

**Andover School Committee**  
**Regular Meeting of March 17, 2011**  
**School Administration Building - School Committee Room**

**Members in Attendance:** Chair Dennis Forgue, Annie Gilbert, Richard J. Collins, David Birnbach, Paula Colby-Clements, and AHS Liaison Jared Rosen

**Others in Attendance:** Dr. Marinel McGrath, Superintendent, Dr. Susan M. Nicholson, Assistant Superintendent, Peter DeRoeve, Interim Business Manager

**I. Regular Meeting**

**A. Call to Order**

The Regular Meeting of the School Committee was opened at 7:07 P.M. by Chairman Forgue.

**B. Opening Ceremonies**

Mr. Collins led the meeting in a moment of silence followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

**C. Recognition**

Dr. McGrath congratulated the AHS Girls' Basketball Team on moving forward in tournament play to the State Championship on Saturday, March 19<sup>th</sup> at the Worcester Centrum. She also recognized the West Elementary students and staff, especially Principal Roos, on the success of the 16<sup>th</sup> West Elementary Readers and Writers Conference.

Mr. Collins recognized Arthur Iworsley, Physical Education Teacher at West Elementary School who was chosen as the Massachusetts Physical Education Teacher of the Year. Mr. Iworsley is retiring this year after forty-three teaching years in Andover.

**D. Citizen Input**

Representatives of the Andover Vocal Music Association along with a contingent of students presented their concerns relative to the reduction of the .2 Music Position at AHS. The representatives want to know how they as an organization can help convince the Town of the importance of this program to students, and if there is an alternative to this decision. Parents and students spoke about the positive impact Mr. Mercer has had on the program and students.

Dr. McGrath stated that all reductions are painful and although the position is being reduced by .2, the program is not being cut; as reductions are made mechanisms in the teacher contract relative to seniority within the ranks of the Andover teachers fall into play. The School Committee is working with the other Boards to achieve what we need for students in our community.

Annie Gilbert said the Vocal Music Association has done a great job but going forward APS needs to find a different way of delivering programs that can be sustained. Dr. McGrath reminded everyone that at this point, the budget being presented is a proposed budget. She also suggested they consider forming a task force to look at the future of the Art & Music Department and investigate ideas on how to make a more robust program before the next budget cycle.

**E. Old Business**

**1. Public Hearing: FY-12 Proposed Budget**

Dr. McGrath presented the Andover Public Schools Proposed Budget for FY-12. She began the presentation with a review of the very important Vision and Mission Statements which reflect the values of the community and the heart and soul of what citizens expect.

APS Vision: The vision for the Andover Public Schools is to be a model public school district known for excellence, resourcefulness, and continuous improvement. APS Mission: The mission of the Andover Public Schools, in partnership with the community, is to inspire students and ensure that they develop the knowledge, skills, and qualities required to be life-long learners, thinkers, and contributors in a diverse and global society.

Goals:

Goal 1: To educate students to experience schools as an intellectual adventure, coming to understand core knowledge and skills as they develop habits of mind. To develop critical and creative thinking, collaborative problem-solving, powerful means of communication, and empathy, cultural awareness and global understanding.

Goal 2: Expand beyond traditional school boundaries, using technology, innovative structures-schedules, and links with the larger community.

Goal 3: To active recognition as a model school district.

Goal 4: To recruit, retrain and develop a diverse cadre of the highest quality teaching personnel, staff, and administrators.

Goal 5: To establish efficient systems for development, allocation, and alignment of resources to support the District's vision, mission, and goals.

The challenge for Andover Public Schools is to provide educational excellence while being fiscally prudent. It is a delicate balance.

As of March 3, the 2012 Preliminary Budget numbers shown are: Salary \$51,146,674 and Expenses \$14,562,665, totaling \$65,709,339; a 7.5% budget increase over FY-2011. The increase includes FY-12 salary increases (contractual)of \$1,168,635, expense increases of \$1,255,851, salary adjustments \$994,945, and Administrative requests to support the APS Vision, Mission, and Goals in the amount of \$1,148,970, for a total change to the base budget in the amount of \$4,568,401 (\$4.5M) less .075% available increase \$(464,163) for a projected FY-12 projected budget gap of \$4,104,238. As of March 10, additional funds of \$1,497,700 were received from the Town from health insurance savings and a reduction in the CIP, resulting in a new projected budget gap of \$3,070,701.

The School Committee directed the Administration to project a further reduction of \$1.1M in budget cuts. The changes brought forward include reductions of \$1,264,496 at all three levels and a reduction of \$944,945 in salary adjustments, but the addition of 4.0 FTE Elementary Specialists for \$240,000 (to cover contracted planning time) and for a new projected budget gap of \$1,061.865. Dr. McGrath explained the changes being presented at the Elementary, Middle, and High School and the impact each reduction will have. The FY-12 Proposed Budget is available on the school website at [www.aps1.net](http://www.aps1.net).

Several parents voiced their concern on the proposed reduction of the eight (8) Special Education Teachers at Andover High School to be replaced with Instructional Assistants. They questioned supervision and compliance issues that would result by supplanting Special Education Teachers with Instructional Assistants, the level of service and how curriculum and instruction would be delivered,

differentiated instruction, and the inclusion model. Parents questioned if Instructional Assistants would have the same skills as certified Special Education Teachers, and expressed concern that the removal of Special Education Teachers could increase the case load of social workers, and cause parents to send their children to out-of-district schools further increasing the Special Education budget. The Vision Statement does not match with the changes being proposed for the high school. Parents are asking the School Committee to advocate for students.

It was asked how many students are on IEP's and the number of certified Special Ed Teachers at the High School. *There are 245-250 students with IEP's and 22 Special Education Teachers.*

Dr. Sharkey, Interim Principal at AHS spoke to their concerns explaining they are adopting a model many other school systems use, and moving in a new direction with a change in the modification of the inclusion model to have 10-11 students per class with an Education Plan. Standard classes will be maintained, as will assisted and support studies with Special Education Teachers. There are no surpluses or fat in the budget, this option was the only viable option available. It is a diminishment in the program, one of which has been exceptional. Dr. McGrath said most Instructional Assistants have a teaching degree, and they will work with the Regular Education Teachers, Principal, and Special Education Program Heads to look at the applications closely.

John Zipeto, 14 Canterbury Street remembers the Special Education Budget being a part of the fixed costs for the Town, and the allocation to the schools different. Why has the School Committee not pursued returning to this model? Chairman Forgue said Out-of-District costs were relegated as a fixed cost, but a decision was made about four years ago to change that and now we are left with the impact of that decision.

Dr. McGrath stated there are a set amount of dollars for education at this point in time, and we have to submit a balanced budget to the Town. It has to be the will of the community to implement change. Chairman Forgue said the School Committee is continuing to work out their strategy for the budget, it is a process and hopefully they will continue to get colleagues on other committees to see this as a whole. He encouraged residents to contact their representatives to push for a 60% reimbursement in circuit breaker funds rather than 40%, which could mean a difference of \$680,000 in the school budget.

Annie Gilbert said the School Committee needs to give direction to the Superintendent on how to move forward. The available options are: 1) ask the Leadership Team for more reductions, 2) look at the fee structure and consider how to create more revenue, or 3) change the assumptions. Annie does not recommend option 1 or 2, and Paula Colby-Clements does not support asking the Leadership Team for further cuts. David Birnbach He recommends pursuing a more traditional schedule at Andover High School, one that is more efficient and effective. There are other models less costly than the current block schedule that would save \$500,000-\$800,000. Chairman Forgue said they are looking at a 3/3 schedule at AHS. He suggests the Committee digest the information heard this evening, and continue with budget subcommittee meetings, and meet next week.

## 2. Financials

### a. Monthly Financial Report

Peter DeRoueve reported on the Monthly Financials and is a little concerned with the higher cost items and suggested placing a soft-freeze on the budget. Purchases should be on a needs only basis to slow down spending so as to not incur a deficit.

b. Warrants - 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 Warrants as presented.

3. 2011-2012 School Calendar – 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading

The School Committee will vote on the School Calendar at the March 24, 2011 meeting.

**I. Adjournment**

On a motion by Annie Gilbert, with a second by Paula-Colby Clements it was voted 5-0 to adjourn the meeting at 10:24 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

*Dee DeLorenzo*  
Recorder

Documents:

Monthly Financials for February 2011  
2011-2012 School Year Calendar