

Andover School Committee
Minutes of Thursday, January 30, 2020

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

Others in Attendance: Superintendent Berman, Paul Szymanski Assist. Superintendent Finance & Administration, Assist. Superintendent Teaching & Learning Sandra Trach, Asst Superintendent of Student Services Dr. Sara Stetson, and AHS Liaison Ben Roldan.

A. School Committee Regular Meeting- Call to Order

Chair Blumstein called the School Committee to order at 7:00 P.M. in the School Committee Meeting Room located in the School Administration Building. The meeting began with a Moment of Silence followed by a Salute to the Flag.

B. Public Input

The Chair provided an opportunity for the audience to speak on other areas besides the budget.

Sally Mandelbaum, AHS Spec Ed Teacher and Andover resident, spoke about the issue on the lack of Case Management Time for SPED teachers at AHS. Last year she had 7 hours+ per student per year and this year she has much less. Currently, the schedule now gives her 39 minutes per student for the remainder of the year which will result in a deficit of time to work with her students. It has become an overwhelming almost impossible task to do the job they would like to do and meet the needs of the students.

Kerry Costello reiterated the issue with Case Management Time at AHS, stating that it is a serious issue when we cannot appropriately service children within the time limitations.

Matt Bach, President of the Andover Educators Association, said the elimination of case managers at the beginning of the year has severely affected the students and the case management time should be reinstated. This issue should be a priority within the budget.

C. Response to Public Input

Dr. Berman explained that the previous arrangement in which Case Management Time (CMT) took place during H-Block resulted in the neediest students being unable to access their teachers during H-Block and that this was viewed as discriminatory. The alternative was for SpecEd teachers to conduct CMT during H-1 and then be paired during other H-Block times with other teachers. The greatest number of students a teacher would have during H-block time is 6 students. Dr. Berman believes that this provides an equivalent option.

D. Continuing Business

1. Update: Budget FY21

The Chair explained that the School Committee will vote on a preliminary budget number tonight which will be given to the Town Manager on Friday. The Town Manager is releasing his Recommended Budget for FY-21 on Friday, February 7th. This is a preliminary budget amount and is not a final decision on the components of the budget. A final vote on the budget will be made by the School Committee prior to Town Meeting, with Town Meeting having the final vote.

Dr. Berman provided an overview of the budget drivers and spoke about the deficit the School Department is facing due to SpecEd transportation issues. However, there are some fairly significant items in the budget that the Committee should consider.

- SpecEd Transportation \$627,526 or 0.7%
- Step/Track Changes \$1,251,344 or 1.46%
- Negotiated settlement with unions – unknown
- Legal costs for negotiations \$75,000
- Athletic program \$84,306
- Homeless Transportation \$45,000
- Special Ed staffing (BRIDGE, AHS Program Head, Tier 3 Program Staffing)

Our enrollment is decreasing slightly with projections for FY-21 expected to be similar at 5,836 students.

The anticipated increase in FY-21 Chapter 70 funds were projected at 4.0% or	\$12,135,023
The increase in Chapter 70 Funds under Governor’s Budget are 1.48% or	\$11,840,491
Leaving a gap of	\$ 294,532
Total Increase in Chapter 70 Aid for FY-21	\$ 172,200

The Superintendent presented a number of potential scenarios for the preliminary budget including the components to be included (attached). Members of the School Committee posed questions and comments regarding the budget and areas where they think funds should be spent. There are a lot of important priorities including investment in Special Education, FDK offset, and elimination of double bus runs. The lack of expected support from the State in Chapter 70 funding has severely impacted our budget.

Public Comments:

Kerry Costello asked if the stipends for Global Advisors are for all three levels (*only at AHS*) and reminded the School Committee that it is the Stipend Committee which determines the appropriate stipend amount. She said that stipends are for work to be done outside of the work day and believes that this group meets during H-Block at times and is already being paid through their salary, As a result, could they consider reducing the stipend if this is the situation?

Michael Melvin, 2 Landau Lane, asked how negotiated settlements with unions are figured in the budget. Joel explained the negotiation process and the COLA increase. There are funds built into the budget for COLA’s for increases of some type.

Matt Bach, AEA President, asked why Andover is getting less in Chapter 70 funds. The Chair explained that under the Governor's budget for FY-21 Andover will receive an increase of only \$172,200, not the higher amount previously projected, due to a reconfiguration of funding for urban school districts under the Student Opportunity Act.. Mr. Bach encourages the Committee to look to the Town Manager to fill the gap in funds.

Shannon Scully moved that the Andover School Committee vote to adopt the Superintendent of Schools' recommendation for the Preliminary FY-21 Operating Budget in the amount of **\$89,246,700** subject to the further public input and consideration of other relevant information.

Discussion: Members of the School Committee hope that this is not the end of the discussion. This is only the first step and hope there can be some economizing that can be done to allow the School Department to take on additional needs. The Committee has the option to come in higher than the Town Manager's recommendation. However, there is value in working more collaboratively with the Town and there are big projects on the horizon that we will need to work through with the Community. The consensus of the Committee was to accept the Town Manager's recommendation of a 3.86% increase in the preliminary school budget.

The motion was seconded by Tracey Spruce and voted 5-0 to approve.

E. Consent Agenda

1. Grants/Donations to District – n/a

F. Adjournment

At 8:19 P.M. on a motion by Shannon Scully and seconded by Susan McCready, the Andover School Committee voted 5-0 to adjourn the meeting of January 30, 2020.

Respectfully submitted

Dee DeLorenzo

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Recording Secretary

Attach: Shelley Budget Presentation