

**Andover School Committee**  
**Minutes of Work Session of March 19, 2010**  
**School Administration Building - School Committee Room**

**Members in Attendance:** Dennis Forgue, Annie Gilbert, Richard Collins, David Birnbach

**Others in Attendance:** Dr. Claudia Bach, Dr. Susan Nicholson, Bernie Tuttle, Michael Gilbert, Massachusetts Association of School Committees, Peggy Kruse, Paula Colby-Clements.

**I. Call to Order**

School Committee Secretary Dennis Forgue opened the Work Session at 1:15 P.M. in the School Committee Room. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss the School Department Budget for FY-2011.

The Committee talked about the process to setup a structure for voting on a recommended budget number for FY-11. Mike Gilbert reported that the State Legislature should reach a consensus at the end of March on what the cut to local aid will be, and he stated that 9C cuts from the Governor are still a possibility that could occur in late May or early June.

Dennis Forgue remarked that last year the School Committee voted on the Superintendent's Recommended Budget and then went to Town Meeting with a different number. Mike Gilbert recommended including a caveat in the motion depending upon the information available by the time they go to Town Meeting. Chairman Forgue wants to schedule additional budget meetings with the school principals prior to voting on a budget number to gather information, answers, and data needed to make decisions on the budget.

Dr. Bach talked about the ramifications of last year's budget and that stated there are still twelve employees unemployed at a cost of \$25,000 per month in unemployment benefits. The principals have cut around the edges of their school programs and budget, and have asked to not do that again this budget season. Dr. Bach has decided if they have to cut \$2.9M, she is recommending an increase in class size at the elementary level, cutting the Foreign Language Program and possibly Integrated Arts at the Middle Schools, and reverting to a 5 x 7 class schedule at Andover High that would require fewer teachers. These changes would realize a savings of approximately \$1.3M.

Mike Gilbert said when you have cut around the edges and there is no place else to go, you have to cut core programs. He encouraged the Committee to find out what the community wants, show them what the recommended cuts would

mean, and present options for consideration to get through FY-2011 with as little impact to students as possible. He also suggested having a meeting(s) with principals at all three levels regarding recommended changes.

Annie Gilbert asked about the implications of changing from the block schedule to a 5 x 7 schedule at Andover High, and does not want to bring the principals to the table if the results would not be productive for this budget time-frame. If they do schedule meetings with the principals, the scope of the meetings should be clearly defined. Mike Gilbert stated the conversations with the principals should be focused, reasonable, respectful and not unrealistic in expectations.

The Committee discussed reducing planning time and how it would be replaced; especially with the change in schedule at Andover High. They talked about the effect on study halls, the number of teachers, electives, and duties. They also discussed how to present the recommended changes to the AEA.

Annie Gilbert asked if there are cost offsets if we reverted back to a 5 x 7 schedule, and what amount of savings would be realized after taking into account the expenses incurred for more textbooks and professional development. She also wants to look at the CIP, especially School-3. Dr. Nicholson stated that all of the curriculum and assessments are written for 82 minute periods and teachers would request to be paid to rewrite/revise the current curriculum and assessments.

The Committee discussed the impact of the upcoming bargaining negotiations with the AEA. Dr. Bach stated there are no raises in this year's budget. Bernie Tuttle explained that there is a 1% increase in the budget for raises from the previous contract. Mike Gilbert said State-wide the MTA and teacher unions are being far more reasonable in their demands under this economy.

The Committee talked about the anticipated ARRA funds from the Federal Government, how much they can expect to receive, when, and exactly what it can be used for. Mike Gilbert said last year the funds could be used to supplant but that will not be the case this year. Dr. Bach remarked that we have to wait to find out how the funds can be spent before a decision can be made on where to apply it.

The Committee agreed to schedule a meeting for March 25<sup>th</sup> to discuss the budget for the middle schools, high school, and the CIP-School-3. A meeting will

be held on March 29<sup>th</sup> to discuss the Elementary School budget and to take a position on the Warrant Articles that relate to the School Department.

**Adjournment**

Annie Gilbert motioned to adjourn the meeting at 2:20 P.M. The motion was seconded by Richard Collins and unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Dee DeLorenzo  
Recorder