

Andover School Committee
Regular Meeting of March 22, 2012
School Administration Building - School Committee Room

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

Others in Attendance: Dr. Marinel McGrath, Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent Nancy Duclos, and Paul Szymanski, Assistant Superintendent, Finance & Administration

I. Executive Session

At 6:25 P.M. the School Committee entered into Executive Session on a motion by Dennis Forgue and seconded by Dick Collins for the purpose of discussing matters relative to collective bargaining strategy and to return to Open Session. Roll call vote: A. Gilbert-Y, D. Forgue-Y, P. Colby-Clements-Y, and R. Collins-Y. At 7:02 P.M. on a motion by Dennis Forgue and a second by Dick Collins, it was voted 5-0 to adjourn from Executive Session and to move to Open Session. Roll call vote: A. Gilbert-Y, D. Forgue-Y, P. Colby-Clements-Y, D. Birnbach-Y, and R. Collins-Y.

II. Regular Meeting

A. Call to Order

The Regular Meeting of the School Committee was opened at 7:08 P.M. by Chairwoman Gilbert.

B. Opening Ceremonies

Mr. Collins asked for a moment of silence followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

C. Recognitions

Superintendent McGrath introduced Dr. Christopher Lord, our new Andover High School Principal whose appointment will become effective July 1st pending final resolution of a contract. The announcement of the selection of Dr. Lord was made to the High School Staff at their faculty meeting today and an Alert Now message was sent out at 2:45 P.M. to parents. Dr. Lord was selected for his vision of student learning, his demonstration of spirit, stamina, and leadership qualities; he will bring a focused and caring leadership that will enable our school community to grow and prosper. Dr. McGrath said the transition plan will be worked out over the next few months with the assistance of Dr. Sharkey. Superintendent McGrath thanked all the members of the Search Committee for this work in this important endeavor.

Dr. Lord thanked all members of the Search Committee and recognized Human Resources Director Candace Hall for her efforts, stating that it was an interesting process. He has met with staff, students and parents and looks forward to an incredible journey, one that he hopes students will reflect upon after they leave AHS.

David Birnbach congratulated Andover Townsman Reporter Dustin Lucas who was recognized as Reporter of the Year, and to the Andover Townsman named 2011 Newspaper of the Year. Dustin was recognized for his delivery of in-depth reporting to readers, and his insightful detail.

D. Citizen Input – None

E. Old Business

1. Warrant Articles:

WA#4: FY13 Proposed Budget

An overview of the FY-13 Proposed Budget was provided by Superintendent McGrath. The Proposed School Budget in the amount of \$66,263,983 is an increase of 4.7% over the FY-12 Budget, and has a budget gap of \$(867,584). Should the Town approve additional funding in the amount of \$867,584 to cover the loss of expired Job Grant funds and Pep Grant funds, the budget gap would be reduced to \$(95,103).

Annie Gilbert reported that the Chairs of the three boards (Selectmen, Finance Committee, and School Committee) are engaging in discussions on how to address the allocation of funds needed and are optimistic they will have a proposal to present to the three boards for approval.

Motion: Dennis Forgue motioned that the Andover School Committee approve the FY-13 School Budget in the amount of \$66,263,984. The motion was seconded by Paula Colby-Clements and unanimously voted to approve.

2. Update: Bancroft School Project

Annie Gilbert provided a recap on the status of the Bancroft School Building Project stating that they are moving forward while the appeals by abutters are in process. They are engaging in settlement discussions of outstanding lawsuits and hope to come to agreement soon and be able to construct the building in the original phasing plan. They hope to start initial road work in May, with heavier construction beginning in July. Mrs. Gilbert distributed a conceptual 12 month schedule of the project. They will conduct a pre-condition survey and letters will be sent to home-owners.

3. Financials: Monthly Financial Report

Paul Szymanski gave a review of the Monthly Financial Report and stated they expect to be well within the operating budget for this year and plan to use unexpended funds to cover deficits for legal services, Medicare expenditures, and homeless transportation.

F. New Business

1. Warrant Articles:

Warrant Article P-26 -Technology Infrastructure, Connectivity, Hardware and Telecommunications Equipment

To see if the Town will vote to raise by taxation, transfer from available funds, borrowing, leasing or by any combination thereof and appropriate the sum of \$2,500,000 for the purposes of upgrading and extending the Town's existing data, video and telecommunications infrastructure, including school and municipal wireless capabilities, network capacity, servers, storage, multimedia tools, video projection, telecommunications and personal computing and for the payment of all other costs incidental and related thereto, or take any other action related thereto.

The School Committee discussed the article noting that there would be no tax impact because funds will be borrowed from the Cable Franchise Fee Account and repaid in 4.5 years. The Fund will never go below \$600,000. Paula Colby-Clements said it is a win-win for both the Town and School. Dennis Forgue congratulated Paul Puzanghera on his great vision and supports the infrastructure investment.

Bob Marshall, Samos Lane is concerned that they are moving too fast and disagrees with the undertaking of this project. He suggests the IT sub-committee review what they are proposing to do. David Birnbach assured Mr. Marshall that the IT CIO, staff and technical experts have properly vetted the proposal.

Motion: Paula Colby-Clements motioned that Andover School Committee vote to recommend approval of Warrant Article P-26 entitled "Technology Infrastructure, Connectivity, Hardware, and Telecommunications Equipment" as presented. The motion was seconded by Dennis Forgue and unanimously voted to approve.

Warrant Article P-37. Lease of Land at 100 Lovejoy Road for Solar Facilities

ARTICLE P-37 - To see if the Town will vote to authorize the change of use of a parcel of land containing approximately 35.4 acres at 100 Lovejoy Road, which is under the care, custody and control of the School Committee, being a portion of the land shown on Town of Andover Assessors' Map 153, Lot 3 and which parcel of land is also shown on the map entitled "Lovejoy Road Site Plan, Town of Andover Solar Feasibility Study" dated November, 2011, as prepared by Tighe & Bond, which is on file with the Town of Andover Office of Community Development and Planning, for the purpose of leasing said land for a solar energy facility and to authorize the School Committee and Board of Selectmen to enter into a lease of said land on terms and conditions the School Committee and Board of Selectmen deem to be in the best interest of the Town, for a term not to exceed twenty years, and to enter into a contract for the purchase of power or net metering credits from said solar energy facility for a term not to exceed twenty years, on terms and conditions the School Committee and Board of Selectmen deem to be in the best interest of the Town, or to take any other action related thereto. On request of the School Committee, Andover Green Advisory Board, Plant & Facilities Department and the Planning Director.

Discussion:

School Committee Chair Annie Gilbert said last week's discussion had to do with process and if passed, the Warrant Article would not come back to the Committee for a vote. They spoke with Planning Director Paul Materazzo, about altering the Warrant Article. The School Committee could request the Town accept bids and if that went forward, the School Committee and Board of Selectmen could look into developing a new Warrant Article, to go before the entire community at Town Meeting, for a vote after reviewing the proposals.

Dennis Forgue asked what the minimum terms of the lease would be if the Warrant Article did go forward. *20 years*; if there would be any cost to the School Department – *none, but the Dept of Community Planning has funds approved for expenses*. Mr. Forgue provided prior information from the NESDEC Study on enrollment which predicted Andover would have 293 students less than they currently do. Future new developments, and 40B housing will greatly impact the enrollment at our schools. There are only two pieces of property remaining in the School Committee's custody – Sanborn School and South School. Should they release control of the Sanborn School property, the School Committee would be relinquishing land needed to address future growth.

Annie Gilbert feels it is wiser to pull this Warrant Article, have a defined plan presented first, and then come back with a Warrant Article. David Birnbach reminded everyone that in 1986 a hockey rink was proposed to be developed where the WHMS/High Plain Elementary School complex now resides. The School Committee is the custodians of the schools now and in the future, and he opposes putting anymore effort into using land for solar farms.

Bob Marshall, Samos Lane said it is a wise choice to not release the land. Ralph Jannetti of Hansom Road is pleased to see the action being taken by the School Committee and to give consideration to the restriction in the deed for recreational and educational use. Kristen DeAngelo, Hansom Road thanked the School Committee on their decision to pull the Warrant Article and encourages them to end further exploration of the plan. Several other properties were listed in the feasibility study that could be considered, the Sanborn School property is a totally inappropriate site.

Motion: Dennis Forgue motioned that the Andover School Committee voted that Warrant Article P-37 entitled "Lease of Land at 100 Lovejoy Road for Solar Facilities" be withdrawn and not to be further investigated. The motion was seconded by Paula Colby-Clements and unanimously voted to withdraw.

Warrant Article 39 - West Middle School Repair

Warrant Article 39 - To see if the Town will vote to appropriate, borrow or transfer from available funds, a sum of money to be expended under the direction of the Town Manager for the conversion of the steam heating system to a hot water system at the West Middle School building located at 70 Shawsheen Road, Andover, MA and as shown on Andover Assessor's Map 72, Lot 54, which proposed repair project would materially extend the useful life of the school and preserve an asset that otherwise is capable of supporting the required educational program and for which the Town may be eligible for a school construction grant from the Massachusetts School Building Authority ("MSBA"). The Town acknowledges that the MSBA's grant program is a non-entitlement, discretionary program based on need, as determined by the MSBA, and any project costs the Town incurs in excess of any grant approved by and received from the MSBA shall be the sole responsibility of the Town. Any grant that the Town may receive from the MSBA for the Project shall not exceed the lesser of (1) 39 percent (39%) of eligible, approved project costs, as determined by the MSBA, or (2) the total maximum grant amount determined by the MSBA, or take any other action related thereto. On request of the Acting Director of Plant and Facilities

Superintendent McGrath reported that they have applied to MSBA for funding but have not heard from them yet. Whether 39% of the funding is provided by MSBA or not, the School Committee is required to vote, as a requirement by MSBA.

Motion: Paula Colby-Clements motioned that the Andover School Committee vote to recommend approval of Warrant Article 39 – entitled "West Middle School Repair Article" as presented. The motion was seconded by Dennis Forgue and unanimously voted to recommend approval.

2. AHS Field Trip Approval: Sr. Trip, York ME

Superintendent McGrath explained that the School Committee must approve this request as it is an out-of-state trip.

Motion: Paula Colby-Clements motioned that the Andover School Committee vote to approve the AHS Senior extra-curricular Field Trip to York, Maine on May 30, 2012 as presented. The motion was seconded by Dennis Forgue and voted 5-0 to approve.

3. Entrance Age Policy Inquiry

Kavita and Miki Goyal are requesting an exception to the School Committee's Entrance Age Policy to allow their daughter to enroll into Grade One in September 2012. Their daughter currently attends Kindergarten in a private school in Walpole and they are moving to Andover before the start of school in September. Their daughter will turn six in November, and according to Andover's policy would be required to enter Kindergarten, not Grade One. They have recommendations from their child's current teachers that she is ready for Grade One even though her birth date makes her ineligible in Andover.

Mr. Collins said making exceptions to policies sets a dangerous precedent. He appreciates that their child is ready but the solution is not violating the policy. Superintendent McGrath explained that when children enter kindergarten, all aspects of the child are assessed with. If teachers feel that the child should move forward, we would do that; although it has not happened. Developmental factors come into play, and differentiated instruction in our classrooms provides appropriate levels of instruction. Annie Gilbert said they all have empathy for the many parents who grapple with the same concerns each year, but they cannot focus on just one child.

Entrance Age Policy-JEB states that Andover's entrance age for children entering kindergarten is 5 years old on or before September 1 of the current school year.

Motion: Paula Colby-Clements motioned that the Andover School Committee vote to not approve an exception to the School Committee Policy JEB-Entrance Age. The motion was seconded by Dennis Forgue and voted 5-0 to not approve.

G. Consent Agenda

1. Minutes: Tri-Board Meeting Minutes, March 7, 2012
2. Warrants: Paul Szymanski said the Warrants are in order: Expense Warrant #SW1217 in the amount of \$370,812.95; Payroll Warrant 12SS12 in the amount of \$748.50, and Payroll Warrant 12S038 in the amount of \$2,065,154.75.

On a motion by Paula Colby-Clements with a second by Dennis Forgue, the School Committee motioned to approve the Consent Agenda as presented.

H. Adjournment

At 8:47 P.M. Paula Colby-Clements motioned for the School Committee to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Dennis Forgue and unanimously voted to approve.

Respectfully submitted,

Dee DeLorenzo, Recorder

Documents: School Warrants, Monthly Financials, Bancroft School Building Project Concept Schedule, Warrant Articles 26, 37, and 39, and Triboard Meeting Minutes of March 7, 2012.