

Andover School Committee
Regular Meeting of January 13, 2011
School Administration Building - School Committee Room

Members in Attendance: Chair Dennis Forgue, Annie Gilbert, Richard J. Collins, David Birnbach and Paula Colby-Clements
Others in Attendance: Dr. Marinel McGrath, Superintendent, Peter DeRoeve, Interim Business Manager, Jared Rosen, AHS Liaison

I. Regular Meeting

A. Call to Order

The Regular Meeting of the School Committee was opened at 7:04 P.M. by Chairman Forgue.

B. Opening Ceremonies

Mr. Collins asked for a moment of silence followed by the Pledge of Allegiance led by Shawsheen Students, Sam Murray (Grade 2), and Max Murray (Kindergarten). Mr. Collins presented Sam and Max with a Certificate of Appreciation on behalf of the School Committee.

C. Recognition

Superintendent McGrath recognized all those that were instrumental in preparing our schools to re-open after the snowstorm this week. Through the tremendous efforts of the Town Manager, Buzz, Stapczynski, Highway Supervisor Chris Cronin, Kevin Hale, Interim DPW Director Joe Piantedosi and his team, the school custodians, Ray Tode in Technology, and Mary Lou Walsh, Transportation Coordinator, who all worked collaboratively to prepare our schools, clear roads, and communicate information, we were able to open school today. Dr. McGrath realizes the sidewalks were an issue; although the plan was that they would be ready. Due to operational difficulties during the night, there was a delay in clearing the sidewalks; in the future, should difficulties arise and a change to the plan needed, the Highway Supervisor will contact Dr. McGrath to apprise her of the situation. Parents who feel it is unsafe for their children to go to school have the option to keep their children home and they will not be marked absent as long as the parent calls the school.

The Town Manager and Highway Supervisor Chris Cronin spoke about snow removal and explained there is a systematic approach to clearing the roads and standard operating procedures to follow for every storm situation. A copy of the DPW Snow & Ice Maintenance Standard Operating Procedures was provided to the School Committee and School Administrators. Mr. Cronin spoke about the challenges faced in plowing sidewalks from the storm this week - with 20+” of heavy wet snow it can take up to three days to clear all sidewalks. Priority areas are identified (school locations) and secondary sidewalks cleared after that. David Birnbach said the quantity and quality of work done is amazing compared to the amount of snow from the storm. The Town Manager asked residents to clear sidewalks in front of their homes and, if they can, clear areas around fire hydrants.

Dr. McGrath updated the Committee on an incident at AHS this morning. The police were called in to investigate and determined the incident did not rise to the level of concern where evacuation of the building was necessary. Interim Principal Tom Sharkey sent an Alertnow message to parents. Through the use of video cameras, they believe the individuals involved will be identified.

Dr. McGrath announced that Bancroft School, which was closed for an additional snow day to complete removal of the snow on the roof, will re-open on Friday, January 14th; the building is fine to be occupied.

D. Citizen Input

A plethora of teachers from the Andover Teachers Association were present at tonight’s meeting. Four teachers came forward as representatives of the AEA to share the thoughts of many. Jen Maher, AHS, reminded the School Committee that they are the protectors of the Andover Public Schools, which is an exceptional school system. The teachers’ role is to deliver education, and they are able to do so knowing the School Committee and Administration realize the importance of their job. Teachers are in the 4th month of the school year without a contract; they are doing their part, the School Committee needs to do theirs.

Jane Kish, Sanborn Elementary School, stated that teachers deserve a fair and just contract. Kathleen Crowley of West Middle School, who is also tax payer, said Andover is a wonderful school system with teachers who give their best every day. Andover teachers are a collaborative group who are committed to the children of Andover, and teachers would appreciate ratification of their contract. Matthew Bach, AHS, said teachers are here tonight in the spirit of collaboration; however, they feel that over this past year the spirit of collaboration between teachers and the School Committee has been lacking. Teachers were not involved in the Superintendent search process last spring, they were not asked to

participate in the Strategic Plan process, and feel contract negotiations were prematurely aborted. They would like the School Committee to return to the negotiation table with them. The teacher contingent left after Mr. Bach's remarks. There was no response from the School Committee or Administration.

E. Education

1. Bancroft School Building Project Update

Annie Gilbert updated the Committee on the status of the Bancroft School Project stating that a subcommittee of the School Building Committee (SBC) is reviewing submissions of request for qualifications for the Manager at Risk position should the Debt Exclusion be approved at Town Meeting on Tuesday, January 25th. Proponents of the project continue to reach out and provide information to the community on the need for a new Bancroft School. Dr. McGrath commented on the West Middle School Roof Project which is moving forward. She and Peter DeRoeve had a preliminary meeting with Interim Plant & Facilities Director Joe Piantedosi and his team to discuss the design selection process and the owner's project manager position. There are two interviews scheduled for next Friday with three companies recommended by MSBA.

F. New Business

1. Travel Policy-First Reading

A nine member committee has worked diligently over the past several months to review and provide input to the draft of the School Sponsored Student Travel Policy. The policy was presented to the middle and high school councils, and reviewed by school counsel. Three members of the Committee present this evening, West Middle School Principal Steve Murray, AHS teacher Brian Shea, and parent Barbara Wait talked about the process of the review and procedures revised. The policy is now more consistent, and more of the pre-planning information will be shared, dispersed and approved with School Administration and the School Committee, Parent Guidelines are well thought out eliminating concerns and responses to "what if's", the post report has been improved, and the policy clearly defines the role of what a chaperone is. This was a great opportunity for the two levels (middle and high school) to work collaboratively in discussing and sharing ideas about the policy.

Dr. McGrath explained that approval of field trips that are just over the state lines would not be brought before the School Committee for approval but instead she would be approving them. This would include fields trips such as; outdoor education trips, trips to Canobie Lake Park, and trips for athletic and academic teams.

As this is the first reading of the Travel Policy, no vote is required at this time. The Policy will be put on the APS Website for a public comment period from January 13 to January 21st. The School Committee will vote on the Policy at the January 27th meeting and it will include any changes derived from the Public Comment Period. Upon approval, the Policy will be distributed to all schools, made available on the website with a copy of the Policy available at each school office and the APS School Administration Offices. Notification will be sent to parents/guardians through school newsletters.

2. FY-12 Budget Assumptions, Guidelines, and Timeline

Dr. McGrath provided a review of the Budget Assumptions, Guidelines and Timeline for FY-2012 stating that the information has been reviewed with the Leadership Team and school building principals. The budget was built on five priorities: (1) to align with the District's mission, value and goals; (2) the need for highly qualified staff teaching within the established class size policy; (3) ongoing refinement of curriculum, instruction and assessment; (4) the need to develop innovative programs and maintain educational resources and technology; and (5) provide infrastructure and school facilities that support student learning and meet APS goals.

The budget was developed with certain assumptions and priorities; to meet all federal, state, and local mandates, meet fixed costs, contractual obligations, mandated programs, and high school accreditation standards. Federal and State Program Mandates include Special Education IDEA, No Child Left Behind, English Language Learners, Massachusetts Education Reform Act of 1983, and the Anti-bullying Act of 2010, as well as the N.E. Association of Secondary School requirements.

Budget Goals for FY-12 include continuing the current level of services with the understanding that the School Committee will consider equal cost substitutions in the budget recommended with all assumptions clearly defined, ensuring all professional staffing guidelines, legal mandates, and accreditation agencies requirements are met, and recommend improvements from the Strategic Plan that will advance the quality of teaching and learning. Budget goals include identifying cost effective alternatives for services and to maintain capital assets in order to support the instructional program, protect physical assets, and ensure the health and safety of students and staff.

Dr. McGrath explained the two levels of funding request being proposed to the School Committee; Base Budget requests and Strategic Plan Improvement Budget requests. The Base Budget requests include the total FY-12 budget appropriation, mandated programs and requirements, collective bargaining increases, step and longevity increases as well as increases under other existing contracts, and significant inflationary or enrollment increases for student supplies, additional teachers to maintain class size policy, etc. Strategic Plan Improvement Budget requests are included in the base budget and are items for investment in improved services and programs that reflects the need to grow and improve the schools consistent with the APS mission, values and goals as well as the high expectations of the Andover Community.

Expenditures include staff and programming requirements, textbook replacements, instructional supplies, special instructional requests, and technology and student empowerment curricula. The budget includes revenue anticipated from user fees for athletics, extra-curricular activities, bus transportation, and parking fees at AHS. The budget expense for contractual obligations of transportation for regular education and special education students, and anticipated salary projections were also presented. Peter DeRoeve explained the fixed costs for utilities, and the three types of maintenance expenses: capital improvements projects, CIP items, and annual maintenance expense.

A review of revenue showed that State Aid for FY-12 could be reduced by 5% of the amount received for FY-11. Peter DeRoeve explained the request for a change in the tuition costs for Early Childhood Pre-school Program, and Full Day Kindergarten. It is recommended the Pre-school tuition be increased by \$100.00 and the Full Day Kindergarten by \$250.00.

Dr. McGrath stated the budget timeline includes a preliminary budget presentation on either February 10 or 17th followed by a budget workshop in late February or March. In March the School Budget will be presented to the Finance Committee and Board of Selectmen at a Tri-Board Meeting. Also in March, the School Committee will hold a Public Hearing on the budget, and they will meet again to vote on the budget to be presented for the April Town Meeting.

Chairman Fogue said all additional budget meetings and workshops will be posted and the public is welcome to attend. Some meetings will not be televised but minutes will be taken.

Motion: Annie Gilbert motioned the Andover School Committee vote to approve the FY-12 Budget Assumptions, Guidelines, and Timeline as presented and to ask the Superintendent to develop the Preliminary FY-12 Budget to reflect the assumptions and guidelines. The motion was seconded by Paula Colby-Clements and voted 4-0 to approve. Mr. Collins was not in the room at the time of the vote.

3. FY-11 English Language Learner (ELL) and Guidance Positions

Dr. McGrath explained the request for additional ELL support and the restoration of the 0.4 High School Guidance counselor. Funds to cover the positions to the end of the year will hopefully be paid for through the jobs money and any funds remaining at the end of the year.

Motion: Annie Gilbert motioned for the Andover School Committee vote to approve the addition of 1.9 teaching positions and 0.43 instructional assistant position for the English Language Learner Program, and a 0.4 High School Guidance Position for an approximate total cost of \$80,000 in the FY-11 Operating Budget. The motion was seconded by Paula Colby-Clements and voted 5-0 to approve.

F. Consent Agenda

1. Minutes – Amended Regular Meeting Minutes of December 9, 2010
2. Minutes – Workshop Meeting Minutes of December 16, 2010
3. Warrants: Peter DeRoeve said the Warrants are in order.

On a motion by Annie Gilbert with a second by Richard Collins, it was voted 5-0 to approve the Consent Agenda items.

G. Adjournment

At 9:35 P.M. on a motion by Paula-Colby Clements with a second by Richard Collins, it was voted 5-0 to adjourn.

Respectfully submitted,
Dee DeLorenzo, Recorder

Documents:

Draft of School Sponsored Trips and Student Travel Policy
Powerpoint Presentation of FY-12 Budget Goals, Assumptions and Timeline
Town of Andover – Snow and Ice Maintenance Standard Operating Procedures