

ANDOVER SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Regular Meeting
Minutes of January 26, 2017

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 Nancy A. Duclos, Ph.D., and Vishvesh Kaul AHS Student Government Liaison.

1. Regular Meeting:

A. Call to Order/Moment of Silence/Salute to the Flag

Chairman Blumstein called the School Committee Meeting to order at 7:00 P.M. in the School Committee Room located in the School Administration Building. The meeting began with a moment of silence followed by a salute to the flag led by Sanborn students from Grade 5, Emily Han, Jennie Kim, and Gabi Millien.

B. Amendment to Agenda

The School Committee agenda is being amended to include an International Field Trip for AHS students going to Beijing, China.

Susan McCready moved that the Andover School Committee vote to amend the agenda to include an international field trip for Andover High Students to a National Competition in Beijing, China. Shannon Scully seconded the motion and the Committee voted 5-0 to approve.

C. Recognition/Communications

1. Highlights from around the District

Each year the Department of Education requires school districts to conduct an annual measurable achievement objective of progress with ESL students. Dr. Berman is pleased to announce that Andover has exceeded the target set by DESE by substantial margins and acknowledged our ESL teachers for their impressive work with students. Dr. Duclos spoke to the level of expertise of our ESL teachers in getting kids to progress quickly.

An anonymous donor has generously given \$10,000 to the Andover Public Schools to benefit Doherty Middle School's art programs – specifically the ceramic program, we would like to formally thank the donor and accept the donation with the following motion:

Susan McCready moved that the Andover School Committee vote to accept the donation from an anonymous donor in the sum of \$10,000 for the purchase of equipment and supplies for the ceramic program at Doherty Middle School. Ted Teichert seconded the motion and the School Committee voted 5-0 to approve.

Joel Blumstein reported that he, Susan McCready, Dr. Berman, Shannon Scully, and Steve Chinosi attended the public hearings on the STEAM Innovation Academy proposed for the

Greater Lawrence Technical School (GLTS). This would be a STEAM Academy within the existing GLTS as an innovation school. Shannon said it is her understanding implementation will begin with a 9th grade program and growing the academy out from there. GLTS has a great facility and team in place.

Joel Blumstein and Paul Szymanski attended the Audit Committee meeting which included a discussion on the discount rate used by the Town and the Retirement Board both of which are within the practical range. Mr. Szymanski said it was a good report from the auditors.

Chairman Blumstein reported on the CREST Collaborative Bi-Monthly meeting he attended which included a discussion on proposed tuition increases from 3% to 5% creating concern from several communities who have not factored this increase into their budgets (Andover has not). The Board of Directors will continue the discussion and vote on the proposed increase at their next meeting.

D. Public Comment

Several parents addressed the School Committee regarding comments in the Andover Townsman made during the interview with Dr. Berman, Dr. Stetson, and Chairman Blumstein. about students, disabilities, and out-of-district placements. Parents do not feel the School Committee understands their problems and are requesting they make a commitment to the community that they will work with the parents. The School Committee should embrace and look at what parents have to offer and see how impactful leaving the district is for students versus having the right surroundings in the district.

E. Response to Public Comment

Joel Blumstein read into the record, two emails received regarding the article in the Townsman.

Dr. Berman believes Andover could have done a better job earlier, there has been a history of conflict and it is not one we want to repeat, we are deeply concerned about children not being able to read at grade level. The comments in the newspaper were taken out of context creating unnecessary conflict. Andover has initiated a comprehensive program for understanding of dyslexia, and invested \$200,000 this year in early screening, project monitoring contracts, and collaborations with Landmark. We do not want to diminish the quality of work Landmark does and believe Landmark is an appropriate placement for many situations. We are also working with Landmark Outreach to improve our programs to ensure our teachers understand dyslexia and how to address it. The FY-18 budget includes funds for professional development and textbooks directed at this issue, we have taken concerns very seriously and doing our best to remediate and address these problems.

Ted Teichert said statements that insinuate students sent to Landmark are at a lower learning level and would be at a disadvantage if returned to Andover Public Schools are of great concern, and he proposed that the School Committee arrange a meeting with parents to understand their problems and to arrive at solutions.

Susan McCready and Shannon Scully commented on the problem of incorrect reporting and communications coming from the Townsman. Susan McCready is open to have a public forum, Shannon said it would be helpful to have feedback from the Student Services Director and then let parents tell them if they think it will be effective. Paul Murphy said this has been a long-standing problem, and the district is moving in the right direction by putting students first and advocating for early intervention. Joel Blumstein said nothing he heard from Dr. Stetson or Dr. Berman at the interview with the Townsman was in any way offensive, it was a discussion on doing what is best for students and how to go about doing that.

F. Education

1. ESIC Presentations: Zero Waste The Environmental Sustainable Internship Course students from AHS (Charlotte Gorrie and Miranda Lawrence and Amanda Brosnan) presented ideas on how to standardize the Zero Waste Prevention Program across the school district which included: Making reusable lunch products a district-wide requirement, incorporating environmental science lessons in curriculum for teachers at the beginning of the year for each grade level, providing a trash sorting explanation, installing water refill stations at each school and cafeteria, custodial supervisor to allow collaboration between schools, creating Green Teams at each school (staff and students), and more garden time during the school day for students. The Zero Waste Program currently relies heavily on parent volunteers and would like to investigate opportunities within the school to establish a sustainable program.

2. AHS Field Trip: Steve Chinosi, Director of Innovation, and Sheila St. Laurant, Digital Learning Specialist at AHS, shared the history behind the invitation from the National Science Competition for the three AHS students (Andrew, Cory, and Julia) to present their Smart Garden project at the Science Technology Competition in Beijing, China in March.

Susan McCready moved that the Andover School Committee vote to approve the proposed extracurricular trip for Andover High School students to Beijing, China on March 22-29, 2017 as presented. The motion was seconded by Shannon Scully and voted 5-0 to approve.

3. AHS Facility Planning Committee

Dr. Berman presented a formal proposal to the Committee for establishing the AHS Facility Planning Committee to review facility needs. A variety of goals have been broken into three phases beginning in February 2017 culminating in May of 2018, with updates provided to the School Committee on a regular basis. The mission of the Committee is to review the facility needs at AHS, recommend potential solutions to update building systems, relieve overcrowding and improve program capabilities including the possibility of a Pre-K program located on the campus of AHS.

Susan McCready moved that the Andover School Committee vote to approve the Andover High School Facility Planning Committee as presented by the Superintendent of Schools. The motion was seconded by Paul Murphy and voted 5-0 to approve.

Susan McCready moved that the Andover School Committee vote to approve Annie Gilbert as the Chair of the Facility Planning Committee as presented by the Superintendent of Schools. Ted Teichert seconded the motion and the Committee voted 5-0 to approve.

Mike Roli, 2 College Circle: The School Committee is moving forward to make improvements to the schools, and he would like to hear more about the proposals, their cost, and information on how it will affect property taxes.

G. New Business

1. School Committee Policy Manual: Chapters B - 1st Reading

Sub-committee members Joel Blumstein and Susan McCready, presented the next sections of the policy manual for the first reading of Section B. Susan asked the Committee to look at the existing policy on Guidelines for Public Communications at School Committees and the changes presented to allow public input on agenda items at the beginning of the meeting. Discussion on maintaining item #3 in BEDH-E should not preclude that public input be allowed when agenda items are discussed. Explanations on other changes in Section B were shared and discussed. Next reading of Section C will be provided at the next meeting.

H. Old Business

1. Approval of the preliminary FY2018 Budget

The School Committee has had the opportunity to discuss all the Schools' Budget presentations, departmental presentations, and the Superintendent's overall FY18 budget presentations on the Preliminary Budget Recommendation of \$80,464,784 which includes Personnel Costs of \$64,404,628, and General Expenses of \$15,260,156 (includes textbooks), and the Out-of-District addition of \$800,000, which is outside of the 3.5% budget increase.

Dr. Berman provided comparative data on Andover's ranking in school district spending, per pupil expenditure, average property tax as a percent of medium income, starting salary for teachers, and highest teacher salary without a doctorate. He also explained the Out of District Placement Cost Gap of \$829,849 for FY-17 which was covered by spending down the Circuit Breaker Reserve and the need for additional resources to cover for FY-18. The deficit predicted for this year was discussed at the Chairs meeting last year and an agreement to find another mechanism to pay for the unfunded Out-of-District costs, was reached with the Town in order to balance the budget and go to Town Meeting. Dr. Berman is disappointed that an agreement was reached and a year later told that agreement no longer stands. Trust between Boards is critical and when agreements are reached they should be kept and he encourages the School Committee to hold firm. There are other resources within the Town budget that can be utilized to cover the deficit, with expected increases in State and Local Aid and new growth.

Ted Teichert questioned the ability to pay for additions to the budget if we don't have the funds, and would like to have more discussion on the Out of District addition of \$800K before voting.

Shannon Scully moved that the Andover School Committee vote to adopt the Superintendent of Schools' recommendation for the FY-18 Preliminary Operating Budget in the amount of \$80,464,784 composed of the following: Personnel: \$64,404,628; Expenses: \$15,260,156 and includes integration of \$519,300 for textbooks: Supplemental OOD expense in the amount of \$800,000 as an alternative to the warrant article. The motion was seconded by Susan McCready and voted 4-0-1 to approve. Ted Teicheret abstained.

2. Second Reading of 2017-2018 APS School Calendar

Susan McCready moved for the Andover School Committee vote to approve Calendar "A" as the 2017-2018 School Calendar as presented. The motion was seconded by Ted Teichert and voted 5-0 to approve.

3. Informal School Committee Forums

Joel provided an update on the status of the Informal School Committee Forums. To date, there have been five meetings since June 2016 which have been well attended and a number of issues raised. However, the last two sessions had a fewer number of attendees. The School Committee considered the frequency of the informal forums and discussed whether or not to continue them.

I. Consent Agenda

1. **Warrants:** Expense: SW1720 Payroll: 17S030
2. **Minutes:** December 1, 2016 and December 8, 2016

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

J. Adjournment

At 10:35 P.M. on a motion by Susan McCready and seconded by Paul Murphy, the Andover School Committee voted 5-0 to adjourn.

Respectfully submitted,

Dee DeLorenzo,

Documents: FY-2018 Requested Budget
Emails received
AHS Facility Study Committee Information