

**Andover School Committee  
Minutes of August 1, 2019**

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**Members in Attendance:** Chair, Joel Blumstein, Vice-Chair, Tracey Spruce, Paul Murphy, Susan McCready, and Shannon Scully. (Susan McCready teleconferenced in)

**Others in Attendance:** Superintendent Berman (teleconferenced in)  
Paul Szymanski Assistant Superintendent for Finance & Administration

**I. Regular Meeting-**

**Call to Order**

The Chair called the meeting to order at 6:00 P.M. in the School Committee Meeting Room located in the School Administration Building. The meeting began with a Moment of Silence and a Salute to the Flag

**II. Executive Session**

Shannon Scully moved for the School Committee to meet in Executive Session pursuant to M.G.L. chapter 30A, sec. 21(a) for Purpose 2: to conduct a strategy session in preparation for and to conduct negotiations with nonunion personnel, specifically the Superintendent and Assistant Superintendents; and Purpose 7: to comply with, or act under the authority of, any general or special law; specifically, to perform a review of executive session minutes dated 6/6/19, 6/20/19 (two sets), 6/26/19, 7/10/19, and 7/15/19 pursuant to M.G.L. c30A, sec 22 and to determine whether all or portions of such minutes may be publicly released. Tracey Spruce seconded the motion. Roll call vote: S. McCready-Y, P. Murphy-Y, S. Scully, T. Spruce-Y, J. Blumstein-Y. Motion passes 5-0.

**III. Regular Meeting Continues**

**A. Call to Order/Moment of Silence/Salute to Flag**

**B. Recognitions & Communications**

Dr. Berman:

~ Extended an invitation to School Committee Members to join Central Office Staff working with Civics Plus to update the APS Website and/or assist Candace Hall with updating the benefits package for new Independent Employees. Susan McCready volunteered to join the group revising the website, Tracey Spruce and Joel Blumstein will work with Candace Hall on updating the benefits for new Independent employees. Paul Szymanski suggested they reach out to Janet Wright for historical data.

~ Reported that Governor Baker signed the budget for FY20. The Circuit Breaker is funded at \$345.1M, an increase of 17.7% over last year taking us closer to 74% funding adding \$130,000 more than anticipated into our FY20 Budget.

~ Announced that the two positions approved in the FY19-20 Budget have been filled. Jennifer Pieroni, Grants Administrator, and Hannah Tolla, Data and Financial Analyst will be joining us in mid-August.

~ A position to support the AHS Special Ed Program has been requested by Sara Stetson and Phil Conrad. Pam Lathrop and Michelle Costa have requested an increase in secretarial time from .4 to .6.

Chairman Blumstein recommended scheduling a meeting to discuss where the resources

would come from for the additional hires. Shelley will draft a memo on the request for positions and send to the School Committee.

C. **Public Input** None

D. **Response to Public Input** N/A

E. **New Business**

1. **Contract Extension for Superintendent**

The Chair said the School Committee has spent a significant amount of time looking at issues past and present and received input that covered a wide-range of views.

Susan McCready and Tracey Spruce were appointed to work with Dr. Berman on contract negotiations. Dr. Berman's current contract ends June 30, 2020 and an amendment for a 2-year extension to the current contract that would extend his contract to June 30, 2022 is proposed. It includes a retirement contribution of \$25K per year or the maximum allowed by IRS rules (whichever is less) and changes to the vacation carry-over language to carry over 35 vacation days instead of 40 and with the approval of the School Committee Chair, not the Committee as a whole.

**Remarks from the School Committee**

Tracey Spruce: It was not an easy decision as there were pros and cons with all available options. The key was what's best for students. Shelley's leadership over the past 4 years has moved the district forward in many areas, including treating our children not just as test scores. The decision is based on direct observation of his work and feedback from parents, faculty, and administrators. Dr. Berman has had significant accomplishments; one single error does not warrant not continuing his contract. She has concerns with negative media attention and the tone of the public discourse.

Susan McCready: Thanked everyone who engaged in the process and provided constructive and valid concerns of a renewal. It is not realistic to expect perfection in anyone, and you cannot satisfy every member of the community. She is very satisfied with the educational accomplishments that have been made in the District.

Paul Murphy: He intends to vote against the motion. He favors a one-year extension due to having a high-functioning organized leader. Distractions previously referenced (real and imagined) have been detrimental and embarrassing and do not allow him to support a 2-year extension, but he is hopeful of the work that will happen in the next 3 years. He has a deep respect for the process and is deeply respectful of the work Shelley has done. His vote should not be an indictment of his work, but that a one-year extension is sufficient.

Shannon Scully: Spent scores of hours on the Superintendent's job performance and appreciates everyone's input on the extension of his contract. As Chair last year working closely with Dr. Berman, she has a strong understanding of his strengths and weaknesses and the work that has gone on in the District. There are areas to be improved and Dr. Berman has areas of weakness to address. She feels we must do what is in the best interest of APS students and therefore is in

favor of the extension. Dr. Berman has brought the stability that many craved for Andover and agrees there is important work still to be done and that the district will benefit from allowing Dr Berman to continue that work.

Joel Blumstein: Has given a tremendous amount of thought as to what is in the best interest of students. Joel is convinced that we are moving in the right direction and that a 2-year extension to Dr. Berman's contract will allow that work to continue and he therefore supports the extension.

The Committee anticipates that in the fall of 2021 they will begin a very broad search for a new superintendent. Finding a high-quality superintendent is not easy.

Public Comment:

Jonathan Longley spends a lot of time in the Engineering Department at AHS helping to build a model engineering center at AHS (The IDEA Center) and is very happy with the way things are going under the direction of Dr. Berman. The STEM results for technology and engineering are good. Shelley may not always speak with perfect diplomacy but sometimes that is the way you have to be when you are leading and Dr. Berman does lead well.

Tracey Spruce moved that the Andover School Committee vote to approve an amendment to the Employment Agreement with Superintendent, Dr. Sheldon Berman, providing for a two-year contract extension as presented and to authorize the Chair of the Committee to sign the amendment on behalf of the Committee. Susan McCready seconded the motion. Roll call: S. McCready-Y, P. Murphy-N, S. Scully, T. Spruce-Y, J. Blumstein-Y. 4-1 motion passes. Paul Murphy opposed.

Dr. Berman is appreciative that he can stay in Andover until he retires. The School Committee was very thoughtful in their decision and demonstrated the care and concern that they bring to their work as volunteers making sure that they are doing the best for the District. It has been a pleasure for him to serve as Superintendent in Andover, and he is very honored that they offered him a 2-year extension.

F. Consent Agenda

1. Warrants Expense: SW2002, Payroll 20S005 and 20S004

2. Minutes: June 6, 2019

3. Grants/Donations to District: None

On a motion by Tracey Spruce and seconded by Paul Murphy, the Andover School Committee voted 5-0 to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. Roll call: S. McCready-Y, P. Murphy-Y, S. Scully-Y, T. Spruce-Y, J. Blumstein-Y.

G. Adjournment

At 7:50 P.M. on a motion by Paul Murphy and seconded by Tracey Spruce, the Andover School Committee voted 5-0 to adjourn the meeting of August 1, 2019. Roll call: S. McCready-

Y, P. Murphy-Y, S. Scully-Y, T. Spruce-Y, J. Blumstein-Y.

Respectfully submitted,

Dee DeLorenzo  
Recording Secretary