

**Andover School Committee  
Minutes of Thursday, June 3, 2021  
Virtual Meeting**

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**Participants from the School Committee:** Chair Shannon Scully, Vice-Chair, Susan McCready, Tracey Spruce, and Lauren Conoscenti. Paul Murphy joined the meeting at 8:24 P.M.

**Others participating:** Claudia Bach, Sandy Trach, Sara Stetson, Nicole Kieser, Jeffrey Connors, AHS Liaison.

I. **Regular Meeting**

**Call to Order/Moment of Silence**

Chairperson Scully called to order the meeting at 5:00 PM and the Committee immediately voted to meet in Executive Session. The Regular School Committee Meeting will be broadcast by Andover TV and on Comcast Channel 99, Verizon Channel 43 or streamed: [www.andovertv.org](http://www.andovertv.org). ***Public Participation via email:*** [scremote@andoverma.us](mailto:scremote@andoverma.us)

II. **Executive Session:**

Susan McCready moved to meet in Executive Session pursuant to G.L. chapter 30A, section 21(a), purpose (2) to discuss strategy with respect to bargaining with non-union personnel and purpose (3) to discuss strategy with respect to bargaining with unionized personnel, namely the Andover Education Association (AEA) Unit A, Andover Assistants' Organization, Occupational and Physical Therapists Association, Educational Secretaries Association and SEIU Local 888 (School Custodians) because an open session may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the Committee. The Committee will reconvene in regular session at approximately 7:00 PM. Motion seconded by Tracey Spruce. Roll call: P. Murphy-Y, T. Spruce-Y, L. Conoscenti-Y, S. McCready-Y, S. Scully-Y. Motion passes 5-0.

III. **Regular Meeting Resumes**

The Chair resumed the Regular Meeting at 7:08 PM. It was Governor Baker's order in changing COVID regulations on distancing which has allowed the School Committee to meet in-person tonight for the first time since March 2020.

A. **Recognitions/Communications**

Dr. Bach congratulated the AHS Class of 2021 who have worked under these extraordinary conditions and will officially graduate on Monday, June 5<sup>th</sup> in the big tent. Congratulations as well to all the other students who are moving up to the next level. Town Meeting will be held on Saturday, June 5<sup>th</sup> and the Warrant Article 15 which is for the design and construction of the West Elem/Shawsheen School Project is on the agenda. The second vote for the School Project will be on June 15<sup>th</sup> at the Ballot Box. Claudia also welcomed back, Nicole Kieser as the School Committee's Communications Director.

Sandy, Congratulations to the ABC Scholars, she enjoyed their celebration and congrats to the ABC Scholarship program, it is inspirational to see what was accomplished again this year. Getting the Title Grants off the ground for summer school for student progress which is by invitation only. They will be reaching out to parents shortly. There are 140 teachers who have signed up for Staff Dev Courses this summer and the two outs Responsive Classroom.

Lauren Conoscenti gave a shout out to the DMS Theatre Program who did an amazing job in their production of the "Defendants" two weeks ago. This weekend, WMS is producing "Freaky Friday" which can be streamed live. Thank you all for making this happen.

Tracey Spruce said Article 15 is for the West Elem/Shawsheen School Building Project and needs 2/3 majority to pass which is why it is very important that people come out and support the project to relieve capacity constraints and provide a new preschool. Article 20 will cost tax payers nothing to move forward with a feasibility study for further options at AHS. Susan McCready said if anyone has any questions, to please reach out to any of the members of the School Committee, and Paula Colby-Clements, Chair of the Building Committee or any of the members of that Committee.

Jeffrey Connors congratulated the graduating Class of 2021.

The Tucker Family Field will be formally dedicated this Sunday at 2:00 PM.

Jess Porter introduced the new Custodial Supervisor, Vernon Jones, who will be overseeing all of the school custodians. Vernon has a great background and skillset. Mr. Jones said that having been in this business for 21 years at other school Districts his motto has been to provide a clean learning environment for all our students and hopes to bring a level of professionalism to this job. The School Committee welcomed Vernon.

#### **B. Public Input**

Jason Liss, 151 Chestnut Street. He has two daughters in Gr 6 and Gr 8 at DMS who have had a phenome year. He has not always agreed with every decision the School Committee has made but appreciates the attention paid to additional sleep time for secondary school students. He is here to speak in favor of later start times.

#### **C. Response to Public Input**

#### **D. Education**

##### **1. Health and Safety Updates – Rita Casper**

Nearing end of year, our number of cases has dramatically reduced but we do have a few scattered cases which is why we need to continue protocols for distancing and masks. DESE still has some guidelines that we have to follow to eliminate the possibility of students not finishing the school year. The Committee thanked Rita for the student vaccination clinics she has organized.

## 2. Resubmission of Field Trip Approval

WHMS Students International Field Trip to France April 14 – 22, 2022 (original submission at SC Meeting on Nov. 21, 2019 for April 15-23, 2021 trip) WHMS faculty member, Zoe Cabaret-Salameh, with the support of Principal, Patrick Bucco would like to provide an opportunity for approximately 20 students in 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades to France. April 14-22, 2022.

Tracey Spruce moved that the Andover School Committee vote to approve the proposed extracurricular trip for Wood Hill Middle School Students to France on April 14-22, 2022 as presented and in accordance with the provisions set forth in the Andover School Committee Policy entitled “APS School-sponsored Trip and Student Travel Policy”. The motion was seconded by Susan McCready and voted 4-0 to approve.

## **B. New Business**

### 1. MOA with Andover Assistants Organization

The Andover Assistants in their Collective Bargaining Agreement have a situation in which because of a no school day at West Elementary in March, they are being asked to work an additional day at the end of the School year (June 17), which was explained by the Superintendent and the reason behind the Memorandum of Agreement for that unit to offer an additional day at their hourly rate.

Lauren Conoscenti moved that the Andover School Committee vote to approve the Memorandum of Agreement with the Andover Assistants Organization as presented and to authorize the Chair to sign the Agreement on behalf of the Committee. Motion seconded by Susan McCready and voted 4-0 to approve.

## **E. Continuing Business**

### 1. School Start Time

Shannon Scully provided a recap of the Committee’s previous conversation of last week on school start time (information on School Start Time can be found on the School Committee’s webpage) and the initiative from the work that began three years’s ago to the current status of the initiative today. We were able to achieve the start time change of 8:15 AM because we were not able to offer transportation to AHS students during the pandemic. What do we do with the current 8:15 AM start time at AHS? Does it remain at 8:15 AM or not, and how does that effect other levels going forward when transportation is offered and everyone has returned to im-person learning.

Jeffrey Connor provided information on the comments received from students at AHS in response to a survey that was sent out to as many students as possible. Due to time constraints, they were not able to send it out in a flash email. Although Student Government doesn’t have an official opinion, they did get results from almost 200 students from every level. The response showed about 75% of the students are in support of the 8:15 AM start time and 25% are in support of returning to the 7:45 AM start time. Jeffrey consolidated all

of the comments and opinions received. The survey data was sent to the School Committee which Shannon put in the Committee's Dropbox. The Committee talked about the student comments that additional sleep time made them feel more rested, more engaged and energized.

The Committee discussed at great length the impact of moving the Middle School start time to 8:15 AM and the Elementary start time to 9:00 AM and discussed the changes with Cindy Button, Transportation Director. Some of the larger themes that emerged included having the MS and HS busses drop off students 15 minutes earlier; the more challenging part is in the afternoon where the end time would be 2:15 PM at AHS and the Middle Schools and 3:30 PM at the elementary level.

The 40-minutes between afternoon tiers is what Andover worked under for decades. One theme of the conversation is that you never really know who will be taking the bus. The largest downside is having B runs again. They explored the impact of private schools' bus runs and if some adjustments that could be made there. Cindy Button is working on how to create a more balanced situation and how that might be achieved.

They also discussed making additional investments in transportation. Having a number of apartment complexes in various districts around Andover, we have never invested in supporting more busses to support multi-family dwellings. Next year, we should explore doing some investment there.

Tracey Spruce wonders if there is any possibility of taking the B runs out of the equation, and if not at least spread that burden across the schools. She agreed that we need to make an investment in more busses going forward but it is challenging to find bus drivers. We have an obligation to provide transportation to our students, we should look to see if we have provided equivalent service to our public-school students as we do for the private school students. Also, gather data on where elementary kids go at the end of the day (possibly help to eliminate B runs). The key takeaway is the 8:15 AM start time for the High School and Middle School and the 9:00 AM start time for students at the Elementary level.

Next steps: Given the length of time since we formally solicited feedback, and the renewed interest in the science and focus on mental health, the Committee discussed holding more SC Informal Forums and sending out another survey with a more specific framework on what the start time would be for the three levels and to include students and staff, that might provide new perspectives. The more specific we are, the more specific the feedback will be.

## 2. Town Meeting Warrant Article Recommendations:

Article 26 Establish New Revolving Fund, Student Technology Rental

Susan McCready moved to recommend approval of WA 26-Establish New Revolving Fund, Student Technology Rental. Motion seconded by Lauren Conoscenti. Motion passes 5-0.

**F. Consent Agenda**

1. Grants/Donations to District; - Grants/Donations
2. Minutes from School Committee Meetings: March 25, 2021.

Lauren Conoscenti moved that the Andover School Committee vote to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. The motion was seconded by Susan McCready. Motion passes 5-0.

**G. Adjournment**

At 8:32 P.M. Tracey Spruce moved to adjourn from the School Committee meeting of June 3, 2021. The motion was seconded by Lauren Conoscenti. Motion passes 5-0.

*Respectfully submitted,  
Dee DeLorenzo  
Recording Secretary*