

**Andover School Committee Regular Meeting
Minutes of April 28, 2015**

Members in Attendance: Annie Gilbert, Paula Colby-Clements, Joel Blumstein, Susan McCready, and Ted Teichert.

Others in Attendance: Dr. Marinel McGrath, Superintendent, Paul Szymanski, Assistant Superintendent Finance and Administration, Dr. Nancy Duclos, Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning, Jason Grosz, AHS Liaison

I. Regular Meeting

At 6:15 P.M. School Committee Chair Annie Gilbert called the School Committee Meeting to order.

A. Opening Ceremonies

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

B. Old Business

1. FY-2016 School Budget

The Board of Selectmen did not approve the School Committee's Budget request for an additional \$280,000 at their meeting last night. Paul Szymanski distributed the School's budget summary sheet and reviewed the budget numbers.

The School Department met the Town Manager's January Recommended Budget of \$73,296,591, a 3.37% increase over 2015. In February, the Board of Selectmen voted to further reduce the tax levy and the Town Manager's recommended school budget changed to \$72,873,529, a 2.78% increase for FY-16 or \$423,062 less than the budget the School Committee recommended.

The APS Staffing Summary Sheet for FY-16 was explained, showing that a budget increase of 2.78% would require a reduction of 21.5 FTE's, while a 3.37% budget increase would net 6.70 FTE's. School Administrators have worked to update all of their assumptions to apply towards the 21.5 positions to be reduced. Additional reductions in staff turnover, projections for out of district tuitions, reductions in innovation spending, and not replacing 3.17 retirements provides an additional \$683,878 in savings allowing the School Department to cover 11.19 FTE's for a net increase of 3.61 FTE's. The remaining delta of \$260,816 leaves a decrease of 4 to 5 FTE's. The difference between the 2.78% budget and the 3.37% budget is \$423,062.

The new budget information means the original 2.78% budget increase would now mean a loss of 10-11 FTE's and the 3.37% budget increase means a loss of 4.5 classroom teachers. Not including the net of the new additions. The staffing information can be confusing because positions are being added to meet legal requirements and the

Strategic Plan and to do that, additional general education classroom teachers will be lost.

The School Department budget is very fluid due to the movement of Special Education Requirements, turnovers in staff and assumptions made through historical information. The School Committee is taking more of a risk this year with budget assumptions and are not advocating for a reduction in program coordinator positions. They recognize the value the Program Coordinators play in moving the district forward and maintaining consistency across the district in curriculum. Program Coordinators also perform teacher evaluations, provide embedded professional development for teachers and hold grade level meetings with teachers.

The School Committee commented on the budget number they support.

P. Colby-Clements: recommends the 3.37% budget because the 2.78% further erodes the gains the School Department has made. Many residents have commented that their number one priority is to have strong schools.

T. Teichert: leans towards the 2.78% budget. He has talked with a lot of people in the community who want to see cuts in the non-classroom personnel putting the value back into classroom teachers.

J. Blumstein: in agreement with recommending the 3.37% budget increase which still leaves the Town with a fairly large unused levy capacity.

S. McCready: She is disappointed that the Board of Selectmen is unwilling to compromise. As a newly elected member of the School Committee, she is not sure if she is ready to vote a number tonight.

A. Gilbert: it is time to look at which budget will do more for students and so she supports the 3.37% budget. This year the School Department met the Town Manager's allocation and then the rules were changed. The Board of Selectmen has always taxed to the levy limit. The teacher contract signed with the AEA was affordable under the assumption that the Board would as they always do, tax to the levy limit; not reduce the budget. In addition, the Town has a high number in reserves and the stabilization fund.

Public Input

J. Moffitt, FinCom liaison to the School Committee, said Susan McCready could abstain if she does not feel she is ready to vote a budget number.

B. Pokkress said there are many people who have lived in Town for decades and who now find their taxes too high to stay and there are many young families who can't afford to move to Town.

J. Teichert: The right thing to do is to vote the 2.78% budget that was presented in March, and table spending for innovation and digital learning specialists. The Spec Education costs have not been vetted enough and needs further discussion.

K. Costello, AEA President: Last year over 40 IA's were cut, and they have fewer administrator positions now than in the 1970's. The School System is complex s and the Town needs to decide if they want to invest in their children or not.

Superintendent McGrath said the initial budget number was the right number which the Board of Selectmen has reduced twice now. The School Department is rebuilding from the previous years of budget reductions.

Motion

Paula Colby –Clements moved that the Andover School Committee vote to adopt the FY-16 Operating Budget at \$73,296,591. The motion was seconded by Joel Blumstein and voted 4-1 to approve. Ted Teichert opposed.

II. Adjournment

At 7:01 P.M. on a motion by Paula Colby-Clements and seconded by Joel Blumstein, the Andover School Committee voted to adjourn. Roll call: P. Colby-Clements-Y, J. Blumstein-Y, S. McCready-Y, T. Teichert-Y, and A. Gilbert-Y.

Respectfully submitted,

Dee DeLorenzo
Recording Secretary

Documents: APS FY-2016 Recommended Budget
Summary – FY-16 APS Staffing