

TRI-BOARD MEETING
Minutes of March 7, 2012

Board of Selectmen, School Committee, Finance Committee

I. Call to Order/Roll Call

Chairman Major called the Triboard Meeting to order at 7:05 P.M. in the School Committee Room at the School Administration Building. On a motion duly made and seconded, the Board of Selectmen voted 5-0 to open the Triboard Meeting. Roll call: Chairman Major-Y, Selectmen Teichert-Y, Selectman Vispoli-Y, Selectman Lyman-Y, and Selectman Salafia-Y.

School Committee Chair Annie Gilbert opened the meeting for the School Committee at 7:05 P.M. Present from the School Committee: Annie Gilbert, Paula Colby-Clements, Dennis Forgue, David Birnbach, and Richard Collins.

Finance Committee Chair Jon Stumpf opened the meeting for the Finance Committee at 7:06 P.M. Present from the Finance Committee: Chairman Stumpf, Joanne Marden, Paul Fortier, Peggy Kruse, Greg Serrao, Mary O'Donoghue, Mark Merritt, and Greg Rigby.

Others in attendance: Town Manager Buzz Stapczynski, Assistant Town Manager Steve Bucuzzo, Superintendent Marinel McGrath, Assistant Superintendent Nancy A. Duclos, and Assistant Superintendent Paul Szymanski.

The meeting was duly posted and cable-cast live.

II. Opening Ceremonies

A. Moment of Silence/Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman Major asked for a Moment of Silence followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

III. FY-2013 Budget Presentation

School Department Budget presentation

Superintendent McGrath began her presentation of the FY-2013 Proposed Budget for the Andover Public Schools with the Mission and Vision Statements, which reflect our purpose and reason for being. The first step in the budget process was the presentation of the preliminary budget presented at the March 1st School Committee Meeting. The second step is the presentation of the Proposed Budget, followed by the Recommended Budget which will be voted on by the School Committee on March 29th. The Public Hearing of the FY-2013 School Budget will be held on March 15th in the School Committee Meeting Room.

The Preliminary Budget contains the FY-12 appropriations and current positions, Special Education Programs, Administrative staffing and expense requests that support the enrollment and the Strategic Plan, and the statutory and regulatory mandates as well as the accreditation requirements for the high school.

The FY-13 Preliminary Budget in the amount of \$66,263,983 is an increase of 4.7% over the FY-12 approved and adjusted budget of \$63,284,577. The difference between the School Department's Preliminary Budget increase of 4.7% and the Town Manager's Recommended Budget increase of 3.1% \$(2,111,822) leaves a funding gap of \$(867,584). If the Town approves additional funding to cover the loss of the expired Ed Jobs Grant in the amount of \$541,909, and the \$230,572 loss of the PEP Grant for Health and Physical Education, the revised projected budget gap would be \$(95,103).

Primary drivers of the budget include salary increases, adjustment for COLA's, increases in Therapy and Evaluation Account, Medicare expense, and increased transportation costs of \$185,000 of which \$25,000 will provide transportation for homeless students. The budget includes a net increase of thirteen FTE's for the instructional program, and the expansion of in-house Special Education Programs; LEAP for Grades 3-5, the Excel Program at AHS and the TOPS Program which is a joint program with North Andover for our 18-22 year old students.

The classroom will be located in the School Administration Building, and the program will provide students an opportunity to work and stay in their community and to have an educational experience post-AHS. A \$50,000 Grant from the DESE for startup funds has been applied for. The funds will be used to purchase a van to transport the students to work and to Northern Essex Community College. All of the above initiatives support our Strategic Plan.

The Strategic Plan initiatives for AHS include a Program Advisor for World Language and Science (Grades 6-12), a School Resource Officer, Digital Curriculum Guides, and continuation of the one-to-one Ipad initiative (Year 2), Teacher Digital Classroom Initiative, and a Media Center Assistant.

The Middle School level initiative includes restoring the School Adjustment Counselors, implementing a French Language Program in Grades 6 & 7, Program Advisors for World Language and Science (Grade 6-12), and to continue with the one-to-one Ipad initiative (Year 2), and the Teacher Digital Classroom Initiative.

At the Elementary School the goal is to maintain class size, initiate a LEAP Program for students in Grades 3-5 who have significant language-based learning disabilities, continuation of the Ipad initiative (Year 2), and the Teacher Digital Classroom initiative.

District level initiatives include a PK-12 Instructional Technology Coordinator, focus on Staff Development in areas of technology supported learning, data analysis, team development, student assessment, and tiered instruction for all students. Also included in the District initiatives is a Digital Curriculum Mapping and Development Program, expanded parent portal and continuation of the Special Education Programs through the development of LEAP, an expanded EXCEL Program for students in Grades 9-12 and the implementation of a Post-grade 12 EXCEL Program.

The District supports creation of Digital Classrooms to promote regionalized learning and the four C's; creativity, critical thinking, communication, and collaboration. Students use technology in all areas of their lives and the Digital Classrooms will improve student engagement, encourage creativity, and better connect students to relevant information and current issues. In the one-to-one programs students and teachers will use mobile devices that will travel with them, and they will be able to access drop boxes for assignment and projects on-line. For this initiative, the District needs wireless platform access at all ten schools and for Town and School Offices that will serve as the super-highway for information to flow from teachers to student to classrooms and back. The Warrant Article includes Teacher Information Stations which include portable devices for instructional flexibility, projection systems to augment teaching and learning within and outside of the classroom, and in 2013-2014 portable devices will be available for students to lease (or use their own) at a cost of \$250 per year/student which will cover the device, software, and replacement insurance. All of the technology will enhance learning flexibility for students.

The plan is to roll-out teacher information stations to those who are eager and have demonstrated a willingness to support learning with technology and who will engage in the required staff development tied to the Strategic Plan. Within two years, the expectation is for all teachers to support learning through technology.

Staff Development and Curriculum Development will be accomplished through the use of Early Release Days, in-house Staff Development Courses, and on-line college and university courses, funded from the Operating Budget, There will be a decreased reliance on textbooks and an increased ability to create project-based learning and improve parent communication.

The investment in technology will be sustained by allocating funds in our annual operating budget to keep equipment current, and committing annual funds for on-going staff development for the migration to Digital Classrooms to be successful. The plan is to start the 2013-2014 school year by introducing the Digital Classroom to incoming Grade 9 students and each incoming Grade 9 class thereafter.

A Public Hearing on the School Budget will be held on March 15th followed by a vote by the School Committee on March 29th. Dr. McGrath thanked her Leadership Team, Central Office Staff, the

Chairs of the Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee, the School Committee, the Town Manager and his staff, and Paul Szymanski and his team in the School Business Office.

Assistant Superintendent Nancy Duclos introduced Carolyn Fawcett who is a Special Education Teacher at Sanborn Elementary. Carolyn provided an interactive hands-on demonstration of a Digital Classroom utilizing some of the technology devices.

Discussion

Dennis Fogue pointed out that Out-of-District placement costs is currently \$250,000 less than it was last year and a direct reflection of the effort to keep students within the district with new programs. The three new programs mentioned in Superintendent McGrath's presentation will fill out the Special Education Programs and maintain a more balanced per student cost realizing savings in Out-of-District tuitions and transportation, while creating a cushion against cost fluctuations previously experienced.

Superintendent McGrath expects to see a decrease in dollars for tiered instruction for all students by providing professional development with a series of interventions taught in regular education classrooms by regular teachers bringing Special Education and Regular Education together, eliminating two separate systems.

Selectman Teichert asked which of the 13 positions are most crucial. Dr. McGrath said it is difficult to prioritize the requests as the list affects different student needs, but specifically the School Social workers are a key component, and the World Language Program Advisor is a direct requirement of NEASC. It is estimated that seven of the positions will impact health insurance and benefits, while and many of the positions are fewer than twenty hours and won't require benefits. The Resource Officer will address the needs at AHS by building relations with students with an everyday presence, with the goal of reducing student drug and alcohol abuse and vandalism.

Mary Carbone, 3 Cyr Circle asked if the new program with North Andover is driven by a grant considered short term funding. Dr. McGrath stated that any grant funds received will be to purchase a van for transportation; the program itself will be funded through the school operating budget and expenses evenly shared with North Andover. Andover anticipates having four students in the program next year and North Andover four or five students. They expect to see additional savings in Out-of-District costs with the development of this program.

Dan Kowalski, Enfield Drive asked what the cost of the School Resource Officer and how it will be funded. Dr. McGrath responded that the cost of the position is \$36,000 and funded through the school budget.

Warrant Article – Information Technology

Paul Puzzanghera, CIO of Information and Technology provided a presentation of the Warrant Article request to upgrade of the infrastructure for the Town and School Department. The request is for \$2.5M to fund a bond that would be repaid entirely from the Cable Franchise Access Account to fund 100% of this program, requiring no new dollars. The infrastructure enhancements will be paid back in 4.5 years even without assuming any increase in productivity. The Digital Classroom Initiative breakdown is anticipated to be \$29 per student.

The Warrant Article has two objectives. The first is to provide infrastructure consolidation to eliminate all duplicate software and hardware, install new servers, provide a disaster recovery system, Voice-over IP telephone system, and improved network speed at a cost of \$1M. The second objective is to fund the Digital Classroom Initiative providing wireless connection in all classrooms, updated laptops, and classroom projection systems for a total of \$1.5M. The potential savings for this initiative is \$200-300K per year. At the end of five years, the Cable Franchise fund will have the same balance it has today.

The first initiative involves replacing the existing infrastructure. Currently there are four separate systems operating that don't communicate with each other at a tremendous cost to the Town. By consolidating the infrastructure they will have two state of the art systems with one serving as a backup for disaster recovery. The Virtual Server Technology will be reduced from forty to less than ten servers; and there will be one email system as opposed to the current four systems in place, and the Town will have an automatic synchronization of data and only one platform. All of the above will significantly reduce operating costs.

The second initiative for the 21st Century Digital Classroom and Support System assists with providing 21st Century skills, differentiated learning, real-time assessments (tests), support of new learning styles, changing content availability, leveraging of 3rd party resources, allows for distance learning, and improved communications. High-end wireless classrooms allows devices to connect to the internet, supports Apple TV devices, projectors, and display devices for larger images or other new generation technology.

Concerns that we are moving too fast are unfounded as this technology has been available for the last four-five years. Installing the upgrade in pieces is not realistic as all parts are inter-connected. A specific technology has not yet been chosen; however, they will be gathering input from teachers and the new Director of Digital Learning. This Warrant Article for these two initiatives is very specific with a very limited scope on spending. The benefits of these initiatives will significantly reduce costs, provide a higher service, update the learning structure and communication, and requires no new tax dollars.

Discussion:

Finance Chairman Jon Stumpf asked at what point it will be decided what will be used in the classroom. Mr. Puzzanghera said they are working together to explore options, pilot programs will begin in the fall and a decision made by the end of 2012.

Selectman Teichert asked about the status of e-texts. Mr. Puzzanghera said digital texts combine curriculum and information from different sources on the web, e-publishing is being made available in open source.

To ensure sustainability it is suggested that all IT purchases be built into the Town and School Department's Operating Budgets with purchasing decisions discussed in collaboration with the Technology Department.

Selectman Vispoli asked about the status of the Copy Center. Paul Szymanski said the Copy Center performs two different functions; high volume production that is cost-effective at this time and operates at about a third of the cost of what it would be if the function were outsourced. The Copy Center services all departments town-wide at a tremendous savings to the Town and School Department.

Selectman Teichert inquired about allowing the use of the school facilities for community programs. This item will be discussed at another meeting.

Capital Projects

Interim Plant & Facilities Director Maria Maggio reviewed the School CIP requests:

School 1, 2, 5, and 6 requests funds for school projects in the following amounts: School-1 Basic Maintenance in the amount of \$210,000; School-2 in the amount of \$792,000 covers building health and safety items; School 5- funds major school projects in the amount of \$2,709,000, and \$330,000 is being requested in School-6 to complete the renovations of the DMS WWII Auditorium.

School 3 – Textbooks They are requesting \$375,950 for textbooks to cover the cost of the Grade 6 & 7 Foreign Language Program, E-texts, and purchases dependant upon the decision on the high school schedule.

IV. Adjournment

At 10:05 P.M. on a motion by Selectman Salafia with a second by Selectman Lyman, it was voted 5-0 to adjourn from the Triboard Meeting. Roll call: Chairman Major-Y, Selectman Teichert-Y, Selectman Lyman-Y, Selectman Vispoli-Y, and Selectman Salafia-Y.

On a motion by Dennis Fogue with a second by Dick Collins, the School Committee voted 5-0 to adjourn from the Triboard Meeting. Roll call: Annie Gilbert-Y, Paula Colby-Clements-Y, David Birnbach-Y, Dennis Fogue-Y, and Dick Collins-Y.

On a motion duly made and seconded, the Finance Committee voted 8-0 to adjourn from the Triboard Meeting. Roll call: Jon Stumpf, Joanne Marden, Mary O'Donoghue, Paul Fortier, Mark Merritt-Y, Greg Rigby-Y, Peggy Kruse-Y, and Greg Serrao-Y.

Respectfully submitted,

Dee DeLorenzo, Recorder

Documents: FY-2013 School Department Budget Presentation