

Andover School Committee
Regular Meeting of March 27, 2014
School Administration Building - School Committee Room

Members in Attendance: Annie Gilbert, Paula Colby-Clements, Barbara L'Italien, David Birnbach, Joel Blumstein
Others in Attendance: Dr. Marinel McGrath, Superintendent, Paul Szymanski, Assistant Superintendent Finance and Administration, and Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum & Instruction, Nancy A. Duclos, and AHS Liaison Hugh Smith.

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:45 P.M. by Acting Chair Annie Gilbert.

Barbara L'Italien led the meeting in a moment of silence followed by the Pledge of Allegiance led by Aaron Mistry, Grade 4 student at High Plain Elementary School. On behalf of the School Committee Aaron was presented with a Certificate of Appreciation.

Annie Gilbert welcomed Joel Blumstein to the School Committee. Joel was sworn in on Wednesday, March 26th as the newest member of the Committee succeeding outgoing member Dennis Forgeu.

II. Regular Meeting

A. Committee Reorganization

Before continuing with the meeting the School Committee voted to select a new Chair and Vice Chair for 2014-2015.

1. Elect Chairperson and Vice Chairperson

Paula Colby Clements moved that Annie Gilbert be elected as Chairperson of the Andover School Committee for 2014-2015. The motion was seconded by Barbara L'Italien and voted 5-0 to approve.

Barbara L'Italien moved that Paula Colby-Clements be elected as Vice-Chairperson of the Andover School Committee for 2014-2015. The motion was seconded by Joel Blumstein and voted 5-0 to approve.

B. Recognition/Communications

Dr. McGrath recognized the Aixa De Kelley, Director of Guidance at AHS, for her efforts in procuring four retired engineers to provide free tutoring in mathematics to Andover students. All four retirees have tutoring experience.

Nancy Duclos recognized Paul Puzanghera, CIO of the IT Department and his entire Tech Team for their assistance in managing the technical needs for the PARCC testing at each school this week.

Barbara L'Italien attended the Show Choir Showcase held this weekend and said there were over nineteen schools who participated in the first event of this type with students from Toronto hosted in local homes. It was a wonderful day!

David Birnbach thanked the Andover High School Baseball Team and Coach Grams for supporting the Andover Little League Kick-off event this weekend.

Paula Colby-Clements recognized the entire district on the handling of the PARCC field test. There was a lot of anxiety with the anticipation of the test and the schools did a wonderful job of alleviating the stress.

Annie Gilbert reported that Andover SEPAC launched its first annual needs assessment survey on March 25th which is available on the Andover Public School's Website for public feedback.

Public Hearing: FY-15 Preliminary Budget

The purpose of the public hearing is to provide an opportunity for residents to make a statement on the budget, and a time for the School Committee to listen and take input. The next Budget Sub-committee is scheduled for April 3rd and they will deliberate and provide direction to the Superintendent. The School Preliminary Budget was presented to the School Committee in March and to the Triboard on March 12th. There is a delta of \$800,000 between the School Budget and the Town Manager's Recommend Budget. There are still many variables to consider, information on revenue to be received, the health insurance bids have been favorable, and they are waiting to see what the overall available funds will be. In addition, the Board of Selectman recently voted to further reduce the School Department's Budget by \$400,000 and the Town Budget by \$200,000; leaving the School with a new budget gap of \$1.2 million. The Finance Department provided questions today to the team and a PDF packet was sent to the School Committee members with their questions. The next budget meeting is scheduled for Thursday, April 10th.

Dr. McGrath provided a brief overview of the School Department's Preliminary FY-2015 Budget. Major projects include level services, investment in the Strategic Plan, meeting all statutory and regulation obligations, reorganizing where educationally sound, capturing savings where possible, and working within available funds.

Highlights of the budget include a 4.7% increase over the FY-14 budget of \$68,927,593 with no increases in class size or user fees for Pre-K and full day tuition, a modest investment in the Strategic Plan and level services adjustments for enrollment and compliance includes a part-time custodian for Bancroft School. The FY-15 Preliminary Budget is \$72,185,744 with \$58,890,954 in Personnel Services and \$13,294,930 in Expenses. The Town Manager's Recommended Budget is \$71,304,452 leaving a delta of \$881,332 (plus the additional \$400K voted).

There are 6.76 FTE/Positions requested are for enrollment and compliance needs at a cost of \$418,536. Some are new positions, and some are increases in hours of current positions. The Strategic Plan investment calls for two positions at AHS in the amount of \$120,808 for twelve sections (depending upon enrollment) at AHS for Engineering, Computer, and JAVA classes. There is also a request in the amount of \$25,000 for a Pre-K-Grade 5 Literacy Specialist which is not an additional position but a transfer of a teacher to a supervisory position. Classroom and Technology expenses amount to \$3,488. The total for the FY 15 Strategic Plan Request is \$149,296,000.

The CIP Warrant Article for the AHS Schematic Design was voted by the Board of Selectmen to not insert the Warrant Article.

Items that are not included in the budget include a fifth day of World Language Instruction at the Middle Schools, no World Language classes at the Elementary level, Phase II of the Transition Program, Digital Learning Specialists at the Elementary level, and a reduction of user fees.

The School Committee will vote on the School Committee Budget on April 10th and the Annual Town Meeting is scheduled for May 5th and May 6th at the Collins Center.

Audience Participation

Ed Medeiros, 50C Washington Park Drive, questioned the number of FTE's reported stating that 52 FTE's were not included in the count last year because the positions were paid for through grant funding. He asked how many FTE's are being paid through outside funds. Annie Gilbert said the information is available on page 26 of the Budget Book. The Chart shows all FTE's in the budget and by funding source. The revolving fund covers the cost of the full-day kindergarten teachers and expenses funded through tuition. Mr. Medeiros requested transparency by ensuring all employees in total are shown. Dr. McGrath explained they cannot mix revolving, grant, and operating monies in one line item, they have to be separated out. The total number is 972.

Mona Leveille of 19 Acorn Drive is disappointed more funds are not being spent to improve school services and is especially concerned about the Digital Learning Specialists not being funded in the amount of \$62,000 which is a small amount. As technology is increasing in the schools, the elementary students are not getting the benefit of it without the Digital Learning Specialists.

It was also explained that the Assistant Principals were brought in due to the changes in the Educator Evaluation System Model this year. The Learning Specialist positions were eliminated and that role given to the Assistant Principals who are not in the Teachers unit; thereby they are able to conduct evaluations. David Birnbach said we need more to spend more in Technology Programs and take advantage of free programs offered from Tufts, MIT, and Harvard.

Bob Landry, Seminole Circle spoke about items parents are asked to pay for outside of the school budget and wonders if there will be a change the direction of increased athletic user fees and transportation fees. Dr. McGrath said they have had a 2% increase in the line item for school supplies for the past two years and discussed this issue with the Town-wide PTO and principals that too much is being asked of parents. They are working very hard this year to roll back these requests of parents.

Jeryl Williams, 44 Holt Road, asked about the selection of the Literacy Specialist position. She was informed they can move forward with that depending upon the decision for funding at Town Meeting.

Jean Teichart, Dufton Road, noted that Special Education costs are perceived as the reason for budget increases, and asked about the numbers and where they come from? The numbers are from the October 1 enrollment provided to the Dept of Education. Costs are based on the number of projected students, salaries of personnel, and projected rates of tuition for out-of-district programs.

John Zipeto, Canterbury Street, said SEPAC gives a very informative full day presentation on Special Education, and Federal and State information on parent rights. Dr. McGrath said the information is available on the APS Website under Student Services.

End of Public Hearing: 7:52 P.M.

C. Communications

Dr. McGrath reported that changes were made by the State in the Anti-bullying Law last October, and the revised plan has been on the APS Website and will remain available for public comment until April 9th after which time the School Committee can vote on the updated Anti-bullying Law. The law now names any school employee as a person who could be viewed as a bully.

Public Comment Period regular amendment to State's Anti-Bullying Law MGL 71, Section 370

Seeing none, the School Committee continued with the agenda items.

III. Regular Meeting Resumed

D. Old Business

1. FY 2-15 Warrant Articles

WA-5 FY-2015 Capital Projects Fund Appropriation

Barbara L'Italien moved that the Andover School Committee vote to recommend approval of Warrant Article 5 that allocates the amount of \$1,040,000. The motion was seconded by Paula Colby-Clements and voted 5-0 to recommend approval.

WA-39 Town and School Energy Initiatives

ARTICLE-39: To see if the Town will vote to raise by taxation, borrowing, or transfer from available funds or by any combination and appropriate the sum of \$236,000 for the purpose of paying the costs of various electrical, heating, ventilation and air conditioning replacements and upgrades to town and school facilities, including any other costs incidental and related thereto, or to take any other action related thereto.

On a motion by Paula Colby-Clements and seconded by Barbara L'Italien the Andover School Committee voted 5-0 to recommend approval of Warrant Article 39 – Town and School Energy Initiatives in the amount of \$236,000.

WA-40 Technology Hardware and Software

To see if the Town will vote to raise by taxation, transfer from available funds, borrowing or by any combination thereof and appropriate the sum of \$200,000 for the purposes of purchasing or leasing technology hardware and software, including any other costs incidental and related thereto, or take any other action related thereto.

Paula Colby-Clements moved that the Andover School Committee vote to recommend approval of WA-40 Technology Hardware and Software in the amount of \$200,000. The motion was seconded by Joel Blumstein and voted 5-0 to recommend approval.

WA-42 School Site Improvements

To see if the Town will vote to raise by taxation, borrowing, or transfer from available funds or by any combination and appropriate the sum of \$319,000 for the purpose of paying the costs of making various school site safety, circulation and infrastructure improvements, including any other costs incidental and related thereto, or take any other action related thereto.

Barbara L'Italien moved that the Andover School Committee vote to recommend approval of WA-42 School Site Improvements in the amount of \$319,000. The motion was seconded by Paula Colby-Clements and voted 5-0 to recommend approval.

WA-47 Annual Computer Workstation & Laptop Replacement Program

To see if the Town will vote to raise by taxation and transfer from available funds (Cable Franchise Fee account) the sum of \$360,000 for the purpose of leasing Town and School administrative and teacher computer workstations and laptops, including any costs incidental and related thereto, or take any other action related thereto.

Paula Colby-Clements moved that the Andover School Committee vote to recommend approval of WA-47 Annual Computer Workstation and Laptop Replacement Program in the amount of \$360,000. The motion was seconded by Barbara L'Italien and voted 5-0 to recommend approval.

WA-52 School Building Maintenance and Renovation

To see if the Town will vote to raise by taxation, borrowing, or transfer from available funds or by any combination and appropriate the sum of \$1,500,000 for the purpose of paying the costs of constructing, adding to, remodeling, reconstructing and making extraordinary repairs to and equipping various school buildings and roofs, including any other costs incidental and related thereto, or take any other action related thereto.

Paula Colby-Clements motioned to recommend approval of WA-52 School Building Maintenance and Renovation in the amount of \$1,500,000. The motion was seconded by Barbara L'Italien and voted 5-0 to recommend approval.

G. Consent Agenda

1. Minutes: School Committee Meeting March 11, 2014
2. Warrants: Expense Warrant #SW1420 and Payroll Warrant #14S039

Paula Colby-Clements moved the Consent Agenda be approved as presented. The motion was seconded by Barbara L'Italien and voted 5-0 to approve.

H. Adjournment

At 8:05 P.M. Paula Colby-Clements motioned the Andover School Committee adjourn the meeting of March 27, 2014. The motion was seconded by David Birnbach and voted 5-0 to approve.

Respectfully submitted,

Dee DeLorenzo
Recording Secretary

Documents: School Warrants and Minutes of March 11, 2014
Town Warrant Articles