

Andover School Committee
Minutes of Regular Meeting of November 10, 2009
School Administration Building - School Committee Room

Members in Attendance: Chair Debra Rahmin Silberstein, Richard J. Collins, Dennis Forgue, Annie Gilbert, David Birnbach.

Others in Attendance: Dr. Claudia L. Bach, Superintendent, Dr. Susan Nicholson, Assistant Superintendent and David Keniston, Business Manager.

I. Executive Session

Chair Deb Silberstein called the School Committee Meeting to order at 6:10 P.M. in the School Committee Meeting Room in the School Offices. Present were: Chair Deb Silberstein, and Committee Members Richard Collins, Dennis Forgue, and Annie Gilbert.

On a motion by Dennis Forgue and a second by Richard Collins it was voted to go into Executive Session to discuss contractual issues and negotiation strategies and to return to Open Session. Roll Call Vote: Chair Silberstein-Y, Members, D. Forgue-Y, D. Birnbach, and A. Gilbert-Y. At 6:58 P.M. on a motion duly made and seconded, it was voted to adjourn the Executive Session and to return to Open Session. Roll Call Vote: Chair Silberstein-Y, Members, D. Birnbach-Y, D. Forgue-Y, and A. Gilbert-Y.

II. Regular meeting in the School Committee Room

A. Opening Ceremonies

Chair Deb Silberstein reconvened to Open Session at 7:10 P.M. and introduced Sean Lima, a member of the Junior Class at AHS who led the meeting in a moment of silence followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. Chair Silberstein presented Sean with a Certificate of Appreciation on behalf of the School Committee.

B. Recognition of Achievement

1. Best Practices – Sustainable Garden Project

Assistant Superintendent Susan Nicholson introduced AHS Science Teacher Melanie Cutler who provided a presentation on the inter-disciplinary approach used for the Sustainable Garden Project. Ms. Cutler explained that the project is an effort shared by the 1420 Foundation, College of Miramar, Costa Rica, Umass/Lowell Meso-American Development Institute, and Drumlin Farm in Lincoln, Mass. The Sustainable Garden is located in the AHS Courtyard. Students will learn where food comes from, the importance of growing food, and the significance of producing and purchasing local food, as well as team work and technology skills through research, hands-on experience, communication with their peers, and making significant connections. All 9th Grade Science Classes will be involved in this project. Ms. Cutler is working with Grants Administrator Lisa Glickstein to procure grant(s) to compensate students to harvest the crops over the summer.

Dr. Bach said she and Dr. Nicholson attended the National Honor Society Induction Ceremony and congratulated guest speaker, Mr. Collins on the outstanding speech he gave to the students. Dr. Nicholson recognized Brian Shea, AHS Teacher who is also the advisor to the students.

B. Recognition of Achievement (Cont'd)

Dr. Bach visited the Engineering Class at DMS led by Steve Cogger and students demonstrated the robots they were working on. I-Robot who has donated material for the class to make robots was also present. Dr. Nicholson said the students did a terrific job demonstrating their products; the session was taped and will be viewed at a workshop for I-Robot.

Dr. Bach congratulated the Arts & Humanities students who were awarded the National Tower Award and will be attending a ceremony in Washington, D.C.

C. Communications

1. Bancroft Feasibility Study – Update & Discussion

Annie Gilbert explained that tonight's discussion would concern the population of Bancroft but not the specifics of how the building will look or where it will be sited which will be the decision of the School Building Committee. A meeting with the neighbors will be held on Saturday, November 14th.

Lorraine Finnegan, Symmes, Maini, and McKee Project Manager presented enrollment options and space capacities arrived at for the Bancroft School Building Project. The School Committee discussed the options for the size of the school and debated the pros and cons of each option. Four points the School Committee will focus on are school size, enrollment composition, educational visioning, and redistricting. The enrollment alternatives provided by SMM include: 1) Bancroft only (498 students maximum), 2) Bancroft and PK-Shawsheen (589 students maximum), 3) Bancroft plus 100 students (608 students maximum), and how to distribute by grade, by rooms, by students. MSBA sees this project as the solution for Bancroft and the solution to overcrowding at Shawsheen.

Dennis Forgue provided population options and outcomes, which the Committee reviewed and discussed. The Committee also talked about closing Shawsheen, which would provide the opportunity to move from six elementary schools to five elementary schools and save on operating expenses.

The School Committee dialogued with residents in the audience who commented on funding for Pre-K if moved to Bancroft or elsewhere, reducing the population at Shawsheen, closing Shawsheen entirely and options to consider should this happen, redistricting, and the impact on the Bancroft School neighborhood by increasing student population. They also discussed the recent site visits to area schools with 700-800 student population. A larger school would provide more flexibility in the MSBA funding formula, more additional program space and opportunities realized by a larger school building. Deb Silberstein said she is leaning in the direction of a 700-student population.

The discussion on the Bancroft School Building Project will continue at the November 17th meeting.

C. Communications (Cont'd)

2. Superintendent Search – MASC, Michael Gilbert

Michael Gilbert of MASC, distributed and reviewed the timeline provided to the School Committee for the Superintendent search. The Committee was also requested to review the search questionnaire for additions/deletions/revisions and to vote on the contract, timeline, survey, qualifications, screening, and salary range.

Dennis Forgue motioned to approve the contract with MASC to conduct the Superintendent search in the amount of \$8,500 plus advertising and expenses as outlined in the agreement. The motion was seconded by Annie Gilbert and unanimously approved.

Dennis Forgue motioned to accept the timeline as presented to include the dates listed for the focus groups by Tuesday, November 17th. The motion was seconded by Annie Gilbert and unanimously approved.

Dennis Forgue motioned to approve the survey as modified by the School Committee. The motion was seconded by Annie Gilbert and unanimously approved.

Dennis Forgue motioned to accept the qualifications as presented. The motion was seconded by Annie Gilbert and unanimously approved.

Dennis Forgue motioned to agree that the process for screening internal candidates applying for the position would be the same as external candidates. The motion was seconded by Richard Collins and unanimously approved.

Dennis Forgue motioned to establish the salary range for the new superintendent at \$180,000 to \$200,000. The motion was seconded by Richard Collins and unanimously approved.

The Committee agreed that the Focus Groups would include School Administration, Town Officials, Staff, Parents, Students Seniors, and the Andover community in general. The number of semi-finalists will range from 8-10 candidates and could go as high as 12, and the range of finalists will be 3-5 candidates.

3. Strategic Plan - Update

Dr. Nicholson reported that the Steering Committee will have their first meeting on Monday, November 30th at 7:30 a.m. and that the Pinpoint Committee Co-Chairs held their first meeting last Friday. Dr. Nicholson has been working on the Retrospective, capturing the history of significant changes and events since 2004. David Birnbach reported he and Ray Tode, Co-Chairs of the Technology Pinpoint Committee are working on the framework for digital learning and will be reporting back to the Committee. Mr. Birnbach also suggested arranging digital learning site visits at several locations (Rhode Island, Massachusetts, Virginia).

D. Facilities

1. Statements of Interest/School Building Authority

Dr. Bach reported that as a requirement by MSBA, Statement of Interest (SOI's) for schools identified as having significant issues for which funding by MSBA is being requested need to be resubmitted yearly. The refreshed SOI's for Andover High School and Shawsheen School need to be prioritized by the School Committee before submitting. Dr. Bach commented that Andover High School is still over-enrolled and core facilities remain inadequate. Deb Silberstein said there are serious failings in the high school facility.

Dennis Forgue motioned to resubmit the SOI's for Andover High School and Shawsheen School establishing Andover High School as the priority issue. The motion was seconded by Annie Gilbert, and unanimously approved.

E. Finances

1. Revenue Forecast for FY2011

Business Administrator, David Keniston provided an FY2011 Budget Estimate to the School Committee showing the estimated budget forecasted for FY2011 as \$61,804,959, which is an increase of \$2,076,081 from FY2010. The increase is the result of the built-in 1% increase in salary expenses for FY2011 and step increases for all eligible employees. The Town Manager's FY2011 shows a budget of \$60,232,830 for the School Department, which is approximately \$1,572.129, less than the FY2011 Budget he has provided.

2. Year-to-Date Financials

Mr. Keniston reported that the YTD Financials are on track with the exception of the Circuit Breaker. There is discussion with the Board of Selection to move the Special Education Budget out of the School Department Budget. Mr. Keniston is requesting approval for the budget transfers presented.

Dennis Forgue motioned to approve the budget transfers as presented. The motion was seconded by Richard Collins, and unanimously approved.

F. Citizen Input

Bob Willard, 76 Tewksbury Street suggested conveying the salary for the incoming Superintendent voted on this evening be communicated to the Town as soon as possible.

G. Consent Agenda

1. Warrant: Dave Keniston said the Warrants are in order.

Dennis Forgue motioned to approve the warrant as presented. The motion was seconded by David Birnbach and voted 5-0 to approve.

2. Field Trips: Sanborn School: Nature's Classroom, Charlton, MA for Grade 5 February 23-26, 2010; West Middle School: Washington, D.C. for Grade 8, June 1-4, 2010; and Doherty Middle School; Greece, Italy, Spain for Grades 7-8, April 13-23, 2010.

G. Consent Agenda (Cont'd)

2. Field Trips: Dennis Forgue motioned to approve the field trips as listed. The motion was seconded by David Birnbach and voted 5-0 to approve.

3. Minutes: Regular Session Minutes of October 27, 2009.

Dennis Forgue motioned to approve the School Committee Minutes of October 27, 2009 with revisions. The motion was seconded by Annie Gilbert and voted 5-0 to approve.

H. Policy

1. Student Activity Accounts

David Keniston distributed the Policy on Student Activity Accounts approved by the School Committee on June 20, 2005. The School Committee will review the policy and take whatever action deemed necessary at the next meeting.

I. Motion to Adjourn

Prior to adjourning, the School Committee wished David Keniston their best wishes as he leaves Andover to begin his new endeavor as Business Administrator for the Town of Peabody.

Dennis Forgue motioned to adjourn the Regular Meeting of the School Committee. The motion was seconded by David Birnbach, and unanimously approved. The meeting adjourned at 10:25 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Dee DeLorenzo, Recorder