

Andover School Committee
Minutes of Thursday, November 23, 2020
Virtual Meeting

Present from the School Committee: Shannon Scully, Susan McCready, Tracey Spruce, Paul Murphy, and Lauren Conoscenti.

Others present: Assistant Superintendent Sandra Trach, Assistant Superintendent Sara Stetson, Chief Operations Officer Steve Nembirkow, Director of Communications Nicole Kieser, Human Resources Director Jessica Porter, Principal Robin Wilson, , Doherty Middle School.

I. Regular Meeting

A. Call to Order/Moment of Silence

Chairperson Scully called the Andover School Committee Meeting of November 23, 2020 to order at 7:00 P.M. and opened up the Regular Meeting through a Virtual Meeting Broadcast by Andover TV on Comcast Channel 99, Verizon Channel 43 or via streamed:

www.andovertv.org . **Public Participation via email: scremote@andoverma.us**

The meeting began with a Moment of Silence.

A. Continuing Business

1. Superintendent Search Firm

Shannon Scully reported that three executive search firms responded to the Request for Proposal (RFP) to lead the search for a new permanent School Superintendent. The Selection Committee interviewed two of these firms [Ray and Associates](#) from Cedar Rapids, IA; and [McPherson & Jacobson LLC](#) from Omaha, NE. Shannon talked about the process of choosing a professional service to find a new superintendent to fill the role of Dr. Berman who is leaving at the end of the year. The Committee reviewed a request for proposals (RFP) on October 20th and the dates outlined in the RFP required responses to be submitted by November 12th.

Jessica Porter said there was a quick turn-around of the RFP and, with the expertise of the Town's Purchasing Agent Terry Peznola, the information was made available to the stakeholders in a timely fashion. They are recommending Ray & Associates Inc. who have over 40-years of experience conducting superintendent searches. They have an impressive data base of over 3,500 candidates and we will have a dedicated team of three of their associates for the Andover search. There were a small handful of negative reviews but when questioned, they were very open and honest and answered all of our questions. The cost of their services is \$23,000 for a full and complete process. A copy of the proposal was provided to the School Committee earlier today for their review.

Laura Conoscenti was very impressed with their experience in holding community forums, how they gather the perspective of the community, and their 40 years of experience. It was clear that the team had worked together before and they were very impressive. Steve Nembirkow said they narrowed the decision down to two capable firms with Ray Associates coming out on top. Robin Wilson added that what was very impressive was not only their depth of experience, but also their commitment to this being our search and allowing us to create the parameters for Andover.

Shannon was concerned with their location and asked questions on how they would conduct recruiting. As a team, they encourage an engagement model with the community and to take the time to make sure they hear from a number of various groups. They have conducted thousands of searches; not all went perfectly. Shannon asked them 'what happened' and why there were some negative press reports. Their transparency was very impressive and they talked about a change in leadership that occurred in 2013.

Paul Murphy thanked everyone for the work in selecting and digging into the company's background. He likes that they are not a firm within Massachusetts. This process will move very quickly. We will be in important feedback groups in December, so please don't hesitate to jump in when asked.

Tracey Spruce asked if they offered any ideas or approaches, i.e. task forces, surveys, etc. Their methodology would be to setup remote meetings and have conversations with particular groups to understand the qualities, characteristics, and leadership style of the superintendent we are seeking. They will use the themes that emerge to help guide the search as well. Ray and Associates is ready to begin on December 1, 2020, if the contract is in place.

Susan McCready asked for clarification on contract pricing and start date. She also confirmed that Andover will have direct input to the process with guidance and recommendations from Ray and Associates as needed.

The School Committee agreed that they have enough information and feel confident with this decision and thanked everyone for their time in putting this together.

Paul Murphy moved that the Andover School Committee vote to authorize the Town Purchasing Department to enter into negotiations on the Committee's behalf with Ray and Associates for the Executive Search Services described in the October 2020 "Superintendent Search for Andover Public Schools" RFP. The motion was seconded by Susan McCready. Roll call: T. Spruce-Y, P. Murphy-Y, S. McCready-Y, L. Conoscenti-Y, S. Scully-Y. Motion passes: 5-0

II. **Adjournment**

At 7:25 P.M. Lauren Conoscenti moved to adjourn the meeting of Monday, November 23, 2020. The motion was seconded by Paul Murphy. Roll call: T. Spruce-Y, L. Conoscenti-Y, P. Murphy-Y, S. McCready-Y, S. Scully-Y. Motion passes: 5-0

Respectfully submitted,
Dee DeLorenzo
Recording Secretary