

**Andover School Committee Regular Meeting
Minutes of October 22, 2015**

Members in Attendance: Annie Gilbert, Paula Colby-Clements, Joel Blumstein, Susan McCready, and Ted Teichert

Others in Attendance: Interim Superintendent Dr. Sheldon Berman

I. Call to Order and Opening Ceremonies

Chair Annie Gilbert called the meeting to order at 6:02 P.M. and led the meeting in a Moment of Silence followed by a Salute to the Flag.

II. Regular Meeting

A. New Business

1. Discussion on Superintendent for APS for the 2016-2017 School Year

With the unexpected retirement of Dr. McGrath this past year, the School Committee chose to fill the position with a interim superintendent due to the time of year, the pool of candidates being much thinner, and the importance of having a very full and flushed out process. The School Committee agreed to address the situation again this fall but have learned there are many openings for School Superintendents in other communities this year. The options for Andover would be to begin the search now or extend Dr. Berman's contract for more than just this year. The School Committee talked about their preference of the options presented.

Joel Blumstein strongly prefers the option of extending Dr. Berman's contract for a number of reasons. He has been very pleased with how things have gone over the past 4 months that Dr. Berman has been in the position and his experience and expertise on a host of items have been wonderful. Dr. Berman has created relationships with lots of people and that is something that is invaluable. All the feedback received from parents, teachers, program advisors and the community has been very positive. Mr. Blumstein also expressed the need for stability in leadership, which is an important factor particularly in light of the issues we are facing at this time.

Paula Colby-Clements is also very pleased with Dr. Berman's performance over the past four months. A number of teachers told her it was the greatest opening day they have had for the start of school. However, she worries about what the community will think where the School Committee did say they would go through the search process. On the other hand, the benefit of having someone here for 4 months it is like a 4-month interview and the opportunity to balance his performance to date.

The School Committee wants a superintendent who communicates, has budgeting experiences, and the ability to take us through change – all of the items Dr. Berman has. She would like to see the relationship extended. We will be competing with a lot of other communities for new superintendents and we have an extremely effective and competent person in place.

Ted Teichert, has observed the many changes that were done quickly over the past few months, some as simple as painting the doors at AHS. Dr. Berman has been very visible in the community and regularly communicates with the School Committee. He feels if the School Committee members are all comfortable with the interim we have, why look elsewhere.

Susan McCready echoes all previous comments. The search for a new superintendent would be a huge investment of time and having the right person in place teachers, parents, and administrators are happy with she concurs with the other School Committee members to extend Dr. Berman's contract.

Annie Gilbert said if we go out on a search, we open ourselves up to an unknown while we have a 'known' and she doesn't want to take the chance of losing Dr. Berman to another community. Some people will say its only October and how can we be so sure, but it has been 4 months of really hard work that Dr. Berman has been doing. He has been in close communication with the School Committee, established many relationships, and zeroed in on core items; to look elsewhere now would be a step backward. As Chair, she has been impressed with his ability to get to the heart of the matter quickly and his ability to empower his team to address concerns. In addition, he has brought his own experience to bear on several of our projects, especially capital projects.

The School Committee discussed the mechanics of the process of retaining Dr. Berman and wants to extend the offer for more than one year; they also agreed to appoint two School Committee members to begin negotiations with Dr. Berman. Joel Blumstein offered to be on the sub-committee along with Paula Colby-Clements.

Candace Hall, Director of Human Resources, confirmed that the market availability for school superintendents is not great and we are fortunate to have Dr. Berman. In addition, the Andover Teachers Association sent a letter stating they hope that the School Committee would seek to retain Dr. Berman.

Dr. Berman thanked the Committee for their kind comments. Although he hadn't thought about coming out of retirement, it has been a 4-month interview for him as well. He is impressed with the community and the schools in Andover and sees a deep caring about the community from so many people. During the past month he has attended many town events and was so impressed with the dedication and commitment of many town people; and many who have grown up here and stayed here.

Dr. Berman has visited all the schools and spent significant time at several of them already. He remarked on the wonderful work being done in the classrooms in so many creative ways, the quality of the instruction and curriculum is impressive. Andover has a gifted administrative team. He sees tremendous potential to bring cohesiveness to facility and long-term facility planning, and the potential to bring cohesiveness and direction to our

instructional program. The community is gifted with a talented and thoughtful School Committee and he looks forward to the collective and individual meetings with them. He still has a lot to learn, as every situation has to be approached in a different way. He will forgo his retirement for a period of time, as he has had a wonderful experience the last four months.

Susan McCready moved that the Andover School Committee authorize Joel Blumstein and Paula Colby-Clements to enter into negotiations with Dr. Shelley Berman on a successor contract for Superintendent of the Andover Public Schools. The motion was seconded by Ted Teichert and voted 5-0 to approve.

B. Consent Agenda

1. Minutes: None
2. Consent Agenda: The warrants are in order

On a motion by Joel Blumstein and seconded by Paula Colby-Clements, the Andover School Committee voted 5-0 to approve the Consent Agenda as presented.

III. Adjournment

At 6:38 P.M. on a motion by Paula Colby-Clements and seconded by Joel Blumstein, the Andover School Committee voted to adjourn. Roll call: P. Colby-Clements-Y, J. Blumstein-Y, S. McCready-Y, T. Teichert-Y, and A. Gilbert-Y.

Respectfully submitted,

Dee DeLorenzo
Recording Secretary