

Andover School Committee
Regular Meeting of February 11, 2013
School Administration Building - School Committee Room

Members in Attendance: Dennis Forgue, Annie Gilbert, Paula Colby-Clements, Barbara L'Italien

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

I. Regular Meeting

A. Call to Order

Chairman Forgue opened the Regular Meeting of the School Committee at 7:12 P.M. Barbara L'Italien asked for a moment of silence in memory of Greg Rigby which was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

II. FY-15 Preliminary School Budget

Prior to presenting the Preliminary School Budget for FY-15 Dr. McGrath thanked all the members of the Leadership Team, School Committee Budget Sub-Committee members (Dennis, Annie, Barbara), the Town Manager and his staff for their assistance in developing the FY-15 budget. After reviewing the Vision and Mission Statement, which articulate the values of the Andover Public System, she explained the 4 C's (Critical Thinking, Collaboration, Communication, and Creativity,) and their connection to the Strategic Plan and incorporated into the curriculum across the district. The Budget Development Process, Timeline, Guidelines, and Assumptions were developed to include all statutory and regulatory requirements, to ensure level services across the District, an investment in the Strategic Plan, to reorganize where educationally sound, and to capture savings wherever possible while working with available funds.

The FY-15 Preliminary School Budget is \$72,276,140, an increase of 4.8% (\$3,348,547) over the FY-14 budget of \$68,927,593. The budget includes \$58,981,310 in Personal Services and \$13,294,830 in Expenses including unfunded mandates. The Town Manager's recommended budget for the School Department is \$71,304,452 leaving a delta of \$971,688.

The FY-15 Preliminary School Budget comes with no increases in class size, user fees or pre-school/full day kindergarten tuition; nor are there any reductions in programs or services. There is a modest investment in the Strategic Plan of 2.0 FTE's (twelve sections) to offer computer science, engineering, and JAVA at AHS at a cost of \$120,808. Through intra-department reallocation of funds, a modest request for \$25,000 is included in the budget for the salary differential (teacher to program head) for a Pre-K through Grade 5 Literacy Specialist. In addition, 6.76 FTE's are requested for level service adjustments for enrollment and compliance requests for student services and general education; bringing the total FTE request to 8.76. A chart listing the specific request, location and budget impact was included in the presentation. Technology Expenses includes \$3,488 for laptops.

Superintendent McGrath included the list of needs that are not being funded this year which includes a start-up World Language Program for elementary students, a fifth day of World Language for middle School students, Phase 2 of the Transitions Programs for Grades 7 and 8; Digital Learning Specialists at the elementary level, and reduction/elimination of user fees.

As this is the Preliminary Budget, the budget will be subject to change dependent upon further budget deliberations and the Town's availability to fund based on revenue and Chapter 70 state education aid.

The Tri-board will meet on Wednesday, March 12th at 7:00 P.M. in the School Committee Room to review

the 2015 Budget and CIP requests, and the Public Hearing for the School Department Budget will be held on Thursday, March 27th with a vote by the School Committee on Thursday, April 3rd. The School Budget Presentation will be put on the Andover Public School website at www.aps1.net .

Comments:

Paula Colby-Clements thanked the Leadership Team, School Administrators and the School Committee Budget Subcommittee who spent an enormous number of hours meeting and collaborating on the budget. She noted that there is less of a delta this year than last year and \$972K is not an insurmountable number for the three Boards to work through.

Barbara L'Italien expects there will be some change to the increase in local aid for school budgets.

Annie Gilbert also thanked the Leadership Team and School Administrators for their work in bringing the budget forward; difficult decisions were sorted out by the Leadership Team prior to being brought forward to the School Committee. Level service means what we need to do to open the doors offering the same services as we do now. Children's needs change yearly with various requirements that causes a fluidity in local services. The two new positions for the Strategic Plan and the other six positions are needed to meet needs for level services; and only six of the positions are benefit eligible.

Dennis Forge asked about the availability of space at AHS to accommodate the two additional positions. Superintendent McGrath said space will be gained through the use of two additional mobile labs, people will have to change rooms using the already existing space for engineering, and they are collaborating with Merrimack College, U/Mass Lowell, and local businesses to SKYPE. The mobile carts for JAVA can be setup anywhere, and they are not dedicating classrooms to study halls (study halls have been reduced)

Mr. Forgue also feels the gap of \$970K is a relatively modest gap and manageable and said there are many variables in revenue assumptions that will change. Needs of school systems vary from one year to the next depending upon student needs and services, it is a very dynamic entity.

Dennis Forgue reported the School Committee is in the final process of a contract agreement with the AEA that will be effective from September 1, 2014 through August 31, 2017. The AEA is scheduled to vote on the contract agreement Thursday, February 13th. If the contract is ratified by the AEA, the School Committee will meet that evening to provide an opportunity for all School Committee members to voice their opinion and to vote to approve the contract. A majority vote is needed. If there is no school on Thursday (weather-related) a future meeting will be scheduled.

III. Adjournment

At 7:55 P.M. on a motion by Annie Gilbert and seconded by Paula Colby-Clements, the Andover School Committee voted 4-0 to adjourn the School Committee Meeting of February 11, 2015.

Respectfully submitted,

Dee DeLorenzo

Recording Secretary

Documents: FY2015 School Budget Presentation