilities. Information on the criteria and an outline of the process for consideration will be included in the letter being sent to families affected by the redistricting. Students in Special Education Programs will remain in the school where their program is held.

Parents can also view the information on the Andover Public School website at [www.aps1.net](http://www.aps1.net) under the Redistricting tab. The deadline for parent letters to request consideration for grandfathering is February 1, 2015. All requests will be reviewed with school principals from February 3, through February 13 and responses will be sent to parents the week of February 23, 2015.

**F. New Business**

1. School Committee Vacancy

Annie Gilbert reviewed the process required under the Town Charter for filling a vacancy on the School Committee. After meeting with the Board of Selectmen to discuss the time frame and process to fill the open position (or not), Annie asked the School Committee to provide their thoughts on how to move forward noting should they choose to fill the position, the Board of Selectmen need to post an opportunity to serve after which the two Boards would jointly meet to vote on letters of interest received.

The School Committee talked about the majority of School Committee seats turning over this year, a replacement would only serve for 5-6 weeks until the March Town Election, the amount of time to bring the replacement up to speed with budget and other school issues and if it make sense at this point in time.

Audience remarks included refilling the position with someone with prior School Committee experience or a former elected official, to not filling the position due to the short period of time they would serve, to the horrible timing of the March Town Election.

The School Committee agreed to meet with the Board of Selectmen on Monday, January 20<sup>th</sup> to discuss the qualities they would be looking for in a replacement, and to discuss changing the Town Charter.

2. Appointments: CREST Collaborative Representative and SEPAC Liaison

The resignation of Barbara L'Italien from the School Committee also leaves CREST Collaborative and SEPAC without a School Committee Liaison.

Paula Colby-Clements moved that the Andover School Committee vote to appoint School Committee Member Annie Gilbert as the Andover Representative to the Collaborative for Regional Education Services and Training (CREST) Collaborative Board for the remainder of the 2014-2015 school year. The motion was seconded by Joel Blumstein and voted 4-0 to approve.

**F. New Business (Cont'd)**

2. Appointments: CREST Collaborative Representative and SEPAC Liaison (Cont'd)

Paula Colby-Clements moved that the Andover School Committee vote to appoint School Committee Member Joel Blumstein as the SEPAC Liaison for the remainder of the 2014-2015 school year. The motion was seconded by David Birnbach and voted 4-0 to approve.

**G. Consent Agenda**

1. Warrants: Paul Szymanski said the warrants are in order:  
WA SW1514 and WA PR15S029
2. Minutes: December 4, 2015 Andover School Committee Regular Meeting  
December 8, 2015 Triboard Meeting Minutes  
November 24, 2015 Triboard Meeting Minutes
3. Surplus Inventory Disposal: Bancroft School – Old school books

Paula Colby-Clements moved that the Andover School Committee vote to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. The motion was seconded by Joel Blumstein and voted 4-0 to approve.

Bancroft School Media Specialist, Nancy Snow, was recognized for the work she did and personal time spent over the summer transferring books at Bancroft to an on-line system.

**III. Adjournment**

At 10:01 P.M. on a motion by Paula Colby-Clements and seconded by Joel Blumstein, the Andover School Committee voted to adjourn. Roll call: D. Birnbach-Y, P. Colby-Clements-Y, J. Blumstein-Y, and A. Gilbert-Y.

Respectfully submitted,  
Dee DeLorenzo  
Recording Secretary

Documents: APS Surplus Textbook / Supply Disposal Inventory form from Bancroft School  
SEPAC Presentation and Recommendations