

Andover School Committee
Regular Meeting of October 21, 2010
School Administration Building - School Committee Room

Members in Attendance: Chair Dennis Forgue, Annie Gilbert, Richard Collins, David Birnbach and Paula Colby-Clements

Others in Attendance: Dr. Marinel McGrath, Superintendent, Dr. Susan M. Nicholson, Assistant Superintendent, Jared Rosen, AHS Liaison.

I. Regular Meeting

A. Call to Order

Chair Dennis Forgue opened the meeting at 7:15 P.M.

B. Opening Ceremonies

Mr. Collins asked for a moment of silence followed by the Pledge of Allegiance led by High Plain Elementary Students Aine Stuart (Gr K) and her sister, Kaleigh Stuart (Gr 4) followed by a musical piece performed by Grade 5 students Tommy Gallagher, Rich Hart, Sean Diel and Julie Carzo and accompanied by Music Teachers Julie Diel and Martha Giguere.

C. Recognition

Dr. McGrath introduced and welcomed Interim Business Manager, Peter DeRoeve and Interim High School Principal, Dr. Tom Sharkey. Dr. McGrath shared the qualifications and extensive experience of both Mr. DeRoeve and Dr. Sharkey in her remarks.

D. Citizen Input

Bob Willard, 76 Tewksbury Street, distributed copies of two items he requests the School Committee consider. The first item concerns the upcoming election of November 2nd and the ballot questions that will have an impact on the state's budget, which if passed, the ballot questions will create a large budget deficit for the State, resulting in a loss of local aid to cities and towns. The second item relates to the announcement from the Social Security Administration that there will be no increase for the second year in a row in Social Security payments to retirees. If SSA is not increased, he recommends there be no cost of living increases for school and town contracts for the entire three year term of the contracts. Last year the AEA received a 3.5% increase and seniors received a zero increase. He has great respect for Andover teachers, but fairness dictates hardships be felt equally.

E. Education

1. Bancroft School Project Update

Dr. McGrath reported that a Triboard Meeting held on October 12th provided a community public input session on the progress of the building project. The Special Town Meeting for approval of the project will be held on December 6th and if passed, a Special Town Meeting to vote on the debt-exclusion will be held on January 25, 2011. Residents should be aware that this is a two-part process.

A meeting with MSBA on Wednesday, October 20th to review the Schematic Design provided an opportunity to respond to questions, and to provide more knowledge for their November 16th decision. They will meet with MSBA next week to review financials, educational components, and phasing in of the project. On-going meetings will be scheduled with the Bancroft Community and general public to explain the project and process. The School Building Committee met today to discuss ideas on educating the public; the SBC has been quite busy and will continue to be for the upcoming months.

On September 24th a Statement of Interest for the West Middle School roof and gymnasium window repairs listed on the CIP Plan was submitted to MSBA. MSBA visited West Middle for an inspection of the roof this week, and we will be notified in a few weeks if the project will go forward in the reimbursement process.

Steve Fink, 26 Bateson Drive, said the Triboard Meeting / Public Information Session was an amazing meeting; the plan for the Bancroft School Project has been done with great physical care and fiscal thought. He is impressed with the current "green" themes included in the project and the design of the school. The reaction by the Downtown Merchants to the "Being Green Made Easy" event held Friday could be equated to a barn-raiser in terms of getting the community as a whole out to vote on this project. He salutes the School Building Committee and Dr. McGrath on the School Building process.

Chairman Forgue remarked that the pre-school classrooms which were originally addressed in the building process but removed when it was determined that the Bancroft site could not sustain a building large enough to absorb an additional 200 students plus the Pre-K population. Their next mission will be to begin discussions on the future of Pre-K.

Paula Colby-Clements praised the member of the School Building Committee and especially Annie Gilbert for their dynamic presentations.

Chairman Forgue said the reimbursement from MSBA will be in the 40% range and if it does not pass in December and/or January, we will have to go back to the drawing board and most likely incur price increases.

2. October 1 210 Enrollment

Dr. McGrath provided a presentation on the October 1 Enrollment Chart which was distributed to all members. The October 1 enrollment figures set the number used for the 2010-2011 school year. The enrollment chart includes students in out-of-district placements by grade/level as they are included in the October 1st enrollment numbers reported to the State. There are 89 students receiving education out-of-district. The enrollment numbers reveal a decrease of 16 students in our elementary student populations for a total of 2,867 elementary students; an increase of 23 students in Middle School for a total of 1,509 students; and an increase of 2 students at AHS for a total of 1,802 students. Total School Enrollment is 6,178 students. Overall, there is an increase of 9 students over last year's enrollment. Paula Colby-Clements noted that the elementary classes are within recommended class size and requested detailed data on the classroom sizes at AHS. Dr. McGrath expects to have the information on AHS class sizes available for the November 4th School Committee Meeting. Chairman Forgue said the special education data is helpful and noted that only ten elementary students are receiving out-of-district education which is a compliment to the District's program development over the last few years. Dr. McGrath noted that in 15% of the school population were identified as special education in 2009-2010 and this year the special education population is at 14.8%.

Tom Deso, 81 High Street, thanked the Superintendent for including the OUD information. The report is more transparent with this information included, and the lower special education numbers a direct result of the in-district programs developed.

Chairman Forgue reported that due to an unexpected increase in retirements and leave of absences, only one elementary teacher was lost instead of the six expected. Teacher lay-offs had more of an impact at the high school. He cautioned that the return of the teachers on leave will have a direct impact on the budget for 2012 because of their higher salary range.

F. Old Business

1. Technology Pinpoint Committee

Dr. Nicholson recognized the Technology Pinpoint Committee and the Revenue Generating Committee, both comprised of an outstanding group of community people committed to the Strategic Plan initiative, who worked well together and whose roles extended far beyond the original charge. On behalf of the School Department she thanked the members for their great work and time committed to the project.

Ray Tode, Director of Technology and Information Systems and members of the IT Committee provided a report on the findings of the Technology Pinpoint Committee. The theme of their presentation is "Saying Yes to

Learning”, and their primary goal is to focus on the academic component of integrating technology into the curriculum as part of the overall Strategic Plan. He spoke about raising the bar and bridging the gap between the present and the future and the challenges before them, especially with reduced budgets. Technology costs have to be reduced and the focus shifted to relying less on purchased software/hardware and more on leveraging student devices where appropriate. Costs can be managed through the use of cloud computing which will allow flexibility to integrate the curriculum into the classroom environment. Consistent and sustained training through professional development is necessary to be successful. Securing access for everyone everywhere, being device independent and development of the infrastructure are vital components to success in technology. Bandwidths have to grow to accommodate home/school connections with equitable access being critical. Providing enhanced learning for all through global perspectives, problem solving using 21st Century skills and communication are key. Challenges faced: less than 50% of teachers are proficient or advanced in technology skills and the Technology staffing needs to increase to ensure the success of technology in the schools. Actions for maximum impact on what to focus on first and what to get rid of were discussed. Going forward the technology plan will be integrated into the Strategic Plan and action plans rolled out.

F. New Business

1. Solar Panels

Chairman Forgue explained that tonight’s presentation on solar panels is an information session only and no action will be taken. The opportunity to develop solar farms on Town/School property is a complex issue, and all aspects will be investigated.

Director of Planning, Paul Materazzo and Gregory Sebasky, Andover Green Advisory Board gave a presentation on the possible installation of solar panels on school land at Sanborn School, one of four potential sites identified for solar panels. Documents provided included a memo to Chairman Forgue on Solar Farms and pictures of the areas considered for installation at Sanborn School.

Mr. Materazzo said the solar panels would be ground mounted and explained how a power purchase agreement (PPA) would provide financial, environmental, and educational benefits. They would like to have the opportunity to do a feasibility study to pursue information relative to this initiative. They are prepared to move forward with two other Town sites, and also prepared to move forward with the Sanborn site upon approval by the School Committee. Dr. McGrath noted that monies received would go directly to the Town General Fund and not to the School Department. The School Committee agreed to schedule a work session at a later date to further discuss the proposal.

2. School Travel Policy

Superintendent McGrath said a School Sponsored Travel Policy Committee has been formed and members include: School Committee members Paula Colby-Clements and David Birnbach; APS Teachers-John Givens, and Brian Shea; Parents – Cyndi Weber and Barbara Waite; Principals – Patrick Bucco, Steve Murray and Assistant Principal Marilyn Jordan. The committee will meet to review the policies and present them to the School Councils, after which they will come forward to the School Committee for two readings and a vote.

G. Consent Agenda

1. Warrant Superintendent McGrath said the warrant is in order and gave an explanation of the financial report.
2. Field Trip WHMS Outing Club, Grades 6, 7, 8 on October 28 to Canobie Lake Park
3. Field Trip AHS Choral Group, Grades 9-12 on December 4th to Rockingham Mall, Salem, N.H.
4. Minutes: Regular Meeting Minutes of September 16, September 23, and School Committee Workshop Minutes of September 30, 2010

On a motion by Richard Collins with a second by Paula Colby-Clements, it was unanimously voted to approve the Consent Agenda as presented.

H. Adjournment

On a motion by Paula-Colby Clements with a second by Richard Collins, it was unanimously voted to adjourn the Regular Session at 9:28 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Dee DeLorenzo, Recorder

Documents:

October 1 2010 Enrollment Chart

Memo on Solar Farm and pictures of Sanborn School area

Items to Consider from Bob Willard

Minutes of September 16, September 23, and September 30, 2010