

Andover School Committee
Minutes of May 14, 2020
Virtual Meeting

Participants from the School Committee: Chairman Joel Blumstein, Vice Chair Tracey Spruce, Shannon Scully, Susan McCready, and Paul Murphy.

Others participating: Superintendent Shelley Berman, Assistant Superintendents Sandra Trach, Paul Szymanski, Sara Stetson, Director of Communications Nicole Kieser, Director of Innovation Stephen Chinosi.

I. Regular Meeting

Call to Order/Moment of Silence

Chairman Blumstein called the Andover School Committee meeting of May 14, 2020 to order at 6:00 P.M. and opened up the Regular Meeting through a Virtual Meeting Broadcast by Andover TV and on Comcast Channel 99, Verizon Channel 43 or via streamed:

www.andovertv.org **Public Participation via email: scremote@andoverma.us**

Alison Phelan and Shelley Berman will be screening the emails.

The meeting began with a Moment of Silence.

A. Recognitions & Communications

1. Superintendent: Update on APS District Closure

Dr. Berman reported that the principal searches for AHS and South School are moving along quite well.

Candace Hall announced her retirement for October 2020. Candace has done an extraordinary job for the Town/School over the past 30 years. The screening committee will consist of members from the Town and School side.

Phase II of the closing has been going along well, there has been more involvement of students and more participants in Google Meets across the district. A Town and School Task Force, co-chaired by Mike Lindstrom and Paul Szymanski, is being formed to begin plans to re-open.

Sandy Trach said they are working on Title I and ELL Summer School and Sara Stetson said they have been working on an extended school program as well. Steve Chinosi reported that the Capstone Virtual Ignite Session, the Capstone Presentation and the induction of the 50 Global Scholars will be held virtually next week.

Paul Szymanski reported on the Phase I plans to prepare for the end of the year and returning student belongings. They have ordered 6,000 bags which student belongings will be placed in and distributed. Only students in the middle and high school will be able to enter the building. They have plans developed for moving up days for elementary and middle school students.

Phil Conrad reported on the activities of the 2020 Graduating Class. Senior celebrations began on Tuesday with AHS staff delivering personalized signs, caps and gowns, and Year Books to the student's homes. A number of virtual events are planned and individual appointments are being scheduled for seniors to come to the Collins Center along with a few members of their family to have a professional picture taken. Senior Awards and Scholar's Night will also be virtual. Their hope is to have a large-scale graduation later in the summer, pending information from the Governor and Commissioner.

Dr. Berman read an email from a resident who thanked all the teachers for their efforts during this difficult time and asked if remote learning will be continued. *Yes. Teachers are becoming more comfortable with live video conferencing for whole class and small group exchanges. Sandra Trach added that we are expecting to hear more from the MA Dept. of Education on re-entry plans for the fall.*

Paul Murphy reported on an email he received from a parent stating that they are thankful for all of the support from teachers.

Tracey Spruce reported on the West Elementary Building Committee Meeting held this morning. There will be a Zoom Meeting on June 3rd with members of the Committee, architects and others.

Susan McCready thanked everyone who helped to reach out to the AHS Seniors. The Sanborn Parade was held today and it was nice to see people in person.

Joel Blumstein attended the CREST Board of Directors Meeting and reported that the sale of their Broadway facility has been finalized. They will be moving into a facility on Shattuck Road in Andover the end of this calendar year. We may be receiving a small amount of funds back from CREST this year. The CREST Board voted not to increase tuitions for FY-21.

B. Public Input

1. Public Input – none

C. Response to Public Input – N/A

D. New Business

1. Update from West Elementary SBC: Chair, Paula Colby Clements

Paula Colby Clements provided an update on the School Building Committee Status in the MSBA process. As of this morning's meeting, SMMA Architects submitted the Preferred Schematic Report (PSR) to MSBA on May 6th. The Committee has been meeting with SMMA every two weeks since January to move the project along.

The building project also includes the Shawsheen Pre-school. They are working with MSBA to vet the design of PSR which includes three different designs with one design noted as preferred by the Committee. They expect comments back from MSBA and based on the feedback they will update the design.

There will be a meeting on June 3rd with an the MSBA sub-committee, Dr. Berman, Architects, PMA, Andrew Flanagan and Paula to discuss the project. Everything is still in a preliminary phase; an overall project cost went out which was much higher than anticipated.

At this morning meetings, based on the current climate, it was asked if we need to think about social distancing. The architects said that the future will be driven by what we are doing now, enhanced virtual learning. Paul Puzzanghera, provided information on technology options and opportunities at today's meeting.

MSBA will not pay for an auditorium in an elementary school. The Committee has had many discussions on how we could make the room more multi-purpose and at some point, a recommendation will be submitted to the School Committee to vote on. Tracey Spruce said they did get some push back on some of the spaces proposed from MSBA. MSBA will pay 30-40% of the eligible cost of the building only, not the furnishings.

The Committee discussed the information collected from the community including a \$6M Flexitorium that is not covered by MSBA. The auditorium has been very important to the West Elementary Community, but Tracey has deep concerns on asking the community to make that investment knowing there other building projects under consideration Joel agreed that this may not be feasible based on the future projects. Dr. Berman talked about re-thinking the cafeteria space based on configuring the space differently for students with disabilities and other uses.

Shannon asked that they check to make sure the student population number of 953, voted on by the School Committee, is still a valid number for West Elementary. Shannon also inquired about the cost of the Pre-School provided by SMMA, which is much higher than anticipated. Paula reported that there are items in the Pre-School plan that are in many Districts now (Anxiety Room, PT/OT rooms, Quiet Room), etc. One of the goals at this point, is to build the school to meet the unique needs of students so they are not sent out-of-district. Paula Colby-Clements said they will need direction from the School Committee on the Flexitorium.

2. Update on FY21 Revised Budget: Town Manager, Andrew Flanagan

Town Manager, Andrew Flanagan, provided an update on the revised budget due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. The Town Manager thanked Donna Walsh and Patrick Lawlor for working with him on the budget to minimize impacts on the budget and approached the exercise to try and maintain the operating budgets initially proposed. The most difficult part has been planning for the un-known.

We have not received any indication from the State on State Aid. Therefore, many of the projections are based on worst-case scenarios and building in some flexibility. They are planning on a worst-case scenario reduction of \$6.2M for the FY-21 budget and projecting up to a 20% reduction on unrestricted State Aid, a reduction in Local Option taxes (lodging/meal tax), Motor Vehicle Excise Tax Receipts, and License and Permits. If the first quarter revenue is less or more, we need to be prepared for any 9C cuts from the Governor mid-year that would double the impact.

Miscellaneous Reductions

Under the proposed revised budget, the retirement appropriation will be reduced by \$700,000, General Liability Insurance reduced by \$100,000, and the Overlay Reserve reduced by \$100,000 for a total of \$900,000 in reductions.

This proposed revised budget reduces Article 5 (CIP) by 4.1%. Items departments determined as essential will now be funded through Free Cash, and other projects will be authorized but delayed; reducing the budget from \$4.3M to \$4.1M. The balance of \$1.1M will come out of the Town/School Operating Budgets.

The School Committee will need to re-vote the Budget and the Free Cash Article.

Shelley talked about concerns with Chapter 70 funding; if it comes in as level-funded or a \$1M decrease, is a significantly different figure, and ways to recover the \$800,000 reduction in the School Operating budget. There are some resources (savings in transportation, and year-end balances) which could offset some of the loss in the budget. They will be looking at what can be cut or reduced and clarity on contract negotiations. Expenses for re-opening plans for a return to school in the fall is still an unknown.

The School Committee thanked the Town Manager for his presentation.

3. **Amended Article 19: Revolving Fund**

On February 7, 2019 the School Committee approved a motion to approve the proposed ATM article for the creation of a school department revolving account. The motion to approve was consistent with the provisions of Massachusetts General Law Chapter 44 Section 53E1/2. However, M.G.L 44 Section 53E1/2: Revolving funds reads in part "...The city or town shall, on or before July 1 of each year, vote on the limit on the total amount that may be expended from each revolving fund established under this section. **In any fiscal year, the limit on the amount that may be spent from a revolving fund may be increased with the approval** of the city council and mayor in a city or with the approval of **the board of selectmen and finance committee in a town.** (*emphasis added*)

While the article, as currently written in the 2020 ATM Warrant as Article 19 "SCHOOL DEPARTMENT REVOLVING ACCOUNT", describes the purpose of the article, it does not include the limit that may be expended from the revolving fund. Therefore, the following motion is for the School Committee to amend the requested 2020 Article 19 to create the revolving account including an expenditure limit in the amount of \$50,000. Both Shelley and Paul Szymanski feel that the limit requested will support expenditures charged to the revolving account during the FY21 school year. Said motion will be consistent with the provisions of M.G.L 44 Section 53E1/2.

The amended article shall read: To see if the Town will vote to accept the provisions of Massachusetts General Law Chapter 44 Section 53E ½ to allow all monies received by the School Department in connection with a fee based, Andover led professional development institute for teachers and educators, with an expense limit in the amount of \$50,000, or take any other action related thereto.

This does not create any obligations, it just places a cap on the amount.

Shannon Scully moved that the Andover School Committee vote to approve the proposed amended ATM Article 19 for the creation of a School Department Revolving Account. The motion was seconded by Susan McCready. Roll call: S. McCready-Y, P. Murphy-Y, S. Scully-Y, T. Spruce-Y, J. Blumstein-Y. Motion passes 5-0.

4. Withdrawal of Article 23: Supplemental Funding for Circuit Breaker

Shannon Scully moved that the Andover School Committee vote to withdraw Article 23: Supplemental Funding for Circuit Breaker as recommended by the Superintendent of Schools. The motion was seconded by Paul Murphy. Roll call: S. McCready-Y, P. Murphy-Y, S. Scully-Y, T. Spruce-Y, J. Blumstein-Y. Motion passes 5-0.

5. School Improvement Plans: Postponement

The Superintendent is requesting that the School Improvement Plans be postponed until a later date for review by the Committee in light of the school closure. It would be preferred if this could be done in October since the School Councils still need to meet to finalize their plans. Massachusetts General Laws requires that the School Committee review School Improvement Plans by July 1. MASS is currently pursuing legislative action to suspend the deadline for this year.

Susan McCready moved that the Andover School Committee vote to approve the recommendation from the Superintendent to postpone the review of the School Improvement Plans from June 1 to by July 1, 2020 if there is no change in the Legislation and October 15, 2020, if the Legislature allows a change in the deadline. The motion was seconded by Tracey Spruce. Roll call: S. McCready-Y, P. Murphy-Y, S. Scully-Y, T. Spruce-Y, J. Blumstein-Y. Motion passes 5-0.

6. Discussion: Middle School Chromebooks Lending Program – Paul Puzanghera

Paul Puzanghera provided a presentation that IT is proposing for a Chromebook rental program for the middle schools where Andover would acquire and own the Chromebook devices that would allow an improved in-classroom experience for students by placing the management of the devices in the hands of the IT Department. Families would be asked to pay an annual fee for a student to be provided a device with repair and service including insurance from accidental damage which is a significant issue. Students would be able to use these devices for all standardized testing. This would also eliminate the hassle and burden of repair, management, and maintain technology for parents.

The costs of the Chromebook Lending Program will be finalized over the next few weeks and will require establishing a revolving account which Donna Walsh and Paul Szymanski have been working on. Wally McKenzie from the IT Department and Steve Chinosi on the Digital Learning Team for the Schools will lead this initiative. We hope parents will respond to the All-inclusive option.

The School Committee asked Paul to include the section of the BYOD management in the survey and parent discussions.

Email question: Georgeann Kerr provided a statement that parents need to know how they can control security on their managed device at home. *Paul said once the device goes home, he loses control of the device. They can offer guidance and options to parents, but parents will still have to be vigilant on controls at home.*

As with all school fees, the Chromebook would be eligible for scholarships.

7. Last Day of School Waiver – Submission to DESE

The Superintendent has an opportunity to submit a last day of school waiver to DESE. The teacher contract states they work 184 days which would be June 18th. Dr. Berman explained how the option of the waiver would work and it would be a fairly quick decision by DESE to grant the waiver. Shannon read the language in the AEA contract and does not understand why this would be subject to negotiations. All the information they have tonight, they had two weeks ago, nothing has changed since they voted two weeks ago. Shannon is against this request.

Tracey pointed out that we don't know how parents might perceive this waiver, there is already concern about time on learning and does not feel comfortable reducing the amount of instruction students are receiving. Paul agreed that time on learning is critical, but in June not as valuable, he has not heard a compelling case to ask for the waiver. Susan said DESE has provided clarifying information for the request. Joel is inclined to not submit the waiver, based on time-on-learning. The Committee is appreciative of all the work the teachers are doing, this is no reflection on their effort. No action taken.

8. Policy Subcommittee- First Reading

Susan McCready and Joel Blumstein updated the Committee on policy changes recommended by MASC as well as a new policy on recycling. This is the first reading of these policies.

BEDH – Public Comment at School Committee Meetings: Recommend to adopt updates from MASC that includes further clarity on the purpose and scope of the policy.

IHA- Basic Instructional Program: Recommended to delete by MASC; SC recommends keeping this policy as we reference this quite a bit.

JJIB - Interscholastic Athletics Recommendation to adopt revised JJIB as defined

JLA – Student Insurance Program Recommended to move to Inter-Scholastic Athletic Insurance Policy

JLD – Guidance Program Recommended to delete

JP – Student Gifts and Solicitations Recommended to delete by MASC; SC to retain

JFABD – Homeless Students – Enrollment Rights and Services Recommend to adopt
JFABE – Educational Opportunities for Military Children Recommend to adopt
JFABF – Educational Opportunities for Children in Foster Care Recommend to adopt

DJAA – Recycling Policy (NEW) Recommend to add the new policy that will allow for the application for a grant that will be very helpful in terms of reducing waste and cost for compostable products.

9. **Memo of Agreement for Teacher and IA Evaluation**

Chairman Blumstein recognized Sandy Trach and the members of the JLCM, who have worked very hard to arrive at an agreement for teacher and IA evaluations. He reported that the agreement was reviewed by School Counsel. Sandy Trach recognized the members of the JLCM who worked very hard on this agreement: Administrators: Sara Stetson, Steve Chinosi, Candace Hall, and teachers Holly Currier, Sally Mandelbaum, Lauren McCarron, Michael Walsh and Elizabeth Walsh.

A summary of the two documents that require two separate votes, one for Unit A for teachers and one for Unit Instructional Assistants, was provided by Sandy. This agreement is for this year only.

Tracey Spruce moved that the Andover School Committee vote to approve the Memorandum of Agreement for Teacher Evaluations for the 2019-2020 School Year. The motion was seconded by Susan McCready. Roll call: S. McCready-Y, P. Murphy-Y, S. Scully-Y, T. Spruce-Y, J. Blumstein-Y. Motion passes 5-0.

Tracey Spruce moved that the Andover School Committee vote to approve the Memorandum of Agreement for Instructional Assistant Evaluations for the 2019-2020 School Year. The motion was seconded by Susan McCready. Roll call: S. McCready-Y, P. Murphy-Y, S. Scully-Y, T. Spruce-Y, J. Blumstein-Y. Motion passes 5-0.

10. **April Financials**

Paul Szymanski provided a review of the April Financials. We were able to move from a deficit balance to a positive balance of \$390,000 due to the savings in transportation, substitutes, heating and electric, and other such areas.

E. **Consent Agenda**

1. **Grants/Donations to Andover Public Schools/ Minutes**

a. **Minutes:** March 13, 2020 and April 16, 2020

Susan McCready moved that the Andover School Committee vote to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. The motion was seconded by Paul Murphy. Roll call: S. McCready-Y, P. Murphy-Y, S. Scully-Y, T. Spruce-Y, J. Blumstein-Y. Motion passes 5-0.

F. Executive Session

Shannon Scully moved that the School Committee move to Executive Session pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws chapter 30A section 21(a) for the following purpose: Purpose 3: to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining with the Andover Education Association Unit A and AEA Secretaries, AEA Occupational & Physical Therapists, Andover Licensed/Practical Nurses, Andover Assistants, Andover School Food Services, Andover School Custodians, and Andover Administrators Associations because an open session may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the Committee not to return to Open Session. Motion seconded by Susan McCready. The Chair declared that an open session would have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the Committee. Roll call: S. McCready-Y, P. Murphy-Y, S. Scully-Y, T. Spruce-Y, J. Blumstein-Y. Motion passes 5-0.

II. Adjournment

At 9:25 P.M. the School Committee adjourned from Open Session.

Respectfully submitted,

Dee DeLorenzo
Recording Secretary