

Andover School Committee
Budget Workshop
Minutes of March 1, 2012
School Administration Building - School Committee Room

Members in Attendance: Vice- Chair Paula Colby-Clements, Dennis Forgue, Richard Collins
Others in Attendance: Dr. Marinel McGrath, Superintendent, Paul Szymanski, Assistant Superintendent, Finance & Administration, Assistant Superintendent Nancy Duclos

I. Budget Workshop

A. Call to Order

The Regular Meeting of the School Committee was opened at 7:06 P.M. by Vice-Chair Paula Colby-Clements. There is only one item on the agenda, the FY-13 Preliminary School Budget.

B. Opening Ceremonies

Mr. Collins asked for a moment of silence followed by the Pledge of Allegiance led by P.J. Lorenti, a 7th Grade student at WMS. Mr. Collins presented PJ with a Certificate of Appreciation on behalf of the School Committee.

C. FY-13 Preliminary Budget

Superintendent McGrath recognized the Leadership Team, the Budget Sub-Committee (Dennis, Paula, and Annie), Brian Major, Jon Stumpf, the Town Manager and his staff, Candace Hall, Joyce Laundre' and especially Paul Szymanski and his staff, Janet Wright, Kathy Gilmore, Doreen Bille, and Mary Robinson without whom the budget could not have been constructed. Tonight's presentation is a macro-view of the Preliminary Budget with key points and excerpts from the Vision and Mission statements. The three steps in the budget process begins with tonight's presentation of the Preliminary Budget followed by the Proposed Budget presentation at the March 7th Triboard Meeting, and finally the Recommended Budget which the School Committee votes to approve on March 29th.

The Preliminary Budget includes the FY-12 appropriations and current positions, continuations of the Special Education Programs, administration and staffing expenses supporting enrollment and the Strategic Plan, and all statutory regulations and mandates.

The FY-13 Preliminary Budget number is \$66,263,983 which is a 4.7% increase over the FY-12 approved budget of \$63,284,577. Salaries for FY-13 total \$52,522,838 and Expenses \$13,741,145. The Town Manager's recommended budget is a 3.1% increase over FY-12 and includes the \$150,000 for the transfer of the two IT positions, resulting in a projected funding gap for FY-13 in the amount of \$867,584. The budget increase is attributed to salary increases for track, step, and longevity as well as 2% COLA adjustments, the cost of new and existing evaluation and therapies, transportation for regular and homeless students, and Medicare costs.

It should be noted that the Federal Stimulus Education Jobs Grant in the amount of \$541,909 expired, as did the PEP Federal Grant covering Health and Physical Education expenses in the amount of \$230,572 for a total of \$772,481. If the Town approves additional funding to cover the loss of these grant funds, then the FY-13 Budget gap would be \$95,103.00. The FY-

13 Budget supports the APS Strategic Plan focusing on high academic achievement, technology-supported learning, teaching and leading, communications, planning and partnerships as well as educational funding, financial management and the infrastructure.

The seven Strategic Plan Initiatives for Andover High School include: a Grade 6-12 World Language Program Advisor, Grade 6-12 Science Program Advisor, School Resource Officer, Digital Curriculum Guides, continuing with the 1:1 IPad Initiative (Year 2), the Teacher Digital Classroom Initiative through Warrant Articles, and a Media Center Assistant.

At the Middle School the Strategic Plan Initiatives include: restoring the School Adjustment Counselors, implementing the Grade 6 & 7 French Language Program, a Grade 6-12 World Language Program Advisor as well as a Grade 6-12 Science Program Advisor, continuing with the 1:1 IPad Initiative (Year 2), and the Teacher Digital Classroom Initiative.

The Strategic Plan Initiatives for the Elementary Schools are to maintain class size, initiate a LEAP Program for students in Grades 3-5 who have significant language-based learning disabilities, continuing the 1:1 IPad Initiative (Year 2), and the Teacher Digital Classroom.

District initiatives include a PK-12 Instructional Technology Coordinator, focusing staff development in areas of technology supported learning, data analysis, team development, student assessment, and tiered instruction for all students. The District initiatives also include Digital Curriculum Mapping and Development, an expanded parent portal, and continuation of the Special Education Programs through the development of LEAP for students in Grades 3-5, expanding the EXCEL Program for students in Grades 9-12, and implementing a Post-Grade 12 EXCEL Program in collaboration with North Andover and Northern Essex Community College.

The Warrant Articles for the creation of the Digital Classrooms will allow us to personalize learning and the four 'C's; creativity, critical thinking, communication, and collaboration. Today's students use technology for everything they do including research, entertainment, communication, personal productivity, creativity, and organization. The mobile devices will enable constant connectivity changing the definition of learning and teaching through one-on-one programs, and will be accessible anytime, anywhere, improving student engagement. A one-on-one program is defined as every teacher and student having a laptop that travels with them to and from school to use to access digital content, electronic textbooks, projects, research materials, and to provide the ability to submit assignments online through a digital drop-box. Teachers will need wireless access, a portable device, and projection system to operate a digital classroom. Students will supply their own devices (portable laptop, tablet, etc).

The rollout plan for the Digital Classroom begins with teachers who are enthusiastic and have demonstrated a willingness to support learning with technology and who will engage in the required staff development tied to the Strategic Plan. It is the expectation that within two years all teachers will support learning through technology.

The Staff Development and Curriculum Development requirements will support the teachers to increase their knowledge of applying critical thinking and problem solving, creativity, innovation, collaboration and communication skills within the content area, and with a decreased reliance on textbooks as the sole source of information. It will be a seamless integration of devices rolled out in the classroom, and teachers will reach out and collaborate with other school districts engaged in the one-on-one digital classroom environment.

It is suggested that the investment into technology be sustained through the allocation of funds in the annual operating budget of each Town and School Department (i.e. four year cycles) so that the equipment stays current. The School Department must commit yearly funds for on-going staff development for the migration to the digital classroom to be successful.

The vision for the one-to-one student program for 2013-2014 is to introduce it at AHS first with the incoming Grade 9 students, and each Grade 9 class going forward. The cost to students will be approximately \$250 per year for the four years they are at AHS, and will cover their device, software, and insurance-replacement costs. The District costs include upgrading the network and infrastructure, technical support, integration support, and on-going professional development.

The School Committee will discuss the *proposed* budget throughout the month with a Public Hearing scheduled on March 15th, a Regular Meeting of the School Committee on March 22nd, and on March 29th the School Committee will vote on the *recommended* budget. The first night of Town Meeting is Monday, April 30th at the Collins Field House. All Town and School boards and committees have been working together with the attitude that we are all in this together to realize what our children need and what our citizens expect.

Discussion/Questions

Dennis Forgue noted that the Warrant Article for the upgrade to the Town/School Network and Infrastructure will be paid for through the Cable Franchise Fees from Verizon and Comcast ~ with no new revenue derived or taken from any other program.

Paul Puzzanghera said the educational benefits of the Warrant Article were clearly articulated by Superintendent McGrath and noted that Andover is well behind all of our peer communities and we need to catch up. The fundamental revamping of the infrastructure for the next ten-fifteen years with no additional taxation is a one time opportunity for both the Town and School and will increase productivity for all.

Bob Marshall, 4 Samos Lane does not agree with this decision and feels a gradual movement to upgrading the technology should be considered because technology is continually changing.

On behalf of the Andover Teacher's Association, AEA President Kerry Costello said the teachers are willing and eager to have training and to begin using the technology components. The current software and hardware used is aged well beyond it's time.

Dennis Forgue noted the reduction in the Out-of-District costs which is due to ten fewer students going Out-of-District, and explains the reduction in transportation fees. He encourages the School Department to continue controlling these costs. However, he would like to know what factors have driven the increase in the Evaluation & Therapy account. Dr. McGrath said there are several items including but not limited to salaries, COLA, the GLEC contract, and home training. She has asked the Director of Student Services, Joyce Laundre', to conduct an in-depth analysis of this account to see where costs can be reduced.

Mr. Forgue pointed out that the budget presented includes some change in the high school schedule but does not fund the 2% COLA and High School Schedule costs – only accommodations and assumptions have been made in the budget to reflect that.

Paula Colby-Clements thanked the entire Leadership Team for their dedication and hard work in putting the FY-13 Preliminary Budget together; it is a difficult process requiring tough decisions. She also acknowledged the work of the other Boards, Committees, and Sub-Committees and appreciates the time given to the School Department to work through the budget numbers. It is exciting to finally map a budget to a Strategic Plan that is going to move education forward for all students.

C. Consent Agenda

1. Warrants: Payroll Warrants: 12SS10, 12S033, 12S034, and 12S035
Expense Warrants: SW1215A and SW1215

Paul Szymanski reported the Warrants to be in order.

On a motion by Dennis Forgue with a second by Richard Collins, the School Committee voted 3-0 to approve the Consent Agenda as presented.

D. Adjournment

On a motion by Richard Collins and seconded by Dennis Forgue, the School Committee voted 3-0 to adjourn the Regular Meeting of March 1, 2012 at 8:26 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Dee DeLorenzo
Recorder

Documents: APS FY-13 Leadership Team Preliminary Budget Request
School Warrants: 12SS10, 12S033, 12S034, 12S035, SW1215A, SW1215