

Andover School Committee
Regular Meeting of April 13, 2010
School Administration Building - School Committee Room

Members in Attendance: Chair Dennis Forgue, Annie Gilbert, Richard J. Collins, David Birnbach, and Paula Colby-Clements

Others in Attendance: Dr. Claudia L. Bach, Superintendent, Dr. Susan M. Nicholson, Bernie Tuttle, Interim Business Manager, and AHS Liaison Charlie Smith

I. Regular meeting in the School Committee Room

A. Salute to the Flag

Chair Dennis Forgue reconvened the meeting from Executive Session to Open Session at 7:05 P.M. He welcomed Paula Colby-Clements to her first Regular School Committee meeting. Mr. Collins asked for a moment of silence followed by the Pledge of Allegiance led by Shawsheen School students Kevin (Kindergarten) and Ryan (Pre-school) DeMichaelis. Mr. Collins presented Kevin and Ryan with Certificates of Appreciation on behalf of the School Committee.

B. Recognition of Achievement

Dr. Bach recognized and congratulated the AHS Girls' Basketball Team who is the Division I State Champions and the Boys' Winter Track Team who won their Division State Championship. Athletic Director Chris Bergeron introduced and congratulated the Girls' Basketball Coach, Jim Tidsley and the Boys' Track Coach, Peter Comeau as well as the members of both teams who were in attendance.

Dr. Bach recognized the students in Grade 4 and Grade 8 on their contribution to the high score received at the National Education Academic Progress Test. She also congratulated the Destination Imagination (DI) Teams on their success this season recognizing the four teams who are moving onto the Global Competition, the other two teams placed 2nd and 4th.

Dr. Bach announced that AHS Math Teacher Stephanie Ragucci was awarded the 2010 MIT Inspiration Award and nominated by a former student, Alexander Su. Stephanie will be invited to MIT to be recognized and she will have access to their resources.

Dr. Nicholson congratulated Steve Sanborn who has received notification that he will be a Fulbright Scholar in India for the Fall Semester. She also recognized Paul Harding, the spouse of WMS Teacher Meg Lawlor, who was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for his first novel, "Tinkers".

Dr. Nicholson visited the Andover Historical Society to view the artwork of the AHS students on display there. She recognized and thanked AHS Art Teachers Jim Batchelder, Sara Bettencourt, Teresa Consentino, Dolores Dunning, Ed Parker, Meghan Reilly and Jonathan Wachs for their efforts in arranging this opportunity for students to display their spectacular artwork. Annie Gilbert, who attended the Art Show on opening night when the students were present, was amazed with the work the students created and what the teachers are doing with inter-disciplinary units.

Dennis Forgue attended the Robotics Contest at the University of Massachusetts in Lowell in which the Andover Robotics Club participated in the programmable tasks competition. It was a very competitive and very exciting event with Andover receiving the top award for on-line documentation.

B. Recognition of Achievement (Cont'd)

Annie Gilbert congratulated the AHS Team for winning the event and recognized the other school teams who participated.

C. Communications

1. Strategic Plan Update

Dr. Nicholson has received all the feedback from the March 11th Community Focus Group and the results are available on the Andover Public School Website. The sub-committee of the Steering Committee met last week to compose a draft of the vision and mission statements. Dr. Bach said the pinpoint committees are still working on their presentations for the School Committee.

Dr. Bach reported that Massachusetts was not awarded the funding for the Race to the Top (RTTT) Grant but will be resubmitting applications; however, applications from sixteen other States moved forward in the process. Massachusetts hopes to move forward with the submission of more districts with signatures to submit. Andover needs the School Committee, AEA leadership, and the Superintendent to sign on. Dr. Bach has sent a letter reaching out to the AEA to reconsider and discuss their concerns.

The School Academic Calendar for the school year 2010-2011 has been set and students will begin school on September 1st with teachers reporting on August 30th and August 31st. The Executive Board of the AEA declined to vote on the 2011-2012 School Academic Calendar presented to them this year. Many people were interested in having the calendars for both years approved so she hopes the AEA reconsiders their decision.

The search for a new principal for the Doherty Middle School has begun with focus groups for parents and staff held this week. Advertisements for a new Business Manager to replace our interim Business Manager were placed on-line and in the newspaper.

D. Facilities

1. Bancroft Feasibility Study

Confirmation was received from MSBA for a Feasibility Study Building meeting on April 21st at 10:30 A.M. at which time Andover will have 15 minutes to present their design and summary overview. Annie Gilbert reported that the official Feasibility Study Report was submitted on April 9th and summary reports submitted on a monthly basis. The Summary Report represents the preferred alternative footprint and the general location of the site (subject to change). On May 26th a presentation will be given before the full MSBA where a decision will be made if they support the design. The goal is to be in a position to have MSBA look at a schematic design in September and then presented to the Andover residents at a Special Town Meeting for a vote.

E. Citizen Input

Chairman Forgue asked that presentations from the audience be brief, noting that email and telephone communication is available to submit communications.

Tom Williams, 133 Holt Road requests the School Building Committee, School Committee and Board of Selectmen reduce the size of the planned Bancroft School and consider another section be added to Sanborn School to create a balance across the district.

E. Citizen Input (Cont'd)

Dennis Forgue said the School Committee has not dialogued on this subject yet and it remains in the hands of the School Building Committee, which is independent from the School Committee. Annie Gilbert reported that the original enrollment was already reduced by eliminating pre-school from the site. Unless the School Building Committee decides it cannot support the enrollment number submitted, it won't come back to the School Committee for further discussion.

F. Education

1. 2010-2011 Kindergarten enrollment

Dr. Bach submitted an enrollment chart of kindergarten numbers as of April 13th for the six elementary schools which shows a total of 275 full-day students and 113 half-day students district wide. The chart also includes the enrollment for FY-2009-10. Both West Elementary and Bancroft School will be adding a third full-day kindergarten class this year. Existing furniture and materials from the reduction of a grade one classes will be used for the extra kindergarten classrooms. Due to space constraints at Bancroft, art will be delivered using "art on the cart". Overall, the class average for full-day kindergarten is 18 students. Low enrollment for half-day kindergarten is a concern at Sanborn School with only five students enrolled and High Plain with eleven students enrolled; however, they expect additional students to register before September 1st. Dennis Forgue encouraged parents who have children in the lower enrollment half-day classes to consider placing their child at other schools for one year.

Dan Kowalski asked for information on how the kindergarten tuition is set. Mr. Tuttle will email the documents to him.

2. Recommendation for the Last Day of School for 2010

Annie Gilbert motioned to recommend approval of June 22, 2010 as the last day of school for the school year 2009-2010 barring any further non-school days. The motion was seconded David Birnbach and unanimously approved.

G. Consent Agenda

Annie Gilbert motioned to accept the consent agenda items as presented. The motion was seconded by Paula Colby-Clements and unanimously approved.

Warrants: Mr. Tuttle reported that the warrants are in order.

Field Trips: AHS: April 16th – Trip to St. Michael's College, Vermont. Grade 10 & 11.

AHS: April 23-28, 2010 Trip to Int'l Career Development Conference, Louisville, Kentucky for Grades 11 & 12.

Bancroft: October 8, 2010 –Nature's Classroom, Greenfield, NH – Grade 5

West El: October 12-15, 2010 Nature's Classroom, Greenfield, NH Grade 5

High Plain: Nov 2-5, 2010, Nature's Classroom, Greenfield, NH Grade 5 and
Nov 29-Dec 2, 2010 for Grade 5

AHS: Feb Winter Break 2011 – London, England (Brian Shea) Educational & Cultural trip

Minutes: Annie Gilbert motioned to approve the Work Session Minutes of March 25, 2010 as presented. Mr. Collins seconded the motion which was unanimously approved. The Regular Meeting Minutes of March 16, 2010 (with revisions) will be voted at the April 26th meeting.

H. Disclosures:

Annie Gilbert motioned to approve the Disclosure forms for Lori A. Bellingerri-Prometour as presented. The motion was seconded by Paula Colby-Clements and unanimously approved.

I. Policy - Second Pass No action required

JBA – Student to Student Harassment - remains unchanged

JICFB-Bullying - Mike Gilbert, MASC will revise the document to include electronic media, but not limited to texting, Instant Messaging, videos, emails, skyping, cellphones, tweeting, and social media postings.

IIB – Classroom Staffing

Special Education Revolving Account

Dr. Bach suggested tighter language be added in the school handbooks this summer to reflect the bullying policy. Annie Gilbert would like to see the longer version with different forms of harassment (teacher to teacher, teacher to student, etc) revisited as well.

J. Finances

1. FY-11 Budget

After Chairman Forgue gave an update on the recent meetings with administrators from the elementary, middle and high school and explained the options being considered to close the budget gap, he opened the meeting for discussion. A Tri-board and Executive Session with the Board of Selectmen is scheduled for Wednesday.

Annie Gilbert asked if the guidelines for the ARRA and IDEA money allocations have been received. Mr. Tuttle expects to receive the data for the formula on April 26. Approximately \$700,000 was used this year for Special Education. Hopefully, this year's money will cover some of the positions for the new Special Education Program for FY-2011. Mr. Tuttle explained the positions covered through the grant funds and decisions that have to be made should the grant monies go away. David Birnbach would like to see monies spent on Physical Education, Music, and Fine Arts, balanced out with STEM initiatives.

As of today, the budget deficit is \$2.6M. If the CIP is level-funded at the FY-10 level of \$1.2M (a reduction of \$300,000) the deficit will be \$2.2M. Using \$700,000 in ARRA funds to offset expenses reduces the net deficit to \$1.3M.

David Birnbach talked about ideas to further reduce the gap and realize \$1.3M to \$1.8M in savings. Some of his suggestions include: eliminating a middle school assistant principal and one assistant principal at AHS, using students as substitutes at AHS, level funding textbooks and library/media expenses, freezing salaries and expenses for professional development, reducing two FTE's at the middle schools, and slightly increasing class sizes at the elementary level for a reduction of 5 FTE's. He would like to see the District invest more money in technology at AHS, add elementary and middle school music teachers, and offer stipends in the amount of \$20,000 for high school academic stipends.

Annie Gilbert considers the task at hand to be looking for \$1.3M in savings to close the budget gap, not circumventing the Strategic Plan process. Leadership tools should be in place to move forward with the Daggett model and the Strategic Plan, so we should wait for the new Superintendent to come on board.

J. Finances (Cont'd)

1. FY-11 Budget

In response to the statement to cut the WHMS Assistant Principal position, Patrick Bucco-Principal of Wood Hill Middle, spoke about the students and the complex issues at the middle school level and the value of having an Assistant Principal, which allows for the Principal to be more of an instructional leader and not a full time building manager. The WHMS Assistant Principal also provides support at High Plain Elementary School.

Annie Gilbert said a portion of the budget deficit is driven by Special Education expenses which are out of our control, and an expense that should be shared by the whole town. She would like to see an effort from the teacher's association towards cutting the remaining deficit. Dennis Forgue said they will be reaching out to the AEA to consider a 3 x 3 teaching schedule at AHS or agreeing to three furlough days. David Birnbach feels the budget is heavily invested in Physical Education and Athletics, and the community expects us to make better investments in the academic area.

Dan Kowalski recommends the School Committee set priorities and build credibility. Diane Costagliola said the Andover education system is highly regarded; we need to decide on a number and go with it. Bonnie Zahorik suggests having a Strategic Plan in place before funding it. Leaders are needed to implement strategic changes and we should not be reducing school administrators, doing so would make it difficult to move forward.

Mr. Forgue reported that Team 470 will be meeting on Wednesday with a School Committee meeting tentatively scheduled for Thursday to close on a position on the budget.

K. Other

1. Town Meeting Warrant Articles

Mr. Tuttle explained the possibility of requesting \$650,000 or less to cover outstanding expenses for FY-2010 which in his estimation is clearly the Out-of-District Special Education expenses. He expects this number to be reduced and then adjusted at Town Meeting.

Annie Gilbert motioned to recommend approval of Warrant Article P-7 Supplemental Budget Appropriations at Town Meeting for supplemental coverage of \$650,000 (or less) to cover the FY-2010 deficit. The motion was seconded by Paula Colby-Clements and voted 4-1 to approve. David Birnbach opposed.

Mr. Birnbach is not comfortable with this number and feels we need to reduce budget items further and not ask for additional funds. Cindy Weber, Gavin Circle said an agreement was made at Town Meeting last year to cover \$250,000 if any over Out-of-District Special Education expense. This number has been reduced twice and she feels Mr. Birnbach should be comfortable with the \$250,000 as agreed last year.

L. Adjournment

On a motion by Richard Collins and a second by Annie Gilbert it was unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting at 10:00 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Dee DeLorenzo

Dee DeLorenzo, Recorder