

**Andover School Committee**  
**Regular Meeting of March 31, 2011**  
**School Administration Building - School Committee Room**

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

**Others in Attendance:** Dr. Marinel McGrath, Superintendent, Dr. Susan Nicholson, Assistant Superintendent, Peter DeRoueve-Interim Business Manager

**I. Regular Meeting**

**A. Call to Order**

The Regular Meeting of the School Committee was opened at 7:08 P.M. by Chairman Forgue.

**B. Opening Ceremonies**

Mr. Collins asked for a moment of silence followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

**C. Citizen Input**

Bob Willard, 76 Tewksbury Street, suggested the School Committee post all the meetings, and sub-committee meetings on the School Website. Dr. McGrath stated the meetings are posted on the website and are also publicly posted.

**D. Old Business**

**1. FY-12 CIP**

Dr. McGrath reported the School CIP for FY-12 has been re-prioritized and revised and the new schedules reflect the following amounts: SCH-1 building maintenance has been reduced from \$290,000 to \$140,000; SCH-2 Projects by Building has been reduced from \$440,000 to \$100,000; SCH-3 Textbooks has been reduced from \$228,000 to \$120,000; SCH-4 Technology reduced from \$500,000 to \$160,000; and SCH-5 Major School Projects reduced from \$1.3M to 925,000; for a revised CIP total of \$1,445,000 reduced from \$2.8M. MSBA will be providing reimbursement for the major repairs for WMS but the full amount has to be appropriated first. The School Committee is required to vote on the revised CIP schedules.

On a motion by Annie Gilbert with a second by Paula Colby-Clements, it was voted 5-0 to approve the FY-12 Capital Improvement Plan Schedules 1-5 as presented.

**2. FY-12 Proposed Budget Update**

Chairman Forgue reported that the Finance Committee voted on a budget number for FY-12 earlier this week and approved what was proposed by the Town Manager. The Finance Committee has to provide a budget number for the Finance Book which goes to print on April 1<sup>st</sup>.

The Board of Selectmen made the decision to not take a position and in the spirit of cooperation, agreed to continue to work collaboratively. The School Committee will decide tonight to either adopt a budget number or continue working on the budget.

Paula Colby-Clements said the Triboard Sub-committee met at 7:0 A.M. on Monday to discuss how to balance the budget and had a discussion surrounding assumptions. The budget assumes a 40%

reimbursement from the State for Circuit Breaker funds, the Triboard Sub-committee discussed changing the assumption number to 50% (\$345,000 more) but what if the State does not come through with 50%-what then? The Sub-committee felt more comfortable leaving the assumption at 40%. The Triboard Sub-committee will meet again on Monday, April 4<sup>th</sup> to continue the discussion.

Annie Gilbert reported the School Committee Budget Sub-committee talked about the request from the Vocal Music Association to see if we would accept private funding for the .2 music position at AHS and examined the policy for accepting private dollars for public schools. They also discussed the proposed reduction of eight (8) Special Education Teachers at AHS. A series of questions have been submitted to Dr. Sharkey and John Norton and they anticipate having their responses by Monday. The SC Budget Sub-committee is still in a holding position until the additional information is received. Mrs. Gilbert is not ready to take action on an overall budget proposal.

Discussion/Comments:

Sally Mandelbaum, AHS Special Education Teacher has concerns regarding students at the high school and the elimination of the co-teaching model. There is a huge amount of collaboration between the Regular Education Teachers and Special Education Teachers on student progress and how to help students succeed. Accommodations are implemented by law and many modifications become best practices for all students. She also stated that Instructional Assistants cannot be left with the classroom if the Regular Ed Teacher has to step out with a student. Special Ed Teachers are with the students for four years, with the elimination of the Special Ed Teachers more students will be in the Standard Classroom, they won't be receiving all information, the curriculum reduced, with the possibility to mainstream diminished. Seniority bumping will cause disruption at all levels.

Paula Brady, AHS Special Education Teacher commented on a recent Boston Globe article about families unsatisfied with the Boston Public Schools and looking for a better education for their children. Many families are looking here because Andover has strong courses, high MCAS scores, and strong Special Education Programs. To maintain the standards of the Town, we need to maintain the strong facet of Special Education Teachers.

Chairman Forge polled the School Committee on what they want to do. David Birnbach wants to continue with the process and come up with creative solutions. Annie Gilbert agrees the budget is still a work in progress. Mr. Collins also agrees to continue working on a budget number. Paula Colby-Clements left the meeting prior to the question from Mr. Forgue. Chairman Forgue stated that no action would be taken on the budget number and the School Committee will continue to work with their colleagues and Sub-committees to look at all options.

**E. New Business**

**1. Preschool Tuition Rates for Full-day Peer Partners**

Peter DeRoueve provided the specifics on the full-day Peer Partners' tuition rates. Shawsheen School Principal Moira O'Brien concluded that there is a need for this service as the program is lacking in peer partners. They researched the tuition costs for the program and arrived at the following tuition rates: For the Five Day Program \$4265 half-day and \$5,265 full day; Four Day Program \$3538 half-day and \$4535 full day; Three Day Program \$3115 half day and \$4115 full day; and the Two Day Program \$2350 half-day and \$3350 full day. The fee structure would be pro-rated for parents who want to enroll their children for the remainder of this school year. A draft of the pre-school tuition rates was included in the School Committee Packet.

Annie Gilbert motioned to approve the tuition rates for Full-day Peer Partners as presented. The motion was seconded by David Birnbach and voted 4-0 to approve.

## 2. Superintendent Attendance at Apple Symposium

Superintendent McGrath explained that she has been invited to attend the Apple Leadership Symposium along with 80 other Superintendents on May 5-6 in Boston. The Symposium is on technology and how it can work to transform classrooms. The value of the Symposium is \$529 (registration/meals/lodging), which Apple will pay and by law she is required to file a disclosure form for any amount more than \$50.00. Should we purchase any Apple Products six months after the Symposium, she will file the appropriate forms with the State. The School Committee needs to approve her attendance.

On a motion by Annie Gilbert with a second by Richard Collins, it was voted 4-0 to approve the attendance of Superintendent McGrath at the Apple Symposium on May 5-6, 2011 in Boston in accordance with the State Ethics Commission and to authorize Chairman Forgue to sign the disclosure form submitted by Dr. McGrath as required by the State Ethics Commission.

## F. Policy

### 1. Private Funding

Dr. McGrath distributed a letter from Andover Public Schools Vocal Music Association (APSVMA). Annie Gilbert said Dr. McGrath brought the request from APSVMA to accept private funding dollars to pay for a position. Annie contacted Michael Gilbert from Mass Association of School Committees for assistance and guidance on this request. Mr. Gilbert informed her there are two policies in place in Andover already, and by law we cannot take the funds and guarantee where the money will be used. There are also other concerns about continued sustainability of funds. Mr. Collins feels it is inappropriate to cut programs because of seniority – kids and programs should come first. David Birnbach wants to wait and see if there are other alternatives.

Dr. McGrath said the Seniority Clause in the Teacher Contract states that professional status teachers have the right to full-time positions if they have the licensure. The Show Choir is an after-school program and should be a stipend position, not in the budget. She feels we need to explore how to make a more viable Fine Arts Program and develop a long-term vision. Some districts have setup different models (before/after school).

Bill Letsky, 10 Blackberry Lane, proposed consideration of a program with an artist in residence paid through private funding and sees the potential to develop a very dynamic arts program where the artist is brought in to work with the current teacher. APSVMA raised \$32,000 this year, their first year, and feels there is a lot of opportunity to bring in additional funds if they keep the momentum moving. APSVMA Treasurer, Bernadette Lionetta understands the position was cut purely as an efficiency savings. They want to look at a long-term vision for Performing Arts and explore all options. She wonders if there would be an opportunity for co-teaching the Chorus Program. Carter Letsky, 10 Blackberry Lane and a student at AHS submitted a petition signed by 200 students to reconsider the .2 music position. Lisa Johnson asked the School Committee as school leaders, to help them preserve programs for music. Students are engaged in a positive activity, making this cut now is not in the best interest of the students, school, and the Town.

Jared Rosen said the TV Studio partners with ACAM and feels a Performing Artist in Residence Program could be beneficial.

Dr. McGrath said the .2 position is symbolic of a larger issue within the entire school system. There are 13.7 other positions being considered for reduction and represents a major structural deficit at all three levels. Annie Gilbert said the School Committee would not be taking action this evening as they are still trying to figure this out while honoring the way the school system is run. Dennis Fogue appreciates the ideas and suggestions presented.

2. Attendance within Prescribed Attendance Areas

The Committee discussed the request of Craig Bonniker, 112 High Street to redistrict the address from DMS to WMS. The property sits on a location that borders both DMS and WMS lines. The property is for sale and they have an offer contingent to the address being redistricted to WMS. Annie Gilbert said the policy states the School Committee can make exceptions in extraordinary cases. She is willing to entertain the request as it is very legitimate request as you look at the where the property is located and the request is unlike others received. David Birnbach is concerned about setting a precedent. The Committee decided to taken the matter under consideration and to present their decision at their next meeting on April 7<sup>th</sup>.

**G. Consent Agenda**

1. Warrants: The warrants are in order.
2. Minutes: Regular Meeting Minutes of March 3, 2011 and March 10, 2011 revised.

On a motion by Annie Gilbert with a second by Richard Collins, it was voted 4-0 to approve the Consent Agenda as presented.

**H. Adjournment**

On a motion by Richard Collins, with a second by Annie Gilbert it was voted 4-0 to adjourn the meeting at 9:12 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

*Dee DeLorenzo*  
Recorder

Documents: CIP Revised Schedules 1-5  
Disclosure Form for Dr. McGrath  
Policies: Public Gifts to the Schools, Funding Proposals and Applications, and Attendance within Prescribed School Attendance Areas  
Draft of the Pre-School Tuition Rates for Peer Partners for 2011-2012  
Letter from APSVMA Committee: Considerations for Performing Arts  
Revised Minutes of March 3, 2011 and March 10, 2011