

**Andover School Committee**  
**Minutes of Thursday, April 1, 2021**  
**Virtual Meeting**

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

**Others participating:** Interim Superintendent Dr. Claudia Bach, Assistant Superintendent Sandra Trach, Assistant Superintendent Sara Stetson, Chief Operations Officer Stephen Nembirkow, Director of Innovation Stephen Chinosi, AHS Student Liaison Jeffrey Connors.

**I. Regular Meeting**

**Call to Order/Moment of Silence**

Chairperson Scully called to order the meeting at 6:00 PM and the Committee immediately voted to meet in 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](http://www.andovertv.org). *Public Participation via email:* [scremote@andoverma.us](mailto:scremote@andoverma.us) or through live video comment with advanced WebEx registration.

**II. Executive Session:**

Susan McCready moved to meet in Executive Session pursuant to G.L. chapter 30A, section 21(a), purpose (3) to discuss strategy with respect to bargaining with unionize personnel, namely the Andover Education Association (AEA) Unit A and Andover Assistants' Organization because an open session may have a detrimental effect on the litigating position of the Committee. The Committee will reconvene in regular session at approximately 7:00 PM. The motion was 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.

**III. Regular Meeting Resumes – Moment of Silence**

Shannon Scully reconvened the meeting to order at 7:08 PM.  
The meeting began with a Moment of Silence.

**A. Recognitions & Communications**

Dr. Bach said there is a group of parents supporting the West El/Shawsheen Building Project who are working very hard to get the message out to the public that the building project is on the Warrant to be voted on at Town Meeting on June 5th.

The Andover Music Honor Society is asking for donations of instruments (unused or gently used). The drive will be held on April 10-11 at AHS with the goal of collecting fifty instruments that can be used for our younger students.

Sandy Trach reported that Commissioner Riley is recommending that graduation requirements for the Class of 2022 be modified. If approved 11<sup>th</sup> graders will not be required to take the MCAS test. The test window will be extended for grades 3-8 and grades 10 until June 11. Juniors and seniors who want to qualify for the Adams Scholarship and Koplik Certificate of Mastery may take the MCAS this spring if they so choose. DESE will offer remote MCAS administration for

families who have chosen to enroll their students in remote instruction through the end of the year.

Sara Stetson thanked their new SEPAC group for a great meeting the other day. Upcoming parent events include a screening of Up-standers (bullying prevention) with a panel discussion, and an evening with David Blink, author of 'Thinking Differently'. They are looking for a speaker to talk about executive functions and they have a guest coming to speak to parents on children with autism. Information is available on the website. An Andover High School Capstone student is sending out a survey to parents on the topic of autism. We hope parents will participate in the survey.

Steve Chinosi announced that APS has been invited to contribute to a panel along with MIT on lessons learned with Covid.

Shannon Scully reminded everyone that our two Superintendent finalists will be introducing themselves to the community Monday night, April 5th on AndoverTV. We hope to get a great cross-section of questions. Please submit your questions online at the APS website, under the School Committee tab. There will also be site visits by the candidates next Tuesday and Wednesday night. On April 8<sup>th</sup>, the SC will interview the candidates in public session. A feedback form will be made available to the Community after the forum on Monday night.

**B. Public Input - none**

**C. Response to Public Input**

**D. Continuing Business**

**1. Town Meeting Warrant Recommendations**

**a. Warrant Article P6: Unfunded Pension Liability**

Town Manager Andrew Flanagan provided a presentation on the pension obligation bond/ Integrated Financing Plan that will go before Town Meeting, currently numbered Warrant Article P6. The presentation included information on the foundation of the plan and why to consider an Integrated Plan.

1. To leverage the opportunity created by low rates to reduce pension costs by the same amount needed to construct two new schools. Andover's AAA bond rating allows favorable interest on loans, the current interest rate is approximately 1.43% to 1.84% as of 1/26/21. The plan models 3.5% rate in order to be conservative. A specific loan rate can be locked in only after voters have approved the plan.

2. Preserve service levels by alleviating budget pressures created by increasing pension costs. The existing pension debt is obligated to be fully-funded by 2040. The plan is to raise revenue for two major expenditures through proposed Debt Exclusions: \$175M to fund Pension Obligation Bonds (POB), 18 year borrowing term, and \$114M to fund the West Elementary/Shawsheen School building project. (WESP)

3. Use revenues from Debt Exclusions to pay down the pension liability and pay for construction of the WESP building project. Reduce overall costs paid for pensions by approximately \$70-\$110M over 18 years, and to pay the Town's share of \$114M to construct WESP. Under the plan, annually the operating budget will put approximately \$11M toward unfunded liabilities.

4. Create future opportunities for new building projects in future years that will require no incremental increase in the tax bill or reduce the annual tax bill, and to use funds from the operating budget no longer needed to pay pension costs to pay the debt on the construction costs of WESP.

The School Committee discussed the plan and asked questions of the Town Manager.

Susan McCready moved that the Andover School Committee vote to recommend approval of the Town Meeting Warrant Article P6, Unfunded Pension Liability, as presented. The motion was seconded by Tracey Spruce. Roll call: Murphy-Y, L. Conoscenti-Y, T. Spruce-Y, S. McCready-Y, S. Scully-Y. Motion passes 5-0.

b. **Warrant Article P26: Andover High School Design** (Mark Johnson)

Mark Johnson, Chair of the AHS Facility Study Committee, provided a presentation on the Town Meeting Warrant Article P26 Andover High School Design. There is currently money sitting in a Town account that is allocated for the Bancroft construction project and remains unspent. The warrant article is to repurpose existing Town funds of \$1,238,419.73 to continue to evaluate various options for AHS and work towards a full schematic design. Additional major costs including approval of any construction project costs would be presented for a vote at a future Town Meeting. AHS was built in 1966 for grades 10-12 and 1,200 students, the overcrowding today is very substantial; the capacity shouldn't be any more than 1,400 students based on MSBA standards today.

Susan McCready moved that the Andover School Committee vote to recommend approval of the Town Meeting Warrant Article P26, Andover High School Design, as presented. Motion seconded by: Lauren Conoscenti. Roll call: T. Spruce-Y, L. Conoscenti-Y, P. Murphy-Y, S. McCready-Y, S. Scully-Y. Motion passes 5-0.

**D. Education**

1. **Learning Model Updates (remote/hybrid/in-person)**

Administration will provide an update on plans to return more students to in-person learning, including space challenges being encountered at Andover High School.

Dr. Bach reported that all of the elementary students will be returning to in-person learning on Monday, April 5<sup>th</sup> and the excitement at the schools is building. The administration team has checked off a huge list to make this happen; the initiative was led by Sandy Trach. The remote option is still available but more than half of the remote students are returning to in-person learning. Remote Academy will continue to the end of year. The Middle School staff is working diligently to be prepared for their students to return to in-person learning on April 28<sup>th</sup>. There is a larger team at AHS who are diligently working to do what they can to extend the in-person learning time for students but it is a gigantic effort. The Commissioner of Education has not given us a date for the reopening for the high school with MCAS testing complicating the problem.

Sandy Trach said the AHS leadership has been conducting a thorough analysis of every area in the high school. With a classroom size of 25-26 students, they can only fit about 15 desks into the classrooms, so the question becomes where does the overflow of sections go and the issue is compounded with the 6' unmasked regulations for lunch. It is the nexus between enrollment

and space. Sandy contacted DESE to see if they will do a site visit, and they will be here in April to view the school and make suggestions. Our data will be provided to them ahead of time. We are actively preparing a waiver as the responsible thing to do; although DESE is not officially accepting waivers for high schools at this time. We also need to plan for the fall if the Dept. of Education does not lift the 3' restrictions.

2. **Resubmission of Field Trips: presented both by Steve Chinosi**

a. **AHS to Global Pathways/Digital Learning Coach – April vacation 2022**

*(original request on Sep 5, 2019 SC Meeting for travel date 7/2020)*

Susan McCready moved that the Andover School Committee vote to amend the date of the proposed extracurricular trip for Andover High School students to Hawaii from July 2020 to April 16-23, 2022 as presented and in accordance with the provisions set forth in the Andover Committee Policy entitled “APS School-sponsored Trip and Student Travel Policy”. The motion was seconded by Paul Murphy. Roll call: T. Spruce-Y, L. Conoscenti-Y, P. Murphy-Y, McCready-Y, S. Scully-Y. The motion passes 5-0.

b. **Amended AHS International Field Trip to Iceland – April 2022 for 8 Days**

Director of Strategic Innovation Steve Chinosi and AHS Teacher Brian Shea were present to explain the request for the School Committee to reapprove this trip. The trip remains an 8-day tour running through April 15-23, 2022 during vacation week. When the trip was originally promoted, Brian Shea submitted for 20 attendees (the usual number), but after a parent meeting, the number of students registered increased to 80 via the travel company’s website. Mr. Shea explained the changes being made to support a large trip. There will be 13 chaperones (all Andover High School faculty members) with two taking professional development courses from ET Travel on supporting large tours.

Susan McCready moved that the Andover School Committee vote to amend the proposed extracurricular trip for Andover High School students to Iceland on April 15-23, 2022 as presented and in accordance with the provisions set forth in the Andover Committee Policy entitled “APS School-sponsored Trip and Student Travel Policy”. The motion was 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.

**E. New Business**

1. **School Choice**

By law, the School Committee needs to consider annually whether or not to allow school choice. Dr. Bach recommended that the School Committee vote no on the School Choice Option due to the space limitations at all of the Andover Public Schools. The SC Policy is to not admit non-resident students but by law the School Committee has to vote.

Tracey Spruce moved that the Andover School Committee vote not to participate in the Massachusetts School Choice Program for the 2021-2022 School Year. The reasons for this action are both philosophical and programmatic as the Andover Public Schools are already enrolled at capacity and our policy stipulates that we do not enroll non-resident students. Motion seconded by Paul Murphy. Roll call: S. McCready-Y, P. Murphy-Y, T. Spruce-Y, L. Conoscenti-Y, S. Scully-Y. Motion passes 5-0.

**F. Consent Agenda**

**1. Grants/Donations to District; Minutes from SC Meetings March 4, 2021**

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

**G. Adjournment**

At 8:50 P.M. Lauren Conoscenti moved to adjourn from the meeting of April 1, 2021. The motion was seconded by Tracey Spruce. Roll call: P. Murphy-Y, L. Conoscenti-Y, T. Spruce-Y, S. McCready-Y, S. Scully-Y. Motion passes 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Dee DeLorenzo  
Recording Secretary