

Andover School Committee
Minutes of Thursday, January 21, 2021
Virtual Meeting

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

Others participating: Interim Superintendent Dr. Claudia Bach, Assistant Superintendents Sandra Trach, Sara Stetson, Chief Operations Officer Stephen Nembirkow, Director of Communications Nicole Kieser, Director of Innovation Stephen Chinosi, and AHS School Liaison Jeffrey Connors.

I. Open Session/Call to Order

A. Call to Order/Moment of Silence

Chairperson Scully called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM and the Committee immediately voted to meet in Executive Session. The Regular SC Meeting will be broadcast by Andover TV and on Comcast Channel 99, Verizon Channel 43 or live streamed: www.andovertv.org. Public Participation: scremote@andoverma.us

II. Executive Session

Susan McCready moved to meet in Executive Session pursuant to G.L. chapter 30A, section 21(a), purpose (3) to discuss strategy with respect to bargaining with union personnel, namely the Andover Education Association (AEA) Unit A and Instructional Assistants because an open session may have a detrimental effect on the litigating position of the Committee. The Committee will reconvene in regular session at approximately 7:00 PM. Motion seconded by Paul Murphy. Roll call: L. Conoscenti-Y, T. Spruce-Y, L. Conoscenti-Y, S. McCready-Y, S. Scully-Y. Motion passes 5-0.

III. Regular Meeting Resumes 7:08 P.M.

The meeting began with a Moment of Silence.

Recognitions/Communications

Dr. Bach recognized that APS students who participated in Service Day on Martin Luther King Day. The AHS Student Government invited Claudia to meet with them to discuss ideas on how to improve communications with students and how students at the high school level can engage with all of the students in the District. Claudia has begun to engage parents in participation for the reopening the schools via Goggle Meets.

Sara Stetson announced that Student Services received a \$40,000 grant for Program Improvement and will be using it to look at students with autism.

Sandy Trach reminded families that there is no school on Wednesday, January 27th as teachers participate in a full-day of professional development. DESE sent out tentative MCAS dates which will be posted on the APS website.

Thank you to Jen Pieroni, Dr. Jorge Allen, and the Andover Police Department on receiving \$55,000 for a Hate Crime protocol that will be shared between the schools and the Town.

Lauren Conoscenti encouraged everyone to attend the feedback sessions with Ray & Associates for the superintendent search. Comments will be helpful to the School Committee as they move to the next phase of the search. There are a series of links to sessions on the APS website.

As the SC Liaison to WMS, Susan McCready was invited to the West Middle School Cultural Climate Committee parent talk and Anti-Hate Speech presentation. WMS teachers, Emily Thompson, Laura Ferriero, Lauren Hayes, and Kayley Pettoruto, walked through a presentation that they created and delivered to WMS students. Susan recognized the tremendous work the WMS teachers have been doing for the students. The presentation was very well done.

Shannon Scully encouraged parents to participate in the upcoming Focus Sessions for the Superintendent Search on Friday and Saturday morning.

A. Public Input

Lindsay Murray, 8 Ellsworth Road, and Vice-President of the High Plain Elementary PTO, commended the teachers and administrators at HPE who have worked tirelessly with students through the pandemic. However, this model is failing them and our students and a discussion that needs to be addressed. This model of learning is not adequate for children's social and emotional needs. The risks of continuing to keep our children home are outweighing the benefits. We need to prioritize all of our learners. Most of our children are not ok and as parents we are seeing their daily decline. She is asking for a plan and real action to move forward and to be transparent about the plan. She was impressed and relieved to read the emails from Dr. Bach opening up this discussion. There are many other communities working to make in person learning a true priority.

Susan McCready shared the email comments that came in through screemote. Christina Odessa: looking to understand what is being done today to prepare for the 2021.2022 school year. The second question from Virginia Malmeta: She asked if children will be able to go back to full-time in-person learning if they are vaccinated.

B. Response to Public Input

Responses will be addressed later in the meeting.

C. Education

1. Update on Hybrid and Remote Learning

Claudia has met with school organizations and ACE and is lined up to meet with others to talk about returning students to in-person learning. She will be setting up Google Meets each week to engage with a different audience to hear their solutions and

innovative creative thinking.

Claudia has met with all school principals. Each school has different capabilities and individual ideas will have to be designed for each school and equitable. Some parents want to keep a virtual option available. Claudia will be presenting four possible scenarios for the budget.

Currently, we are at stage 1 and according to the Covid numbers, 7.1% of Andover's population have tested positive and that is over what our Health Dept. feels is safe for us. We have to hold steady where we are right now, we have not begun to see the curve turn. During Stage 2, whenever we can do it, they will enter the plan to re-open as long it is safe to do so. The goal is to get to Stage 3, going back to pre-COVID days.

Sandy Trach reported that parent notifications for the option to switch students from Hybrid/Remote /Remote/Hybrid have been sent out to AHS parents. The response to the requests will be sent to AHS parents by January 27th. The Kindergarten through Grade 5 window to switch will open up on January 25th and parents will be notified by email by February 12th. The opportunity to submit a request to switch for Middle School will be available at the beginning of March.

Sandy announced that Wednesday, January 27th will be a full-day of Professional Development for teachers and recognized Steve Chinosi and his team for the PD opportunities that will be offered. It is going to be a very robust day that will assist in helping to plan and forecast the second half of the year. She also reported that they are taking a look at the elementary level for in-person learning.

Shannon said the School Committee reached out to our State Legislature advocating for what we might need to do to bring more students back into school in Andover, but we feel it might be time to send the list of our needs to the Governor Baker and DESE Commissioner Jeff Riley. In the 4-page letter they summarize a description of how they are challenged by space, staffing availability, and challenges related to transportation. In the letter, there are specific asks of the Governor and DESE to help us bring more kids back into schools. The School Committee members shared their thoughts about the letter and thanked Shannon for putting it together. The members are all willing to sign the letter.

Email from Frank McCall, teacher at Bancroft School: Does the letter seek clarification as to when the vaccine will be provided to teachers and staff. *The letter asks for the vaccine as soon as possible.*

2. Covid Pool Testing

Director of Nursing, Rita Casper reported that the Governor announced on January 8th that they are introducing pool testing and encouraging school systems to get involved. There are a lot of questions on resources, processing, escalating the contact tracing, increasing the current workload and requiring more staff. They are trying to get as much information as possible before making a decision. It is a significant expense for the small

number of people who test positive. Dr. Bach said there is a cost to Pool Testing, even with DESE supplying the kits, and covering the cost of testing for the first six weeks, after which the District would have to pick up the cost.

Rita Casper responded that the Board of Health has put the school nurses at the front of the line to get vaccinated and to then help with giving the vaccine. There are no good processes in place and our local Board of Health is working as quickly as they can to vaccinate our emergency providers and waiting for the vaccine to come in. They are anticipating vaccinating our school staff in March but those who are 75 years or older need to be vaccinated first. On January 15, the MA Department of Health sent out a notification that the flu vaccine is no longer required for students this year.

D. New Business

1. Interim Superintendent Goals – first reading

Dr. Bach submitted her goals to the Committee as a first draft to be discussed at length at the February 4th meeting. Dr. Bach reported on the goal setting activity and action plan which is normally a year-long process with the person being evaluated bringing the evaluation to the evaluator. The goals are in the format provided by DESE. Her overarching goals include assisting in approval of a consensus budget at Town Meeting, assisting with the West EL/Shawsheen Building Project, assisting in negotiations resulting in a successor contract with the AEA, planning with administrators for a return to in-person learning, and support fully and have high expectations for all administrators under her responsibility. There are four performance levels they are graded on and standards and action plans for each goal. Dr. Bach sees this as a living document and the Committee and Administrators should be adding to this.

E. Continuing Business

1. FY22 Revised Preliminary Budget Dev Assumptions & Guidelines

Steve Nembirkow shared information on the few budget assumption changes which included the fees for next year (High School Parking and bus fees), the McKenney-Vento Homeless, State Aid, and SPED. The Circuit Breaker has increased to 75%. Dr. Bach said the document contains possibilities on various school openings that could occur, the budget covers all four of the possibilities.

Susan McCready moved that the Andover School Committee vote to approve the FY-22 Revised Budget Development Assumptions & Guidelines as presented. Motion seconded by Tracey Spruce. Roll call: L. Conoscenti-Y, S. McCready-Y, T. Spruce-Y, P. Murphy-Y, S. Scully-Y. Motion passes: 5-0.

2. FY22 Budget

A vote on the FY-22 Budget number must be taken by the School Committee and submitted to the Town Manager this week. Dr. Bach made her recommendation based on all the financial analysis being up to date.

Preliminary Budget

Personnel	\$75,239,45
General Expense	<u>\$17,353,607</u>
Total:	\$92,593,452
Town Manager’s Budget:	\$92,593,452

This is a level-funded budget and matches the Town Manager’s recommendation. The Committee agrees to being conservative this year and staying with the 3.75% budget increase. Steve Nembirkow said we will be receiving Federal funds for FY-22 ESSER-2 in the amount of \$474,000 for COVID.

Areas of Cost Increase include the following items:

Contract negotiations with 8 units	TBD
Step and Track Changes	\$1,300,000
Legal costs for negotiations and complaint resolution	\$145,000
Utility costs for health and safety measures	\$407,150
Custodial services	\$205,504
Athletics Program	\$109,281
Full-Day Kindergarten	\$306,098
State Aid data is not yet available.	

Shannon would be interested in the costs related to the middle school schedule change and information to support the School Start Time initiative and related costs.

Tracey Spruce moved that the Andover School Committee vote to adopt the Superintendent of Schools’ recommendation for the Preliminary FY-22 Operating Budget in the amount of \$92,593,452; subject to further public input and consideration of other relevant information. This amount would consist of the following: Salaries \$75,239,845 and General Expenses \$17,353,607. Motion seconded by Lauren Conoscenti. Roll call: S. McCready-Y, L. Conoscenti-Y, P. Murphy-Y, T. Spruce-Y, S. Scully-Y. Motion passes 5-0.

3. December Financials

Steve Nembirkow reported that there a balance of \$82,000 in the budget to be used for Special Ed/ Spec Ed Transportation, as well as the salary line due to a function of COVID. All in all, we are in good shape so far.

F. Consent Agenda:

Grants/Donations to District as presented for a total of \$98,848.

DESE Special Ed Grant	\$40,952.00
DESE Hate Crime Prevention	\$55,322,00
Andover Coalition for Education	\$2,500
Lueders	\$75.00

School Committee Minutes of December 3, December 8, December 10, and December 22, 2020 as presented.

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

IV. Adjournment

At 9: 21 P.M. Lauren Conoscenti moved to adjourn the meeting of Thursday, January 21, 2021. Motion seconded by Susan McCready. Roll call: P. Murphy-Y, T. Spruce-Y, L. Conoscenti-Y, S. McCready-Y, S. Scully-Y. Motion passes 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,

*Dee DeLorenzo
Recording Secretary*