

Andover School Committee
Minutes of Thursday, October 15, 2020
Virtual Meeting

Participants from the School Committee: Shannon Scully, Susan McCready, Tracey Spruce, Paul Murphy, and Lauren Conoscenti.

Also participating: Superintendent Shelley Berman, Assistant Superintendents Sandra Trach and Sara Stetson, COO Stephen Nembirkow, , Director of Communications Nicole Kieser, Director of Innovation Stephen Chinosi, AHS Student Liaison Avi Janarthanan

I. Regular Meeting

Call to Order/Moment of Silence

Chairperson Scully called to order the Andover School Committee Meeting at 6:00 PM and the Committee immediately voted to meet into Executive Session. The Regular School Committee Meeting will be broadcast by Andover TV and on Comcast Channel 99, Verizon Channel 43 or streamed: www.andovertv.org.

Public Participation via email: scremote@andoverma.us

II. Executive Session:

Susan McCready moved to meet in executive session pursuant to M.G.L. chapter 30A, sec. 21(a) for Purpose (2) to discuss strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with non-unionized personnel, namely; Principals, School Independent Employees and Assistant Superintendents; and for Purpose (3) to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining with unionized personnel, namely AEA Unit A, AEA Secretaries and Andover Assistants because an open session may have a detrimental effect on the litigating and bargaining position of the Committee. The Committee will reconvene in regular session at approximately 7:00 PM. The motion was seconded by Paul Murphy. The Chair so declared that an open session may have a detrimental effect on the litigating and bargaining position of the Committee. Roll call: P. Murphy-Y, T. Spruce-Y, L. Conoscenti-Y, S. McCready-Y, S. Scully-Y. Motion passes 5-0.

III. Regular Meeting resumed at 7:00 PM

The meeting began with a Moment of Silence.

A. Recognitions/Communications

The Chair announced that the School Committee has accepted the resignation of Superintendent Sheldon Berman who has led Andover Public Schools since July of 2015 and who plans to relocate back to the Pacific Northwest where his wife has accepted a new position. Dr. Berman will remain in his role as Superintendent of the Andover Public Schools through Dec 31, 2020 to provide support for an effective transition. We are grateful for the leadership Dr. Berman has provided our District, including the successful launch of the 2020 school year under challenging COVID restrictions. Dr. Berman has

grown Andover's reputation as a top School District in the state, guided teams of committed educators, and developed many innovative opportunities for students. The Committee will meet in open session to discuss next steps for selecting an interim superintendent to serve January 2021- June 2021 and launching an extensive search for a permanent superintendent to begin July 1, 2021. Andover is a high-performing well run district and we are optimistic that we will find a highly-qualified candidate. We thank Dr. Berman for his years of service and wish him the best in his future plans.

Dr. Berman thanked the Committee for their flexibility around this change and to be clear, he is resigning the position with regret and leaving on December 31st. His wife has accepted a position in the Pacific Northwest which is an exciting opportunity for her. He is sorry for the sudden notice, but he believes the District Administration is a strong and capable one, and one capable of supporting an effective transition. He appreciates his 5.5 years in Andover, it is a wonderful community and exceptional school district gifted with many talented teachers and staff who have been a joy to work with. He spoke about the many projects and achievements in learning they have worked on over the years and will miss the people he has had the privilege to work with. He will begin developing a schedule of transition items and activities to allow the District to proceed with its normal business cycle.

Sandy Trach gave special thanks to teachers for a successful October 9th Professional Development Day.

The FY-22 Preliminary budget timeline and meeting calendar, budget dates and deadlines were explained by Steve Nembirkow. We are on track for getting the FY-22 budget information out in October and November. The school budget number is provided to the Town Manager at the end of January. The School Committee will discuss the budget calendar and assumptions more closely at their next meeting.

The link to the West El School Building Committee is available on the APS website and contains the information on the West El Community Forum held on October 13th. The forum is also available on the AndoverTV Archive. Susan McCready hopes the community continues to engage and ask questions about the building project. In addition, the Annual Scarecrow Festival sponsored by ACE is underway. The official kick-off will be on Saturday from 10-2 PM; ACE is partnering with ANDONA for activities to complement the theme, "Our Community".

All of the members of the School Committee expressed their appreciation for Dr. Berman's work and commitment to the Andover Public Schools and send their congratulations to his wife on pursuing her career.

Paul Murphy reported that SEPAC is meeting on Thursday, Oct 22nd and future meetings will be held on November 12 and December 10, 2020.

Shannon introduced this year's AHS Liaison to the School Committee, Avi Janarthanan. Avi joined to help share the opinions of the student body with the Committee. Avi read a statement from the Student Government and AHS students who are requesting a small screen break on Wednesdays. Students and teachers have been working tirelessly and are overwhelmed. They are confident a 10 to 15-minute break from screen time would be beneficial between morning classes and afternoon asynchronous work.

Dr. Berman expressed his thanks to Director of Nursing, Rita Casper, Director of Public Health, Tom Carbone, school nurses, all of the School principals, and Town Facilities/Maintenance Dept. for getting the message out about the importance of safety to keep our students coming into school. The cleaning of the schools has gone well as has the handling of ventilation issues. They have accomplished a tremendous amount to ensure we are operating safely.

Steve Chinosi worked with Sandy Trach and Sara Stetson to map out the professional development day held on Friday, October 9th. The day was more about sharing of best practice. There were 33 workshops hosted by 24 teachers with 100 teachers participating. In the afternoon, the teams gathered together to share what they learned. Teachers are doing amazing work. It was an incredibly productive day. Sara Stetson said it was a wonderfully dynamic day with virtual learning choices, varied but structured around our common goal of expert student learning. Sandy Trach agreed that it was a wonderful productive day, and thanked everyone who participated.

B. Public Input

C. Response to Public Input

D. Education

1. Update Hybrid and Remote Learning

The plan for Hybrid and Remote Learning when first presented was met with the request to have the ability to transition from one to the other going forward. At this time, it looks like the network we have created would be challenged by transitions from remote to hybrid or hybrid to remote. It is important for the school community to understand some of the tensions that will be present as we move forward.

Sara Stetson provided information on factors that impact our in-person capacity and DESE requirements that place limits on us to add students into the hybrid model. Consideration is given to students with special needs, students in substantially separate programs, students new to the English language, students in transition (K, Gr 6, Gr. 9), homeless/foster students, students on IEPs, or students with extenuating circumstances, etc. By law, we are required to reassess the situation of student need.

Parents can request a change beginning with the Nov 6-parent conferences. The change would take place beginning Term 2 starting on January 22nd. Changes can take a few weeks to take effect due to systemic and instructional needs that have to be considered.

Students amongst the levels of priority as outlined by Sara Stetson, would be in the top priority for changes. There are many circumstances (transportation, space, logistics) to look at. Requests can result in a change in teachers, classes, and/or schedules. When not possible to switch, the District will maintain a centralized wait list. It is important to mention that those impacts could be for either hybrid to remote or remote to hybrid.

Dr. Berman has been meeting with the Superintendents in the Merrimack Valley Conference discussing how we can best support athletics during Covid 'color' changes. A number of communities have moved into red but not based on a school circumstance. We are going to continue with athletics and competitions if a school is hybrid or remote. If a community moves to red, we will discontinue playing with them during that period of time.

E. New Business

1. Andover High Handbook

AHS Principal Caitlin Brown and Asst. Principal, Scott Darlington provided information on the changes to the AHS handbook for the 2020-2021 school year. There have not been a lot of changes with most changes related to COVID. Thank you to Susan McCready for working with them to make sure the handbook aligned with School Committee Policy.

The attendance policy for students in the Remote Academy and students in Hybrid Classes are the same. A code for a COVID absence and a code for quarantine days will soon be available in Aspen. Parents are asked to call in a student absence on hybrid-remote days. They also discussed changing the wording for the inclusion of hate speech, bus code, the COVID absent exclusion, and removal of the bus code policy.

Tracey Spruce moved that the Andover School Committee vote to approve the Andover High School Handbook for the 2020-2021 School Year as discussed. The motion was seconded by Lauren Conoscenti. Roll call: S. McCready-Y, P. Murphy-Y, L. Conoscenti-Y, T. Spruce-Y, S. Scully-Y. Motion passes 5-0.

2. Capital Improvement Projects FY22 (Janet Nicosia)

The CIP Plan is an elaborate town-wide plan and process. A hearing with all departments was recently held at Memorial Hall Library. Funding for the CIP has been reduced by @ \$3M. The Information Technology requests are very relevant to the closure, the way we teach, and the way we approach education in general moving forward. The Town Manager's timeline to vote on the CIP articles is November 6th.

a. Report on FY 2020 CIP Projects

Director of Facilities, Janet Nicosia and Deputy Director James McSweeney provided an update on the FY-20 approved CIP articles.

Jim McSweeney provided highlights on projects they have been working on over the last year some of which included: Installation of the high-low fans at Dunn Gym and AHS Field House , and at West Middle School, completion of roof designs for Sanborn Elementary School and the design for South School air conditioning, a Kick-off meeting was held today for the new Play-space created outside at WMS with additional changes being made. They have designs for new playgrounds at WH/HPE and continuing work they are already doing at all of the schools.

b. Report on proposed FY-22 CIPs

Janet Nicosia reviewed the items proposed for FY-22 CIP under each category.

SCH-1: School Wide Maintenance Projects: \$735,000 requested
SCH-2: Minor Projects by Building: \$450,000 (original request \$670,000)
SCH-5: Major School Projects: \$2.8M (original request of \$4.3M)
FAC-3: Town and School Security Projects/\$ earmarked for schools: \$100,00
FAC-7: Town/School Energy Initiatives of \$140,00 total \$530,000 for Energy Program

Paul Puzzanghera reported on the CIP articles for Information Technology and the changes the pandemic has brought upon our system. We are collectively suffering from the inability to acquire new technology timely. Chromebooks are back ordered 6-8 months compromising us from doing many things. There is a high level of concern about the efficacy of devices and ability to deliver learning i.e. handing out devices that are 5-6 years old that have recurring problems. Video conferencing and remote learning are going to be fixed learning tools. We have to provide a tech environment that will work outside as well as inside the classroom. Our Instructional Assistants need to have equipment similar to regular classroom teachers; 300 Chromebooks are on order for them and AHS IA's will be upgraded to Window devices. Teachers are being extremely creative navigating the hybrid world and need new tools to do that. We are working with the Town to see if we can use CARES Funding for IT-1.

IT-1: Staff Device Refresh \$738,723

IT-2: Student Device Refresh: \$547,000

We will be moving forward to purchase iPads and fix the IA situation and help students to the best degree we can.

IT-3: Platform and Infrastructure Upgrades \$842,500 est.

Most of our staff and student email and storage has moved to the Cloud, so email and storage will be replaced with a much smaller footprint. Upgrade conference rooms with technology and video conferencing. Reimagine our classrooms to be more virtual and more immersive. Upgrading and integrating our first-generation projectors. The weakest link is the Aspen Student Information Program which 'talks' to nothing. It does not integrate with any of our other programs. It is time to navigate away from Aspen and move to Power School that would work harmoniously with Schoology.

No action taken. School Committee will vote at their next meeting on November 5th.

F. Continuing Business

1. School Calendar 2021-2022

Per School Committee Policy, the calendar for FY 2021-22 has to be approved before November 1st. The calendar has been shared with the AEA, and no feedback has been received.

Susan McCready moved that the Andover School Committee vote to approve the APS School Calendar 2021-2022 as presented. Motion seconded by Lauren Conoscenti. Roll call: T. Spruce-Y, P. Murphy-Y, L. Conoscenti-Y, S. McCready, S. Scully. Motion passes: 5-0.

G. Consent Agenda

a. Grants/Donations to District

b. Minutes: August 10, 2020, September 2, September 12, and September 17, 2020.

Susan McCready move to approve the Consent Agenda with changes as discussed. presented. Motion seconded by Lauren Conoscenti. Roll call: P. Murphy-Y, T. Spruce-Y, L. Conoscenti-Y, S. McCready-Y, S. Scully-Y. Motion passes 5-0.

H. Adjournment

At 8:56 P.M Susan McCready moved that the Andover School Committee adjourn from the meeting of October 15, 2020. The motion was seconded by Paul Murphy.

Roll call: P. Murphy-Y, T. Spruce-Y, L. Conoscenti-Y, S. McCready-Y, S. Scully-Y. Motion passes 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Dee DeLorenzo

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Recording Secretary