

Andover School Committee
Minutes of March 7, 2019

Members in Attendance: Chair, Shannon Scully, Vice-Chair, Paul Murphy, Joel Blumstein, Tracey Spruce, and Susan McCready.

Others in Attendance: Superintendent Berman, Assistant Superintendent Paul Szymanski, Assistant Superintendent for Student Services Dr. Sara Stetson, and Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning Sandy Trach, and AHS Liaison Ben Roldan.

I. **Call to Order**

The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:07 P.M. in the School Committee Meeting Room located in the School Administration Building. The Chair recognized Sanborn School's Art Teacher, Jen Recinos and the Sanborn School students for the display of art work located in the School Administration Building.

A. **Moment of Silence/Salute to Flag**

The meeting began with a Moment of Silence followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

B. **Recognitions & Communications**

Justin Jones from Prudential Financial sponsors of the Spirit of Community Awards that honors for Middle and High School Students for their outstanding voluntary community service and who have dedicated 50 or more hours to community service. Four of the President's Volunteer Awards go to Chiara Holton, Briana Preston, Alice Yu, and Bipasha Ray. Hannah Finn was presented with an engraved Prudential Community of Spirit Medallion in recognition of her acts of kindness and dedication to the community. Congratulations to all of the awardees.

Dorothy Presser, Field Director for the Massachusetts Association of School Committees and representative for Andover Public Schools, reported on other opportunities and resources MASC offers to School Committees.

The School Committee is holding a workshop on March 15th at 8:00 A.M. for an update on the DMS Renovation Project from DiNisco Architects.

Sandy Trach shared an update on the search for the Program Coordinator for the Visual Arts Program. Sandy attended WERAWC at West Elementary School this week which was an amazing event.

Paul Szymanski reported on the Zoning Department meeting he attended on a proposed structure to be built at 56 York Street, a 40B and mixed use facility with 150 residential units (1, 2, and 3 bedrooms). This is a significant initiative and he will update the Committee accordingly. He also reported on the transitioning phase of the ALICE Program to the School Crisis Response Teams.

Sara Stetson reported on the following Student Service events: The 3rd Annual Resource Fair for families of students with special needs and spearheaded by Joe Yarid and Heather Eigen was held last week. Sara attended a Bancroft PTO meeting and talked with parents about kids, executive functioning, and how to form a new SEPAC Group; several interested parents approached them after the event. Sara also visited the South School Kindergarten classes this morning, and tomorrow a team from Student Services will be going to Boston Children's Hospital to work on a project to translate some of their assessment models. Congratulations to Rita Casper, Nurse Leader, who was invited to speak at the International Nurse Leadership Conference in Sweden.

Joel Blumstein also attended WERAWC which is a wonderful event that is a special experience for students and he hopes the tradition continues.

Shannon Scully announced that on Friday, March 15th, the School Committee will meet to receive an update on the renovation plans for Doherty Middle School. A School Committee informal meeting will be held on Monday night, 3/11 at 7:00 P.M. at Memorial Hall Library.

C. Public Input

Mary Robb, 116 Lowell St, Andover, and a Social Studies Teacher at AHS, spoke about the Design Thinking Course she attended this summer that included strategies that educators use regularly and often. She recognized Steve Chinosi and Shelagh St. Laurent for helping the teachers to look at what they do in a different way. They were able to meet the needs of more students by identifying the end user and their needs before starting a project. Mary provided a statement of recommendations to the School Committee.

Kerry Costello, AEA President and Student Government Advisor, introduced Jade Nair, a freshman from AHS, who read a statement on changing the start of the school day. Currently, it takes 4 minutes to move from one class to another. An additional minute of passing time (for a total of 5 minutes) would allow hallway traffic to be reduced. Getting to class on time impacts time on learning.

D. Response to Public Input none

E. Education

F. New Business

1. Fusion Academy

Asst. Superintendent, Sandy Trach, shared information and documentation submitted to the District from Fusion Academy for the purpose of establishing a private school in Andover. Dr. Berman said Sandy has done an exemplary job exploring the information from Fusion Academy and investigating the request to open as a private school in Andover, not an easy task.

Sandy talked about the process and tools used to review the application, spoke to the criteria and the laws for the School Committee to consider, and recommended that Fusion come back

to the School Committee for possible action. She also visited other Fusion Academy sites in Massachusetts and had several dialogues with representatives from Fusion. Policy LBC of the School Committee addresses the need for a School Committee to approve a private school.

Fusion offers classes for students in Grades 6-12, and they have advised Sandy that they are not a Special Education School and don't plan on being one. It is a 1:1 face-to-face school experience. Fusion anticipates enrolling up to 75 students in Andover. It is important for the Committee to review Sandy's memorandum for a full account of her determination and findings. Items to consider include student schedules: Twenty-five 50 minute sessions (a course would equal a little over 20 hours for completion compared to 119 hours at AHS) which speaks to a thoroughness question. Sample schedules supplied for high school schedules did not rise to the 990 hours as required by DESE and there are no AP courses. There is no policy for accommodating students with disabilities. Staff is a one-to-one model, and we have not received copies of student handbooks. Assessments are individualized but they do use the MAP Assessment as does Andover. There are eleven points providing strong guidance from DESE for School Committees to consider with these decisions; these points stem from Mass General Law. Fusion has been extremely cooperative and has welcomed the School Committee to visit their sites.

The School Committee appreciates the time Sandy has spent reviewing the application and the information provided to assist with their decision.

2. Superintendent's Mid-Year Report

The Superintendent sent his Mid-year Report on Goals to the Committee earlier in the week, and the Committee provided feedback on the report. In essence, the goals guide the Strategic Plan and a collaboration of teachers and administrative staff who support the work and see the vision that they can make a difference for students. Dr. Berman gave a review of each goal. See Superintendent's Mid-Year Report for details.

G. Continuing Business

1. Allocation of Additional Time for 2019-2020 School Year

The Superintendent reported on the discussions with school administrators on how to apply the increase in the additional time allocated to the school day (15 minutes) at each level starting in September 2019 and as negotiated with the AEA. Dr. Berman and the School Committee would like the time to be used for academics and not passing time. This is a financial investment made to address an increase to instructional time.

Kerry Costello, AEA President, is well aware of the issues with the passing time and the factors of why it is an option to consider. Due to the severe overcrowding at AHS, school lunches were increased from three to four because of the inability to physically accommodate three lunches, by using a minute of each passing time to create the 4th lunch. She agrees that the extra minutes for instructional time helps provide a cushion to the required 990 that the district was too close to.

AHS teachers, Betsy Desfosse and Kathryn Vives said that increasing passing time at AHS would greatly relieve student and teacher angst moving from one class to the next within a 4-minute window. The extra minute will allow students/teachers to arrive at class in a timely manner and provide quality passing time that will equate to quality instructional time.

Ben Roldan said adding an additional minute in passing time from one end of AHS to the other could improve academic time by reducing delay in class start time.

Comments by the School Committee:

Paul Murphy: Correlates it too much needed social-emotional time.

Joel Blumstein: It is a very appropriate topic for the next year of collective bargaining but does not favor re-opening the agreement now.

Susan McCready: Is reluctant to increase passing time now because the School Committee had to strongly defend their decision that the added time would be used as academic time.

Tracey Spruce: There are valid points made by staff and students, and she understands that the School Committee has made a significant investment in academic time, and that students are spending minutes settling into the start of class, but she is wary of backing away from what the School Committee has presented as learning time.

Shannon Scully: Agrees that the appropriate time to fix this problem is during the next round of contractual bargaining.

2. FY20 Budget Update

Last week the School Committee voted to approve \$86,158,377 for the FY-2020 budget. Since then, the Town Manager has proposed the following FY-2020 budget for the School Committee's consideration:

Personnel	\$69,871,040
Expense:	\$15,733,768
Additional Chapter 70 Funds:	\$ <u>250,000</u>
New Proposed Budget Total	<u>\$85,854,808</u>

Plus a Kindergarten Revolving Account in the amount of \$75,000 for FY 2020 (to be displayed as a line item). The budget includes \$239,813 from the Circuit Breaker, \$220,000 for textbooks, \$313,000 in IT Dept. transfer of school personnel to the Town, and an additional \$553,569 in Chapter 70 Funds.

Discussion:

The School Committee discussed the Town Manager's budget proposal.

It was suggested that the Superintendent look to see if there are other avenues of revenue worth exploring (town) and to look at how the Governor has put forth the recommended use of the additional Chapter 70 allocation. The Committee also discussed the requirements to establish a cost free Full Day Kindergarten and whether to vote on the new budget proposal from the Town Manager (with conditions) or to wait on further information.

On a motion by Paul Murphy and seconded by Tracey Spruce, the School Committee voted 4-0-1 to adopt a revised FY-2020 school operating budget in the amount of \$85,854,808 and to

appropriate an additional \$75,000 to the School Operating Budget for the purpose of further reducing the cost of full day Kindergarten and this vote is expressly conditioned on the Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee recommending a School Operating Budget in the same amounts. Failing such recommendations from the Board of Selectmen and/or Finance Committee, the School Committee's vote of February 28, 2019 on the operating budget shall remain in effect.

Dr. Berman would like to advertise for a full-time Grant person. This is a critical position that has been vacant since the previous Grant person left in March, and the position is an agenda item for the FY20 Budget. The School Committee requested more information be provided.

1. Financials

Paul Szymanski reported that the January Financial Summary projected a negative balance of \$35K, with a deficit in the Food Services line item. He is pleased to report that they now have a balanced budget for January, although there is still a deficit in the Food Services line which they will continue to monitor between now and end of the school year before deciding on an increase in the price of school lunches.

H. Consent Agenda

1. Warrants: Expense SW1919A and SW1919, Payroll 19S036
2. Minutes: School Committee Meetings of January 10, and January 24, 2019
3. Grants/Donations to the District

On a motion by Susan McCready and seconded by Paul Murphy the Andover School Committee voted 5-0 to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. Motion carries.

I. Adjournment

At 10:10 P.M. on a motion by Susan McCready and seconded by Paul Murphy, the School Committee voted to adjourn from the meeting of March 7, 2019.

Respectfully submitted

Dee DeLorenzo
Recording Secretary

Documents: Superintendent's Mid-Year Report
Fusion Academy Private School Application Information
Letter from Mary Robb