

**Andover School Committee**  
**Regular Meeting**  
**Minutes of December 8, 2016**

**Members in Attendance:** Chair, Joel Blumstein, Vice-Chair, Susan McCready, Ted Teichert, Shannon Scully, and Paul Murphy

**Others in Attendance:** Superintendent Dr. Sheldon Berman, Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Administration, Paul Szymanski, Assistant Superintendent Dr. Nancy A. Duclos, and Vishvesh Kaul, AHS Student Government Liaison.

**1. Regular Meeting:**

**A. Call to Order – Opening Ceremonies**

The meeting began with a moment of silence followed by a salute to the flag led by the DeLuca family from South School; Anthony, Mikayla, Ava, and Aiden. The students were presented a Certificate of Appreciation on behalf of the School Committee.

**B. Recognition/Communications**

**1. Highlights from around the District**

Joan Cohen, former Chair of the Andover Fund for Education (AFE), and Treasurer, Sue McLellan presented a check in the amount of \$84,203.56 to the Andover Public Schools to be distributed equally among the schools. The funds represent years of work and fundraising widely supported by the community for the purpose of providing opportunities for teachers in the classroom to engage students. The Superintendent and School Committee thanked the Andover Fund for Education for their generous check as they end its organizational career.

Shannon Scully moved that the Andover School Committee vote to accept the Andover Fund for Education Check in the amount of \$84,203.56 to the Andover Public Schools as presented. The motion was seconded by Ted Teichert and voted 5-0 to approve.

**2. Fall Sports Recognition**

AHS Principal Phil Conrad, on behalf AHS Athletic Director Don Doucette, introduced Marilyn Fitzgerald, Coach of the AHS Girls' Championship Swim and Dive Team, and congratulated them on their 11<sup>th</sup> State Championship. Team Captains Jenna Manning, Elizabeth Flood, Melissa Zang, (Isabelle Allen was unable to attend), accepted the trophies on behalf of the Team. They not only won the State Championship, but almost doubled the number of points of the second place team. This is an overwhelming accomplishment and credit should be given to Coach Fitzgerald for the wonderful job she has done not only on developing the swimmer's talents but inspiring them. The AHS Football Team played in the Division I North Finals and Quarterback E.J. Perry tied a single season touchdown record. The Girls' Volleyball Team also played in the Division I North Finals. The AHS Boys and Girls Soccer Teams qualified for State Tournament, as did the Boys Golf Team.

Representatives of the Massachusetts School Building Authority visited five Andover schools this week meeting with school principals and Ed Ataide, Superintendent of Plant and Facilities. Dr. Berman acknowledged the principals and Mr. Ataide for their time spent filling out extensive surveys, and Paul Szymanski for his leadership role in organizing the evaluations and meetings. A full report will be received in early spring.

Dr. Duclos announced that the new Elementary Progress Reports will be available in the parent portal the week of December 19<sup>th</sup>. The standards are new, and parents should understand that this is still a work in progress which will continue to develop throughout the year.

Susan McCready acknowledged the 5<sup>th</sup> Grade students at Sanborn School for delivering gift bags to the seniors in our community as part of the 38<sup>th</sup> annual Harvest Festival; it was a wonderful intergenerational event.

Shannon Scully said the Town Manager placed the High Plain/Wood Hill Field Handicap Accessibility Ramp request in the 2018 CIP. She also announced that the Retirement Board is meeting on Thursday December 15<sup>th</sup> at 8:00 A.M. which the School Committee should consider watching or attending.

Joel Blumstein provided dates of upcoming School Committee Meetings: Thursday, December 15 Executive Session at 9:00 A.M., January 5<sup>th</sup> 2017 overview of the 2018 budget and vote on the 2018 School Calendar, Wednesday, January 11<sup>th</sup> and Thursday, January 12<sup>th</sup> budget meetings starting at 7:00 P.M., and on January 19, 2017 a vote on the 2018 recommended budget. Chairman Blumstein, Susan McCready, and the Town Manager will be the members of the Negotiating Team for contract negotiations with the Andover Education Association (AEA).

Chairman Blumstein and Paul Murphy held an informal open discussion forum on November 19<sup>th</sup> with only one resident attending, but who offered much feedback and numerous comments related to the open meeting law, open forums, concerns about retaliation on people who spoke negatively at meetings, not meeting SPED mandates, performance rating given to Dr. Berman, heart rate monitor issue discussed but not on the agenda, parents trust of the school, the elections and teachers voicing their personal opinions.

Dr. Berman recognized the Communication Task Force on the upcoming launch of the mobile app, ParentLink on Monday, December 12<sup>th</sup> and the website launch for both Town and School on Friday, December 16<sup>th</sup>. A meeting was held with the Andover Police today to talk about setting up a tip line where parties can send information by text or cell on various categories of safety, bullying, kudos, etc.

### **C. Public Comment**

Mary Robb, AHS Social Studies teacher, was contacted by Erin Neal of Media Literacy Now, because WGBH wanted to do a story on the proliferation of fake news. Erin visited the Democracy and Media classrooms at AHS to see firsthand how students deal with fake

news. A story about Ms. Robb's class was aired on WGBH's Greater Boston and on WGBH radio. Ms. Robb also credited her students for spearheading and honoring the 9/11day.org whose purpose was to take a tragic day and turn it around to an "I will" day. This year Andover was selected to receive a grant from WGBH for field trip expenses.

Mary Robb also shared her thoughts on the new AHS Schedule and said some elective classes will be reduced to a half year course which is a genuine concern for her. The New Schedule Committee did their job in good faith, but the frustration lies in the fact that other faculty members were not asked for input and some flaws have not been fixed. She asks that the School Committee take a long look before implementing the schedule.

Kerry Costello, AEA President, said the AEA is prepared to begin the bargaining process in the New Year and she will forward the names of the AEA Collective Bargaining Committee to the Superintendent and School Committee. She also stated that the AEA bargains with the School Committee, not with the Finance Committee or with the Town Manager. The AEA will host a television program providing information on the teacher contract, teacher evaluations, etc.

**D. Response to Public Comment- N/A**

**E. MSBA Statement of Interest Vote**

The School Committee has to make a determination on which school to submit as the first priority for a Statement of Interest to the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA). At the December 1<sup>st</sup> School Committee Workshop, attended by Alex Pitkin and others from SMMA, the Facilities Report, and the MSBA Statement of Interest application, were part of the discussion on which school should be put forward as the first priority to be replaced or renovated.

Dr. Berman said the conditions of school buildings have a sizeable and measureable influence upon the achievement of students. A follow-up conversation with Alex Pitkin, provided interesting feedback on what MSBA might do based on concerns with the investment other towns are making in their high school; MSBA may be looking at smaller projects so that more projects can be done.

School Committee remarks:

Paul Murphy: teachers, staff, and students are dealing with issues they shouldn't be dealing with; we need to decide which project is the higher priority and which has the best chance to be approved. The high school presents the largest potential expenditure and affects the widest net of students. Quality spaces are critical to teaching our young adults, however, the chance of AHS being selected is low, and the deficiencies at West Elementary School are well documented and compelling. Both schools have daunting price tags and both need replacement. It is his opinion that West Elementary should be the first priority school put forward.

Susan McCready: acknowledged all those who have put in so much time and effort. West Elementary has not had a renovation for 48 years and it would not be responsible to allow

the school to deteriorate further. The disparity in enrollment projections between MGT and MSBA is a concern. We need to move away from the pressure which leads to hasty decisions and loss of options. She likes the planned progression in terms of being able to have options for displaced students as we move on to next projects in the plan. While West Elementary does not serve all the community, it is not ok to ignore a structure that doesn't fit the bill on many levels. While she acknowledges that AHS is our flagship, delaying action on West El is not the right course. Our best chance to do something meaningful for our students is to select West Elementary as the first priority.

Ted Teichert: thank you to all who took the time to help with this project. People look at the high school as the flagship of the Town, so there is a lot of focus on the high school. AHS was built to house 3 grades (Gr 10-11-12) but we have pushed 4 grades into the school. He feels the focus should be on AHS.

Shannon Scully: Addressing conditions at West Elementary will allow for a combined West Elementary Middle School. The enrollment projections by MBSA do not rate AHS as overcrowded; however, we still need to address the lack of appropriate learning space at AHS. A more modest construction project could be overall less expensive for our town without funding from MSBA and suggests convening a committee to develop a plan to address the overcrowding at AHS. West Elementary has serious problems and the overall cost grows as time goes on. We can also upgrade a middle school at the same time by combining a middle school with West Elementary and therefore West Elementary should be submitted to MSBA as our priority SOI.

Joel Blumstein: The needs at both West Elementary and AHS have to be addressed and addressed in the near future, we cannot wait another 5 years to address both. At 60+ years we cannot keep patching up West Elementary School and he believes the best school to put forward as our first priority within the MSBA process is West Elementary. We have to make a commitment to AHS and form a building committee and conduct a feasibility study. Going outside of the MSBA process will allow us much more control of what gets done and when. Lastly, we have to address DMS, which won't be getting major attention in the immediate future but will have to be a priority in the FY-19 CIP.

The AHS Student Government discussed the issue and agreed that the high school should be a flagship school but they are of the opinion that West Elementary should be the first place to start. Vishvesh Kaul said they felt the wait allows more opportunity at AHS to take advantage of the site.

Seeing the will of the Board, Ted Teichert will support West Elementary as the priority school to submit a Statement of Interest to MSBA.

Shannon Scully moved that the Andover School Committee select West Elementary School as the priority choice for a Statement of Interest submission to the Massachusetts School Building Authority. Susan McCready seconded the motion and the motion was voted 5-0 to approve.

Susan McCready moved the Andover School Committee pursue a Feasibility Study for renovations at Andover High School potentially independent of the MSBA process. The first action of which will be to convene a School Building Feasibility Committee to identify the needs for improvement of the physical plant at Andover High School. The motion was seconded by Shannon Scully, voted 5-0 to approve.

## **F. Education**

### **1. After School Programs**

Joe Connelly, Director of Community Services, provided information on results of the survey recently conducted throughout the community on after school daycare needs. The survey included 12 questions and 1,350 responses were received with 98% of the families having children enrolled in the Andover School System. A majority of respondents came from families at West Elementary, Bancroft, South, and AHS, with a high need noted for children in grades Kindergarten and Grade 1. Parents are looking for an affordable option and overwhelmingly preferred a school based program. Over 80% of respondents support the Town developing a licensed afterschool program. The most common response to the question on price to charge was \$15 per day.

Ted Teichert asked about liability, revenue sharing, and how many children are needed in the program to be successful.

Transportation would not be provided. The idea is to start with one school and add on from there. The Town Program would use school facilities overseen by the Department of Community Services and if there are any problems it would be a town issue. The program would be covered under Town insurance.

Linda Shottes-Bouchard, who has been a part of the SHED organization for 25 years, said SHED wants what's best for the children in our community. Their biggest concern is the best interest of children in after-school care, and talked about an option to put the program out to bid.

Elementary School Principals are concerned with the extra wear and tear and cleanliness an after-school program would have on their buildings. Bancroft Principal Michelle Costa volunteered to meet with Mr. Connelly to discuss the program as she had a similar program at her previous school. Principal Lathrop wants to know how their afterschool programs would co-exist with the Town Program. Next steps: Joe Connelly will meet with principals to further discuss the project.

### **2. Strategic Targets (Principals)**

The Superintendent's Leadership Team (SAT) has been working on the strategic targets this fall in their meetings. Representing the SAT, Phil Conrad, Robin Wilson and Pam Lathrop presented the results to affirm the Theory of Action (TOA) and next steps. Pam addressed the new student resume and shared the evolution of 'we won't stop until' strategy represented by the posters that stand for all the employees of the school system, the beginning of their work and the targets. Robin shared how they started with the end in mind... what it is that drives them as educators, what drives our students, and the common

themes among all the posters, which were created on the first day of school, illustrate how all educators are on the same page. Phil said they are ready to share this document with the District and explained that the ideals on the paper represent the direction for the District. Dr. Berman insured an inclusive process in the development of the document.

Dr. Berman said the Theory of Action was really an 'if then' statement and represents the vision and the 'then all students will' represents the mission. The 'when we collaborate' represents the action steps that the District leadership and teachers will take in order to meet that mission. The document represents the work currently being done to continue to drive future work. The document doesn't represent work that we are not doing, and he further explained each of the pieces of the action steps associated with the 'when we collaborate'. An important investment in the four areas would help to solidify the direction. The detail under each of the bullets represents the work they need to continue. They now have the target and the direction.

Shannon Scully appreciates the thought that went into the document and that it represents the education of the whole child. Paul Murphy said it represents an accountability.

### 3. First Reading of 2017-2018 APS School Calendar

Two drafts of school calendars for the 2017-2018 school year have been developed and their differences explained by Dr. Berman. Version A presents a later school start date and the end of the school year later in June. Version B presents a start date prior to September 1 (which requires a vote by the AEA) with the Friday of Labor Day weekend a school day, and an earlier end of the school year. The School Committee will review the calendars and a second reading will be scheduled in early January after the faculty vote

Brad Weeden of 5 Summer Street is advocating for a change in the Early Release Day policy of six half days to three full days, and does not believe there has been critical thinking of calendar days since 2011. Transportation would be less harmful to the environment with a reduction in days and from a 'customers' point of view the Early Release Days are a very inefficient way to operate. Dr. Duclos said DESE requires public schools to have 180 days of school with 990 hours of instruction.

Kerry Costello said DESE does not provide waivers for missed school but they do require 180 days of school. Three full days becomes a budgetary item; half days allows APS to capture the time with less cost. There are a lot of factors involved and the AEA has been willing to look at alternatives. In regard to the school calendar, the AEA will vote as to whether to waive the contractual time line and which calendar they prefer; they prefer to have the Friday of Labor Day weekend off, but that option is not presented.

The School Committee discussed whether to eliminate Good Friday and Rosh Hashanah from the calendar. It was recommended that it be more clearly stated why the two days are identified as low attendance days and therefore not a school day; their concern is having a sufficient number of substitutes available to open school.

### G. New Business

## 1. Drug Presentation & Canine Searches

Dr. Berman said Paul Szymanski has been leading the work on safety and security in the District and has done a terrific job of pulling the elements together. They collaborated with Chief Keefe and Det. Mark Higginbotham on creating safe, caring, responsible classrooms for schools. The abuse of opiates is a serious global problem and a concern of law enforcement and local communities and on a number of occasions they have talked about running a search using canines from NEMLEC.

Chief Keefe spoke about the joint task to combat opiate abuse using education and enforcement. The Police would facilitate a sweep of the high school, but it would be a school decision. It takes about 30-40 minutes and would interrupt about .5 period of class. Principal Conrad wants to ensure our school is drug free and our students have a safe environment to learn in and working with the professionals would secure our students safety at the highest level. A message would be sent home advising parents that there will be a sweep and will also let the student body know but obviously not announcing a time or date.

## 2. School Warrant Articles (5)

A list of possible warrant articles for submittal to the 2017 Andover Town Meeting in May was discussed and reviewed.

### **A. ESTABLISH A SCHOOL DISTRICT SPECIAL EDUCATION (SPED) RESERVE FUND**

**Article XX.** In accordance with M.G.L 40A, Section 13E establish and appropriate or transfer money to a reserve fund to be utilized in the upcoming fiscal years, to pay, without further appropriation, for unanticipated or unbudgeted costs of special education, out-of-district tuition or transportation.

**Description:** During the spring of 2016 school and town board members discussed and agreed upon the need for a SPED stabilization fund, to be drawn upon if out-of-district and related transportation expenses exceeded the departments operating budget and the circuit breaker revolving fund. Any school district which accepts this section, by a majority vote of the school committee and a majority vote of the legislative body, may establish and appropriate or transfer money to a reserve fund to be utilized in the upcoming fiscal years, to pay, without further appropriation, for unanticipated or unbudgeted costs of special education, out-of-district tuition or transportation. The balance in such reserve fund shall not exceed 2 per cent of the annual net school spending of the school district. Funds shall only be distributed from the reserve funds after a majority vote of the school committee and a majority vote of the board of selectman. The district treasurer may invest the monies in the manner authorized in section 54 of chapter 44 and any interest earned thereon shall be credited to and become part of the fund.

Susan McCready moved that the Andover School Committee vote to accept this article regarding a SPED Reserve Fund as presented in this proposed Warrant Article named "Establish A School District Special Education (SPED) Reserve Fund." The motion was seconded by Shannon Scully and voted 5-0 to approve.

## **SPECIAL EDUCATION RESERVE FUND**

**ARTICLE X:** To see if the Town will vote to appropriate and raise from taxation or available funds the sum of \$800,000 to the Special Education Reserve Fund in accordance with Massachusetts General Laws 40A, Section 13E, or take any other action related thereto.

Susan McCready moved that the Andover School Committee vote to accept this article to see if the Town will appropriate and raise from taxation or available funds the sum of \$800,000 to the Special Education Fund Reserve Fund as presented in the proposed Warrant Article named "Special Education Reserve Fund." The motion was seconded by Paul Murphy and voted 5-0 to approve.

## **B. TEXTBOOKS FOR APS K-12 ACADEMIC PROGRAMS**

Textbooks have not been in the budget for several years, they have come out of the CIP. It is Dr. Berman's belief that there will be sufficient funds in our budget for textbooks. If the funds are available in the budget, the warrant article will be withdrawn.

**ARTICLE XX:** To see if the Town will vote to raise by taxation, transfer from available funds, or by any combination thereof, and appropriate the sum of \$519,300 for the purpose of paying the cost of purchasing text and technology materials to support a blended environment where text and technology are both necessary and appropriate to maintain the most current programmatic materials that align to the Massachusetts State Frameworks, including any other costs incidental and related thereto, or take any other action related thereto.

### **Description:**

In previous years, the acquisition of textbooks for the school department was voted as a capital request. After many years of debate, a determination was made to separate the request from the CIP. Although textbooks, including electronic and interactive texts are not capital items, this article is necessary to ensure that funds will be available.

Many of the textbooks used in classrooms are print versions but we are ever vigilant to research and pilot electronic and interactive texts. Today's comprehensive programs offer a blended environment where students and teachers have print versions of the text, online access to additional materials, online access to interactive activities and electronic assessment systems that allow teachers to better analyze student data. The programs are based on scientific research and include pedagogical approaches and instructional strategies that enable Andover students to meet and master local, state, and national standards. The format and the breadth of the instructional materials and programs have not yet been standardized and are dependent upon the publisher. In addition, textbooks represent a one-time purchase, while on line and interactive texts are a yearly subscription cost per user.

Susan McCready moved that the Andover School Committee vote to accept this article for Textbooks as presented in this proposed Warrant Article named "Textbooks for APS K-12 Academic Programs." The motion was seconded by Paul Murphy and voted 5-0 to approve.

### **C. ADA ACCESS TO HIGH PLAIN FIELDS**

After thoughtful consideration, public discussion and with support of the Town Manager, it is recommended that the committee revise SCH-5 (Major School Projects) of the requested FY 2018 CIP to include the installation of a set of stairs and ADA ramp system to access the lower soccer fields from the upper section of playground behind the High Plain and Wood Hill schools. From the day that the schools were opened in 2002, access to these lower fields has been limited to entering at the Cross street end of the fields. This does not allow enough time for gym classes, recess and lunch breaks to use the fields. This project has been cut from prior year CIP requests. However, in order to fund the project in FY-18, town and school officials have agreed to split the estimated construction cost of \$400,000. To accommodate inclusion of the ramp it is recommended that the committee vote to defer two projects with a combined cost of \$200,000 initially approved for FY 18 into FY 19.

Susan McCready moved that the Andover School Committee vote to approve deferring replacement of the stage curtains at the AHS Collins Center to FY-2019 CIP at an estimated cost of \$100,000; deferring Wood Hill/High Plain Rear Access Road Retaining Wall Repair to FY-2019 CIP at an estimated cost of \$100,000; Add a FY-2018 Project Cost of \$200,000 to the Wood Hill /High Plain Field Access Project; change the priority to 1; reduce to zero the sum of \$350,000 requested for FY-2019 for the Access Project. The motion was seconded by Ted Teichert and voted 5-0 to approve.

### **D. AHS LIBRARY/MEDIA CENTER RENOVATIONS**

**ARTICLE XX.** To see if the Town will vote to appropriate \$3,000,000 for the purpose of paying costs of design services for the preparation of plans, specifications, working drawings, bid documents and construction associated with Library/Media Center renovations at the Andover High School located at 80 Shawsheen Road, and for the payment of all other costs incidental and related thereto; and that to meet this appropriation, authorize the Treasurer, with the approval of the Board of Selectmen, to borrow said sum under and pursuant to Chapter 44, Section 7, Clause (??) of the Massachusetts General Laws, or any other enabling authority, and to issue bonds or notes of the Town therefor, or take any other action related thereto.

#### **Description:**

As described in the High School Feasibility Study prepared by Drummey, Rosane Anderson, Inc. (DRA) dated May 22, 2014, DRA recommended redesign of the current Library/Media Center into a more flexible space to support current and future learning approaches. The role of the Media Center has changed from what it once was. It is being transformed from a repository of printed materials into a "Digital Commons." More space is needed for collaborative work in groups of different sizes, from small groups to whole classes, often with access to technology to capture and manipulate material from multiple sources, such as books, newspapers, videos, and web sites. The Media Center has become a place to foster critical thinking, collaboration, and creativity. The appropriation includes 4% escalation for construction in 2018 and \$225,000 for furnishings and equipment.

## **No Motion**

Ted Teichert is concerned if sufficient funds will be available for all of the projects the School Department is proposing with the additional expense collective bargaining will bring. Chairman Blumstein said Friday is the deadline for submitting the articles and it is still early in the budget process; numbers can change and it is important to keep the articles on the table.

### **H. Consent Agenda**

1. Warrants: Expense SW1714, and Payroll 17S023
2. Minutes: October 27, 2016

On a motion by Susan McCready and seconded by Ted Teichert the Andover School Committee voted 5-0 to approve the Consent Agenda as presented.

### **I. Adjournment**

At 10:50 P.M. on a motion by Susan McCready and seconded by Ted Teichert the School Committee voted 5-0 to adjourn.

Respectfully submitted,

Dee DeLorenzo  
Recording Secretary

Documents: 2017-2018 School Year Calendar A and B  
2018-2022 Capital Improvement Program  
Town of Andover Afterschool Program Needs Assessment Survey  
Andover's Theory of Action