

**Andover School Committee**  
**Minutes of Workshop Meeting of April 22, 2009**  
**School Administration Building - School Committee Room**

**Members in Attendance:** Chair Debra Rahmin Silberstein, Dennis Forgue, Annie Gilbert, and David Birnbach

**Others in Attendance:** Michael Gilbert, Mass Association of School Committees

Chair Deb Silberstein opened the School Committee Workshop Session at 6:33 P.M. The purpose of the meeting is to review and identify the Warrant Articles to be voted on, review School Committee communications and ground rules for new members, and to identify areas to be addressed at the April 27, 2009 budget work session.

**I. Warrant Articles**

The Committee discussed the Warrant Articles they feel require a vote by the School Committee. The discussed their recommendations for:

Articles P3-Salaries of Elected Officials: no action

P-4 FY2010 Budget (disapprove) Discussion: Choices are to 1) vote on the number 2) insert preliminary budget changes in the book or 3) to put in a more current number. Deb Silberstein asked the members to give thought to the \$500,000 shared by the Town/School and to think about which budget number to stand by; either the \$59.9 or stay with the \$60.4 and address why. David Birnbach suggested the creation of a graphic format to show contingencies planned based on the budget numbers. Annie Gilbert asked for an update on the CIP.

P-5 Capital Project Funds (hold and discuss with Dave Keniston)

P-6 Budget Transfers (hold)

P-7- Supplemental Appropriations (hold for more information)

P-8 Free Cash- (hold for more information)

P-9 Unexpended Appropriations (hold for more information)

P-40 Medicare Extension Plans for Retirees – Hold

P-61 Transfer Funds from Stabilization Fund to School Dept - (hold for more information)

P-20 School Building Maintenance & Renovation – Approve

P-22 DMS Auditorium Repairs (hold for more information)

P-65 Feasibility Study – Bancroft/Shawsheen \$735,000 (hold for more information)

P-66 Feasibility Study-Bancroft \$320,000 (hold for more information) Discussion:

Annie Gilbert provided an update on the meeting with the Shawsheen Community. Parents were positive about moving forward with the study and agreed the operating budget could be reduced with one less school on-line. In general, they seemed open to the idea. The impact on the change to the school population at Bancroft is a concern; as is redistricting changes. Michael Gilbert offered insight into various school models and ideas to consider such as Spec Ed, Pre-school, Full-day Kindergarten, etc. The negative is the short time frame to communicate ideas and information to both the Shawsheen and Bancroft communities. The positive is the Early Childhood Education opportunity at hand, and the opportunity to reduce the operating budget.

**I. Warrant Articles (Cont'd)**

Mr. Gilbert said MSBA is concerned about bricks and mortar only- Andover needs to figure out the grade configuration first.

The Committee talked about what would be in the best interest of the schools and the community and came to the conclusion more time is needed to gather information and to communicate their findings. The Feasibility Study will provide a communication opportunity. Tom Deso spoke about the parameters of the Warrant Articles and the guidelines from MSBA, reminding everyone that we have only one opportunity with MSBA and should the article(s) not be supported Town Meeting we lose this opportunity.

Mike Gilbert stated there are two things to consider: one is the age of the kids in the school building and the other is redistricting. The case has to be made educationally, and the structure of the feasibility is important (encumber 180 days before the 2010 Town meeting for final construction vote, etc). MSBA is encouraging consolidation creating bigger/larger schools.

The Committee decided to schedule another meeting at Bancroft before making their decision on the Warrant Article for the combined feasibility study.

**II. School Communications and Ground Rules**

Deb Silberstein welcomed new members David Birnbach and Annie Gilbert and presented the book, *Good to Great* by Jim Collins to both.

A packet of information on communications was distributed to the School Committee members. The concept on the importance of being a team, being open and honest, and having trust and confidence in each other was elucidated. In addition, rules and responsibilities, school committee ethics, roles of officers, process and protocols to follow when sending communications were explained. Mike Gilbert said they are a new group and it will take time to work out the dynamics, but with the right attitude and attendance at the training provided by the Massachusetts Association of School Committees he sees a strong team emerging.

**III. Areas to be addressed at April 27<sup>th</sup> School Committee Meeting**

The Committee discussed the following:

Decisions and assumptions on IDEA funds, and the frameworks on use of the funds were discussed. Mike Gilbert said the Federal Stabilization Funds will come to the School Districts as a Federal Grant. David Birnbach's number one priority is to not increase user fees and to consolidate town and school functions to gain efficiencies where possible. Mike Gilbert said it is important to consider the checks and balances of processes.

Annie Gilbert asked his thoughts on cutting whole programs and how he perceives the role of the School Committee and the Superintendent. Mr. Gilbert said the budget belongs to the School Committee and the Superintendent is the day-to-day manager. The School Committee imposes community values as representatives of the Community. When whole programs are cut, they are gone; if you want to keep a program intact, keep part of it. It is important to consider how to do things differently, what is educationally appropriate, and what will meet the needs of the community.

**I. Warrant Articles (Cont'd)**

The Committee talked about integration of programs, resiliency, restructuring funds, and the use of strategic investment dollars as well as what is valued within the school district and community. It is important to stay consistent on the theme of teaching 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills and valuing the whole child.

**IV. Motion to Adjourn**

Dennis Forgue motioned to move into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing contract negotiations and other contractual issues. The motion was seconded by Annie Gilbert, voted 4-0 and approved.

Roll Call Vote:	Deb Silberstein	Yes
	Dennis Forgue	Yes
	David Birnbach	Yes
	Annie Gilbert	Yes

The work session adjourned at 9:20 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Dee DeLorenzo  
Recorder