

**Andover School Committee  
Minutes of June 25, 2020  
Virtual Meeting**

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**Participants from the School Committee:**

Chair Shannon Scully, Vice Chair, Susan McCready, Tracey Spruce, Paul Murphy, and Lauren Conoscenti

**Others participating:**

Superintendent Shelley Berman, Assistant Superintendents Sandra Trach, Paul Szymanski, Sara Stetson, Director of Communications Nicole Kieser, Chief Operations Officer (a/o 7/1) Steve Nembirkow.

**I. Regular Meeting – Call to Order / Moment of Silence**

Shannon Scully called the Andover School Committee meeting of June 25, 2020 to order at 7:00 P.M. and opened up the Regular Meeting through a Virtual Meeting Broadcast by Andover TV and on Comcast Channel 99, Verizon Channel 43 or via streamed: [www.andovertv.org](http://www.andovertv.org) **Public Participation via email: [scremote@andoverma.us](mailto:scremote@andoverma.us)**  
Alison Phelan and Shelley Berman will be screening the emails.

The meeting began with a Moment of Silence.

**A. Public Hearing: FY21 School Operating Budget**

The FY21 Proposed Budget will be discussed tonight. The purpose of this part of the meeting is to provide the public with the opportunity to ask questions and provide feedback about the proposed budget. The hearing was posted in the newspaper on June 17, 2020 as required by the law. The budget is available on the school website at <https://www.aps1.net/411/Budget-Information>

Budget has evolved over time, meetings have been held with the Select Board and Finance Committee. Dr. Berman reviewed the original preliminary budget and proposed budget reduction recommendations by the Town Manager.

**Enrollment:** The anticipated enrollment for the 2020.2021 is 5,914 students, 30 students fewer than this year. Enrollment numbers are stable for pre-school, elementary and middle schools and slightly higher at AHS. Economic disadvantaged students are stabilized @ 10%, and the ELL population has decreased somewhat in part due to limitations of migrations, and standards by DESE. Over the past three years, the goal has been to continue reducing and maintaining elementary class size resulting in range of 20-21 students per classroom.

**Budget Drivers:** Special Education Out-of-District placements and transportation, step and track changes for employees, legal costs for negotiations, Special Education staffing, reductions in revenue from the Athletics Program, and elimination of tuition for full-day kindergarten.

Budget Priorities:

Staffing: Elementary BRIDGE teacher, Human Resources Assistant Director, AHS SPED Program Head and a Tier 3 Program Teacher. Two Elementary Math Coaches, a Custodial Supervisor, Registered Behavioral Technicians (1-5), a Middle School Math Specialist, and a Technology Manager for AHS.

Modest Improvements: Pilot an Elementary Tier 3 Program, add Middle School Curriculum Advisors, Global Pathways Advisors, and a .5 Webmaster, .4 Clerical Support at High Plain and Bancroft, and a .4 BCBA position for the elementary level for a total cost of \$371,180.

Other: Busses to eliminate second runs.

Preliminary FY20-21 Budget

Personnel	\$72,578,173
General Expense	\$16,668,527
Total	\$89,246,700
TM Recommendations	\$89,246,700 or \$89.2M
\$88.4M budget with adjustments due to effects of COVID-19	

Schools were only able to access \$138,000 from the CARES ACT, but we will be able to access Circuit Breaker funds for costs related to COVID. Additional requirements and reductions come to about \$1.8M.

Adjusted FY-2021 Budget

Personnel	\$71,369,021
General Expense	\$17,070,891
Total	\$88,439,912 2.92% increase
TMR Recommendation	\$88,439,912 or \$88.4M

Dr. Berman is asking the School Committee to not vote on the budget tonight, because we do not yet know what the amount of State Aid will be.

The Town Moderator has made the decision to move the Annual Town Meeting beyond July 22<sup>nd</sup>. The budget is an ongoing process and additional refinements will be coming forward.

**II. Regular Meeting Resumes 7:24 P.M.**

**B. Recognitions & Communications**

1. Paula Westmacott, was recognized as the recipient of the YMCA Tribute to Women Award nominated by Pfizer, Inc. of Andover. Paula is the creator of the Vocational Program which began 3 years ago and now serves over 30 students.
2. Introduction of new APS Personnel: Congratulations to the following new Administrators: Caitlin Brown, AHS Principal, Brenda Lee, South School Principal and Ms. Christina Ryan, Student Service Asst. Director.
3. Central Office Retirements: Paul Szymanski, Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Operations, who, after 7 years with APS, will be retiring. Paul is always mission driven, and his diligence, commitment, and leadership have been invaluable assets to the District especially his expertise during the COVID-19 crisis. Paul will be greatly missed especially

for his classic statements, and strong sense of ethics. Shelley thanked Paul for the partnership they have had, and his strong relationships with both Town and School personnel has been exemplary. Paul has always done the best he can to look out for others and he is well respected by all.

Mary Lu Walsh, Transportation Coordinator, will be retiring at the end of June after 21 years of service at APS. Mary Lu has been a valuable asset to the district and her commitment to the families of Andover has gone far beyond her position to do the best job she possibly could to serve children.

Public Comment: Brad Weeden, 5 Summer Street, thanked Paul for always answering and acting on his inquiries.

The School Committee also recognized Paul and Mary Lu and wished them both the very best in their retirements.

Shannon thanked Phil Conrad for his time as principal at Andover High School, and recognized Colleen McBride for filling in as principal at South School and Nancy Koch as she moves on to Newburyport as the head of Student Services.

Lauren Conoscenti thanked all elementary schools on the graduation celebrations for the 5<sup>th</sup> grade classes which were wonderful experiences. She appreciates that the staff went above and beyond to make the graduations special.

Tracey recognized the WHMS staff on the graduation celebrations held for their 8<sup>th</sup> grade graduating class, of which her son was one, that included a car parade and a photo station. Susan's daughter graduated with the 8<sup>th</sup> grade class at West Middle School. She congratulated the staff at WMS who did a really great job of making their 8<sup>th</sup> grade graduation special.

Shannon reiterated that Town Meeting has been moved again from July 22<sup>nd</sup> to August 22 but they expect it will be pushed out again to Saturday, September 12<sup>th</sup>. We are on 1/12<sup>th</sup> monthly budget that requires approval monthly by the Select Board.

C. **Public Input** None

D. **Response to Public Input**

E. **Continuing Business**

1. **West Elementary School Building Committee**

Paula Colby-Clements, Chair of the West Elementary Building Project provided an update on the building project, including discussion and recommendation on the mechanical penthouse and Flexitorium. Tracey and Susan are members of the West Elementary Building Committee.

There has been a slight delay in the building project due to a change in regulations by MSBA causing the removal of the Mechanical Penthouse from the project. The Town Manager, Superintendent, architects and project manager will attend the MSBA Facility

Assessment Sub-Committee (FAS) on July 22<sup>nd</sup>. and an updated PSR submission is due to MSBA by on July 9th that includes decisions on the mechanical penthouse. In late August, they are slated to go before the full MSBA Board with a full presentation of the project, and, if MSBA approves the project, we move to the Schematic Design Phase. The Building Committee decided today to move forward and do an FAS presentation having removed the Mechanical Penthouse knowing that MSBA is not going to fund this item so not to delay the project. A letter will be sent to MSBA in the hopes that they will revisit their decision because this is accepted as a best architectural practice for all districts. MSBA continues to give us feedback on the project as the space needed is continued to be refined. The size of the new building has been reduced by about 3,500 net sq. ft. (\$3.5M off the cost of the project). Members of the district looked very hard at the project space including some of the Pre-K space. Given the size of the new cafeteria and library, it was decided to pull out the Pre-K cafeteria, library, server and warming kitchen, and instead share some of the space in the new West Elementary Building. Reductions were also made to the multi-purpose space, health and physical education space and teachers work room. The West El Building Committee will continue to refine the project and look at what they need to meet the educational requirements for the children in the building.

A decision on including the Flexitorium (auditorium space currently part of the design), which MSBA will not cover the cost of, still needs to be made. The Building Committee asked the Town Manager to give the Committee data on the effects of the building cost on the residential tax bill.

A public meeting (Web-X meeting) on this project will be held on July 14<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 P.M. Thank you to Nicole Kieser for the new design of the website for the West Elementary School Building Project that is easy to navigate and includes answers to frequently asked questions.

Why is this project more expensive than Bancroft? The West Elementary School is a much more sizeable project designed for 925 K-5 students and 120 Pre-k students, which is almost double the size of the Bancroft project. Currently, the West El Building has 204,000 total gross footage. We are getting two schools out of this project; a new elementary and a new site for Shawsheen preschool. Also, there have been multiple building and energy changes since Bancroft was built affecting the cost, and construction escalation costs of about 5% are also built into the project. The Building Committee is still working to provide information on all reasoning for differential between the projects.

## **2. Summer Programs and School Reopening Plan**

Dr. Berman reported on the Re-opening of School's Advisory released by DESE this morning. It is significant in that the medical advice has dramatically changed; children are less susceptible to the virus and not as contagious as once thought. The medical advice is included in the State's advisory. In general, they recommend maintaining a minimum of 3' of social distancing which provides a good chance for Andover to open elementary and middle schools at full capacity; questionable is still bussing and the opening Andover High School which can't be done at full capacity. DESE is requiring that we provide three different plans: an attempt to be as fully in with as many students

as possible, a hybrid plan of being in school and remotely, and a third plan for full remote learning. Students, from grade 2 and up, and staff will be required to wear masks. Additional protection will be provided for students that need it. There is a proposal for additional resources of \$225 per student, but it is unclear if the expenses will be reimbursed. The APS Re-Opening Task Force comprised of a diverse range of members, will meet on July 7<sup>th</sup>. Students/ and families with health concerns will be addressed for remote learning.

Sandy Trach and Sara Stetson shared information on the Task Force which they see as a Central Core Team. They will have broad workgroups with specific tasks, i.e. social, emotional and mental health of students, health and safety, logistics and operations group to work on multiple areas (transportation, entrance/exits, procurements of PPE, structuring classrooms, and appropriate capacity, and high quality remote learning, etc.). Updates are available on the Andover Public School website which includes an email box for anyone who wants to write to them.

School Committee members recommended creating a FAQ section and to consider adding modular classrooms at AHS. Paul Murphy is serving on the Reopening Committee and will report back to the School Committee. It is important to share communications with the community.

Sandy Trach reported that the Title I Student Program in Literacy and Math is running this summer with 94 students involved and the Title III ELL Summer Program has 67 students participating. Information on Summer Book Clubs for students will be sent out soon and summer reading lists are posted on the APS website. All of our Staff Professional Development will be held remotely with 25 courses taught by our Andover teachers; to date, 375 seats are filled by Andover teachers with 21 teachers on a wait list. Responsive Classroom I and II will run virtually in August with 43 teachers enrolled, and 3 teachers at AHS will attend training at the virtual AVID Summit in July. Teachers are also engaged in summer curriculum work.

Sara Stetson said there are about 300 children participating in the Special Education Extended School Year and will be largely remote. Students with more complex needs will be closely looked at to find creative ways to help them transition into school. They are working on offering specialized clinic work for later in the summer and collaborating with the Regular Education Team (Math, World Language, ELA).

Paul Szymanski recognized the Information Technology Team who did a remarkable job recovering student computers at the end of the school year.

### **3. FY21 School Operating Budget**

Based on a discussion with the Commissioner, the Superintendent recommended that the School Committee not vote on the FY21 budget at this meeting in order to assess what legislative action may be taken to provide Chapter 70 funding and additional relief in order to open schools in the fall. It was thought that Andover was going to receive a much higher amount of funding from the CARES ACT.

## **F. Education**

### **1. Curricular Shifts to Highlight Civil Rights**

Adrienne Bock, Social Studies District Program Coordinator, presented a proposal for Social Studies Curriculum to focus more fully on civil rights and anti-racism for the District, to explore issues of race and membership throughout our curricula.

They are proposing a shift for students in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade, with a new emphasis on Civics and student-driven civic action. While the History and Social Studies program in APS supports an approach to studying history and social studies, the new 8<sup>th</sup> grade Civics framework raises important themes, topics and questions for students to explore in order to develop their own civic agency. They will be adopting Facing History and Ourselves, *Choices in Little Rock* Curriculum, that has been adopted widely across the country. It illustrates many of the Civics topics and themes through the lens of race, racism, and the fight for equitable access to education.

The 8<sup>th</sup> grade educators will explore this case study and its placement within our existing grade 8 course. They will identify the other curricular shifts that will have to occur in order to adopt the *Choices in Little Rock* case study. They will register for teacher training needed to teach this important history, including Facing History seminars and self-paced courses. They will also connect with our Facing History and Ourselves' program associate, assigned specifically to the Andover Public School District for curriculum support in implementing this unit of study. They would like to pilot the *Choices in Little Rock* curriculum over the 2020-2021 school year for full implementation in the 2021-22 school year.

Tracey Spruce requested information on all of the curriculum APS has on racism.

## **G. New Business**

### **1. SEPAC Recognition**

SEPAC held elections on Wednesday, June 24<sup>th</sup>. As Liaison to SEPAC, Paul Murphy congratulated the new Board members elected last night. By law, the District must have a Special Education Parent Advisory Council, which is a resource for all families in Andover, required and independent of the District. Co-chairs are Steve Ruisi and Lynn Bowab.

Paul Murphy moved that the Andover School Committee vote to establish a District-wide Parent Advisory Council on Special Education pursuant to G.L. C.71B § 3 AND 603 CMR 28.07(4), as requested by the current conditional Andover SEPAC. The motion was seconded by Susan McCready. Roll call: L. Conoscenti -Y, S. McCready-Y, T. Spruce-Y, L. P. Murphy-Y, S. Scully-Y. Motion passes 5-0

### **2. Start Times Report Update from Asst. Superintendent Sandy Trach**

Asst. Superintendent, Sandy Trach, gave a brief update and overview of the Start Times Report and recognized the members of the School Start Time Committee who gave many hours of their time. The SST Committee held many meetings, public forums, and sent out

surveys on changing school start time and the benefits of sleep for adolescents to students, parents, and staff. Information on School Start Time is available on the District website. [www.aps1.net/2033/school-start-times-study](http://www.aps1.net/2033/school-start-times-study)

Bus transportation was a significant part of the Task Force's study. The SST report contains information on decoupling of private and public school bussing, before and after school childcare, effects on athletics and the potential need for increased playing fields. Changing school start times would also impact elementary band instruction time. Solutions can be found to support music by adding more music teachers. There is a strong desire to eliminate B runs, and to test the bus runs before implementation. The independent report from Edulog Inc., responds to the specific tasks assigned and includes the pros/cons of each of the four start time scenarios is available on the website.

Next steps: School Committee will hold a dedicated workshop on School Start Time on Friday, July 10<sup>th</sup> at 8:00 A.M.

### **3. Policy Subcommittee: Second Reading of Policies**

Susan McCready, Policy subcommittee member, reviewed the changes/updates to the following policies that were presented to the Committee last week.

- **JBB, Equity Policy**
- **JJA, Student Organization Policy**
- **JLCC, Communicable Diseases Policy**
- **JFBB, School Choice Policy**

Tracey Spruce moved that the Andover School Committee vote to adopt policy JBB and updates to policies JJA, JLCC, and JFBB as presented. L. Conoscenti seconded the motion. Roll call: P. Murphy-Y, L. Conoscenti-Y, T. Spruce-Y, S. McCready-Y, S. Scully-Y. Motion approved 5-0.

### **4. School Improvement Plans**

The School Improvement Plans are submitted by level; elementary, middle, and high school with consistent themes based on Andover Public Schools Theory of Action. Goals of the SIC Plans include developing and implementing shared and consistent learning targets that are aligned to the state curriculum standards within mixed learning environments, (remote, hybrid, and face-to-face). Integrating equity-oriented social emotional learning through culturally responsive practices in order to achieve an identity-safe school. Increasing progress monitoring to inform our instructional strategies and to assess student achievement to ensure all students are able to achieve common learning targets.

### **5. Sub-Committee and Liaison Assignments**

Susan McCready moved that the Andover School Committee vote to approve the Sub-Committee and Liaison assignments for FY-21 as presented. The motion was seconded by Paul Murphy. Roll call: L. Conoscenti-Y, T. Spruce-Y, S. McCready-Y, P. Murphy-Y, and S. Scully-Y. Motion passes 5-0.

**6. Timeline for Superintendent FY20 Evaluation**

DESE has updated the timeline for superintendents' evaluations Shannon Scully has proposed the following timeline for Committee consideration:

- Superintendent: Submit End-of-Year Goals and Standards documents to Committee Members by July 6<sup>th</sup>.
- Each Committee Member: Complete Individual Evaluation Report & submit ONLY to the Chair by July 17<sup>th</sup>.
- Chair: Complete Composite Evaluation Report from individual reports & distribute to Committee by July 24<sup>th</sup>.
- Full Committee: Conduct an evaluation in an Open Meeting on July 30 at 7:00 P.M.

The Committee also has an opportunity to invite outgoing Chair, Joel Blumstein, to complete an evaluation of the Superintendent for incorporation into the composite evaluation.

**7. Summer School Committee Meeting Schedule**

Shannon Scully proposed the following dates for summer meetings: Friday, July 10<sup>th</sup> Thursday July 16, Thursday July 30, Wednesday August 19<sup>th</sup> (at 7:30 P.M.) and a tentative meeting for Thursday August 6<sup>th</sup>. The Committee agreed to the meeting dates presented.

**H. Consent Agenda**

**1. Grants/Donations to Andover Public Schools/ Minutes**

a. Grants to be approved: There are seven (7) grants for a total of \$118,715.

Tracey Spruce moved that the Andover School Committee vote to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. Motion seconded by Susan McCready. Roll call: L. Conoscenti-Y, P. Murphy-Y, S. McCready-Y, T. Spruce-Y, S. Scully-Y. Motion carries 5-0.

**III. Adjournment**

At 9:52 P.M. Tracey Spruce moved to adjourn the meeting of June 25, 2020. Susan McCready seconded the motion. Roll call: L. Conoscenti-Y, P. Murphy-Y, S. McCready-Y, T. Spruce-Y, S. Scully-Y. Motion carries 5-0.

Respectfully submitted

Dee DeLorenzo  
Recording Secretary

Documents: FY2021 School Department Budget Hearing  
2020-2021 School Improvement Plans