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**Board of Selectmen/School Committee/Finance Committee**  
**Minutes of Triboard Meeting of March 9, 2016**

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**I. Call to Order/Roll Call**

Chair Mary O'Donoghue called the Triboard Meeting of the Board of Selectmen, Finance Committee, and School Committee to order at 7:00 P.M. in the School Committee Room in the School Administration Building. Present from the Board of Selectmen: P. Salafia-Y, A. Vispoli-Y, R. Landry-Y, and M. O'Donoghue-Y.

Finance Committee Chair S. Jon Stumpf opened the meeting for the Finance Committee. Present from the Finance Committee: J. Marden-Y, M. Kruse-Y, L. Anderson-Y, E. Moffitt-Y, Y, B. Zahorik-Y, J. Barry-Y, G-Serrao-Y, B. Taylor-Y, and S. Jon Stumpf-Y.

School Committee Chair Annie Gilbert opened the meeting for the School Committee. Present from the School Committee: J. Blumstein-Y, T. Teichert-Y, S. McCready-Y, and A. Gilbert-Y.

Also present: Town Manager Andrew Flanagan, Superintendent Dr. Sheldon Berman, Assistant Superintendent Paul Szymanski, Assistant Superintendent Dr. Nancy Duclos, and Finance Director Donna Walsh. The meeting was duly posted and cablecast live.

**II. Opening Ceremonies/Moment of Silence/Pledge of Allegiance**

The meeting began with a moment of silence followed by the Pledge of Allegiance led by Raj Kontham, a 4<sup>th</sup> Grade student from High Plain Elementary School. Raj was presented with a Certificate of Appreciation on behalf of the School Committee.

**III. FY-2017 Preliminary School Budget Presentation**

Dr. Berman presented the Andover Public Schools FY-17 budget and shared information on data collected over the past several months on Andover's performance over time and significant in telling us what the 10 most comparative Communities demographically are as compared to Andover. Andover's academic performance on graduation rates and SAT scores has been consistent over the past ten years, our standing in comparison to other districts has remained consistent, and Andover's students' success in institutions of higher learning shows that 16 months after graduation, Andover's trend line is going up over time and this is some of the most important pieces of data reflecting that we are having greater success in helping our students to get into and stay in college. Comparing per pupil expenditures, Andover increases about the same as the other communities, but the percent increase year-to-year in budget went down significantly during the recession and has been steadily improving.

Average budget increases from FY-11 to FY2016 have been about 3.4%. The total of the budget drivers for FY-17 is \$4,002,483 or 5.46% with only a few items within our control. Enrollment was under-projected for this year resulting in a reduction in staff at the elementary level and more crowded classrooms than anticipated. In order to implement the change to the new High School Schedule requires additional staffing. The Town Manager's most recent budget recommendation for the School Department is \$75,480,829 and the budget proposal presented by Dr. Berman is \$77,299,074.

Special Education and OOD Placement Expenditures are projected to cost \$6.6M for next year, and there is a one-year delay in receiving Circuit Breaker funds. Increase in special education enrollment is a direct cause of increased staff. The last three years we have been above the State average for students in special education and we are anticipating an increase in expenditures due to this. Special Education increases are four times what Regular Education increases are. We need to reinvest in Regular Education.

A review of elementary enrollment shows that we are at the highest-class size since 2009-2010 and will stay at this level unless we add staff. We need to intervene in particular situations at schools where additional staff will make a difference. Dr. Berman explained the impact on classrooms when an additional teacher is added which impacts the whole school. Sanborn Grade 4 and High Plain Grade 2 will see a decrease in classroom sizes in those grade levels by 7 students. A review of the growth in the K-12 ELL population shows about a 20% increase every year, and additional housing developments may cause a major impact in enrollment and an increase in ELL students over the next several years.

Benefits in the new AHS schedule includes a shift from a semester break schedule to a schedule with year-long courses (7 classes with one block called an H-Block) the H-Block will be used for personalization, additional assistance for students, project work, and time for counselors to have meetings with classes, etc. It is a rotating schedule so there is flexibility in the schedule for students and provides dedicated collaborative time for teachers to plan. Costs of the schedule include purchase of additional textbooks in the amount of \$335,000 that will be paid through the FY-16 CIP, delaying some of our implementation to designate the funds for texts and online materials. The schedule does not do as well accommodating special education staffing for students requiring three additional teachers, and 2.7 FTE teachers for regular education. The total cost is \$336,000 for staffing to keep class size the same, and \$335,000 for texts.

The proposed School Department Budget for FY-2017 includes \$62,439,861 in Personnel costs, \$14,859,215 for General Expenses, for a total of \$77,299,074.

1. **Public Input**

**Questions:** **The increase in elementary enrollment, what did we do in prior years when we had more students.** *We had more teachers (109) this year we only have 101 teachers because we cut staffing last year (or did not rehire for retirement).*

**How many ELL teachers do we have?** *We have restructured our ELL teacher schedules based on changes from the State and now because we are not able to afford more teachers, we will be servicing them by mixing levels. 12.9 are separate from classroom teachers. We are also restructuring math at the middle schools and would like to add 3 more math teachers, but the Middle School Principals have pulled back their request and will work the restructuring with the staff they have in place.*

**Will the new H-Block have a dramatic impact on the enrollment in institutions of higher learning?** *Advantages of the schedule are having the continuity across the year with students/subjects and the H-Block will allow time for students to meet with their teachers during the school day. This will be a significant support for students. We should have some independent evaluation to see if it has produced the effect desired and to make recommendations and refinements.*

**On Page 13 of the Budget Book there is a change in some costs from 2012 through 2016 not related to student learning. Increases are larger than the compound rate in teacher salaries. If we can control more of those funds, we wouldn't see the increase requested.** *Some accounts were consolidated to be manageable for the presentation; we have made some changes and more that we will be looking at. Expenditures will now be tracked and when they change we will be able to explain the rationale.*

**How did the innovator position become a permanent position?** *The School Committee and Superintendent discussed the need for that position and the decision was made to put funds into contracted services to secure a consultant, it happened that a very incredible talent reached out to us and he has been an excellent hire. He started innovation teams in each school by engaging students in projects and supporting teachers to be more innovative. The desire in Andover is not to be mid-stream but to be at the top and by stimulating innovation will move the district forward.*

**The single highest expense in the school system is staffing - what happened with the Position Control module - what is status of that.** *The position control module is partially installed and used for IA's and teachers only. We have good control over positions with only minor instances with substitutes, and instructional assistants. We are in control of the number of positions we have and what the payroll expense is. The difficulty is if someone wants to know what the FTE's are - but we can tell you what number of FTE's are budgeted for and we have confidence that we are appropriately paying the appropriate number of people. Donna Walsh said the position control module came with the payroll module from Munis.*

**Is it worth investing in a position to oversee position control?** *Formal Position control using Accountability spreadsheets and looking at our payroll to makes sure it corresponds to staffing...we are doing that. There is value to a position control system but does not see the incremental savings we would get right now.*

**Special Education Student categories are shown on page 46 from 2012 through 2016. There has been an increase in eligibility, families moving into Andover with Special Education plans, because Andover is an attractive community with good solid programs that attracts families.** *The Goal is to provide better education for kids.*

**Explain how the total elementary number of students is up but the elementary teachers are down.** *The kindergarten classroom size has been consistent but in grades 1-5 they have consistently had 108-109 teachers and were reduced to 101 this year in anticipation of a decline in enrollment, but instead our enrollment rose.*

**Is there a way to systemically account for technology in the various school departments?** *A lot of the technology expenses are in the business office budget and the operating budget. The most important thing is it has to be aligned with the DESE Chart of Accounts, with the new application within the MUNIS Module we could. Tech expenses show up in many areas and Dr. Berman will try to get the information for the Triboard.*

**Repurposing of teacher computers coming off lease in another year and being redeployed to 5<sup>th</sup> graders - that are school owned machines, how do you feel about the request for more customer service support within the Tech Department.** *We are going to try to do the best we can next year and when we move to 4<sup>th</sup> grade there will be an absolute need to provide this support request. The real challenge is to look at Technology as multi-year program not as individual line items but as a unified item to determine the overall value.*

The School Department is making decisions that are controlling other budgets, i.e. staffing affects healthcare, OPEB, etc. The budgets are so tied together there should be consideration of how the costs affect the Town side / full cost of staffing. There is a history of spending in the school department and with technology costs, when we are making decisions on budgets; we have to look at the whole budget not just the school budget.

Chair O'Donoghue thanked Dr. Berman and his staff on the presentation of the School Department Budget and for providing a more detailed budget book that offers more transparency

#### **IV. Adjournment**

At 9:12 P.M. on a motion by Alex Vispoli and seconded by Bob Landry, the Board of Selectman moved to adjourn from the March 9, 2016 Triboard Meeting. Roll call: P. Salafia-Y, A. Vispoli-Y, R. Landry-Y, and M. O'Donoghue-Y.

On a motion by John Barry and seconded by Linn Anderson the Finance Committee moved to adjourn from the March 9, 2016 Triboard Meeting. Roll call: J. Marden-Y, M. Kruse-Y, L. Anderson-Y, E. Moffitt-Y, Y, B. Zahorik-Y, J. Barry-Y, G-Serrao-Y, B. Taylor-Y, and S. Jon Stumpf-Y.

On a motion by Joel Blumstein and seconded by Susan McCready, the School Committee moved to adjourn from the March 9, 2016 Triboard Meeting. Roll call: J. Blumstein-Y, T. Teichert-Y, S. McCready-Y, and A. Gilbert-Y.

Respectfully submitted,

Dee DeLorenzo  
Recording Secretary

Documents: FY-2017 School Department Budget