

**North Andover School Committee  
Regular Session**

Date: January 24, 2008

Location: Lecture Hall

Present: Ms. Allen, Mr. Kelly, Dr. Ormsby, Mr. Pybus and Ms. Whidden. Also present were Superintendent Marini, Assistant Superintendent Hutchinson and Business Manager Fortado.

**Call to Order**

At 7:00 p.m. Chair Whidden called the meeting to order.

Chair Whidden stated that the Facility Usage Fee Policy was not on the agenda this evening because after discussion with Mr. Kelly it was decided that additional changes would be needed to the policy. The policy will be brought before the School Committee at the February 7<sup>th</sup> meeting. However, if a member of the public wished to comment on the policy they could do so under public comment. Chair Whidden stated that the last chance for the public to speak to the FY09 budget before the School Committee voted the budget would be under public comment this evening.

**Public Comment**

Debra Degalla discussed inequities in the music program at the high school. She discussed the work of the North Andover Music Association in supporting the program. Ms. Degalla requested that in addition to the .2 music position, the Committee fund a .5 chorus teacher even if it means that other curriculums need to step back.

Polly Pyle discussed the importance of a solid music program in the schools. She asked the Committee to identify funds to hire staff to offer music education.

Josh Lamm the drum major of the high school band, discussed the need to have an additional teacher for chorus. He asked the Committee to fund a full director and a chorus teacher.

Kathy Mange discussed the need for an additional music teacher and the need to give students the opportunity to participate in solo ensemble contests which colleges look for when students are applying. She asked the Committee to support a .5 teacher.

Liz Foretino discussed the need for additional music at the high school. She asked the Committee to support a .5 teacher.

Janice Lamm stated that music teaches students discipline, accountability, respect and community awareness. She asked the Committee to support the .5 teacher.

Judy Ferris supported the music effort but noted that in addition, the elementary libraries need to be reopened. She stated the elementary libraries have been closed for two or three years and the students need this resource. She asked the Committee to support the reopening of the elementary libraries.

### **Chairman's Report**

Chair Whidden stated that the policy manual needs to be updated and that at the next meeting she would be asking members of the Committee to volunteer to take sections of the policy manual for updating.

### **Superintendent's Report**

Dr. Marini discussed the status of the Thomson Elementary School principal search. The Search Committee has been formed and the process will begin shortly.

Dr. Marini discussed importance of following the state's budget process and attending public hearings.

### **Unfinished Business**

#### FY08

Mr. Fortado discussed the FY08 budget update report. He stated that this version, at the request of the Chair, has accounts grouped by DOE functions. He stated that he has been able to make adjustments to accounts that were projecting deficits simply because people were being charged to the wrong account. Mr. Fortado stated that there are a few concerns in the FY08 budget such as the long term substitute account, the substitute account and the utility account.

Chair Whidden stated that she would be meeting with Mr. Fortado in the next few weeks to work on streamlining the first five pages of the report in order to make the budget more transparent for FY09. She asked any member who was interested in attending the meeting or providing input to contact her.

Chair Whidden asked Dr. Marini to check with the Town Manager to see if someone from BudgetSense could be hired to get the work completed on the summary reports. She stated that the work could be paid for with the funds not spent on the Purchasing Director's salary from July through January.

Mr. Kelly asked Mr. Fortado for an update on utility usage.

Mr. Fortado stated that all buildings are heated by gas and that account is fine, electricity is running about a \$30,000 deficit. He stated that he is working to adopt conservation measures and would keep the Committee informed on this issue.

Mr. Kelly stated that last year conservation measures were taken to eliminate exterior lights being left on all night long. He asked Mr. Fortado to check to see if this was still being done.

Ms. Allen asked if the school department is responsible for any portion of snow removal costs.

Mr. Fortado stated that the school department does have two small trucks and there is custodial overtime during storms.

Dr. Ormsby asked that the last column of the report be sorted by the most negative accounts and that information be provided to the Committee on one page allowing the Committee to review problem areas easily.

Chair Whidden stated that she had read in the Eagle Tribune that the police were using the Bradstreet School for drills. She stated her concern about a possible increase in the cost for utilities for the drills and asked the Superintendent to check with the Town Manager about the Bradstreet being used for purposes other than education without the approval of the School Committee.

#### Food Services Revolving Account

Mr. Fortado updated the Committee on the food services account. He stated that there is currently a profit of approximately \$39,000 but that the account bears watching. He stated that he and Ms. Murphy would be back to the Committee in the next month or so with an update on projections for the year. In response to a question regarding revenue projections, Mr. Fortado noted that snow days do hurt the food services revolving account because when the days are made up seniors are no longer in school.

#### FY09 Budget

The Committee discussed the possibility of adding a .5 or less music teacher to the high school, where funds would come from or whether those funds would be in addition to the superintendent's revised recommended budget. There was discussion on whether or not the position should include health care benefits.

**Dr. Ormsby moved that the North Andover School Committee submit a request to the Board of Selectmen for \$36,442,714 (a 3.3% increase over the current year's budget) for FY09. This budget request is identical to the Superintendent's revised budget (a 4.75% increase) except for the following three reductions:**

- 1. Reduce salary reserve by \$405,000**
- 2. Reduce the system-wide budget for "New Adoptions" – PD Science Elementary" by \$67,510 to the level of spending in the current fiscal year (\$88,490)**
- 3. Reduce district-wide spending for electric utilities by \$39,000 (to \$5,000 more than that recommended for FY09 by our utility consultant**

**and add less than ½ time chorus teacher for \$20,000. Mr. Kelly seconded the motion for the purpose of discussion.**

Dr. Ormsby discussed his handout (see attached) FY09 vs FY08 available budget and the impact of the school budget increase on the municipal budget. Dr. Ormsby stated that he

felt that the budget increase should have a rational basis and that the 4.75% increase was unrealistic. Dr. Ormsby stated that he supports having music, art, physical education and other subjects in the schools and it is abysmal that we don't have those things but the reason we don't have those things is not because we are being cheap with the schools, we are spending twice as much in constant dollars as we did 40 years ago, but we are still losing all those things. He stated that it is time to put the brakes on where the extra resources are going and not break the bank.

Mr. Kelly thanked Dr. Ormsby for the discussion. He noted that North Andover is bound by constraints beyond our control such as state and federal mandates. Mr. Kelly stated that collective bargaining is a reality and is not going to go away. Mr. Kelly stated that he believes the Committee needs to present to the community what is a reasonable budget and what is needed to get the job done.

Ms. Allen stated that although the budget amount may not always be feasible it is important that the School Committee actually present a budget to the community that represents the needs of the schools. Later in the process the Committee may be forced to come back and cut the budget but the community needs to be informed.

Mr. Pybus noted that there are too many unknowns in Dr. Ormsby's proposal and in the budget projections from the state as well as the Revenue and Fixed Cost Committee. He stated that he felt it is important to move forward with what the Superintendent has requested until further information is available.

Dr. Ormsby stated that his proposal does not cut one teacher and in fact adds a .5 music teacher to the Superintendent's revised recommended budget. He stated that he thinks the Committee is not doing their job if picking a number that is not realistic.

Dr. Marini stated that he was concerned with the process. Dr. Marini stated that the ground rules for the budget process included no surprises. He stated that he was uncomfortable discussing reductions in programs out of the blue without ample time to review reductions with the administrative staff. He stated that if the Committee wanted a 3.3% increase he should have an opportunity to go back and review the budget with the administrative team. He stated that the budget process should be a transparent process with integrity.

Dr. Ormsby stated that he did not think his proposal was an arbitrary slashing of well considered programs. The funding is essentially the same as the Superintendent's revised recommended budget with the three exceptions noted in the motion. Dr. Ormsby stated that he believed even his recommendation would still have to be cut but asked that the Committee go in with a defensible number.

Chair Whidden stated that she believes the Committee's role is to advocate for the school while keeping in mind the best interest of the Town. She stated that at the last meeting she asked that any members who had questions or comments about the budget to get them to the Superintendent so the issues could be addressed this evening. She asked Dr.

Ormsby if he had spoken to Dr. Hutchinson about the reduction in the science program or Mr. Fortado about the reduction in utilities.

Dr. Ormsby stated that he had emailed Mr. Fortado regarding utilities.

Chair Whidden stated that the Committee would be negotiating hard on insurance to put the Town in a better position long term and cutting the salary reserve account may hinder ability to negotiate and put us in the position of having to cut programs further down the line. She reiterated that having the salary reserve in the budget does not mean that the reserve will be spent.

Dr. Ormsby stated that there is only a certain amount of money that will be received from the Town and any dollar spent in salary reserve is a dollar that won't be spent on art, music and physical education.

Chair Whidden asked Dr. Ormsby to step in and work on a subcommittee for energy conservation and to agree to handle the review of the policy on curriculum renewal.

**The vote on the motion was 1-4 Dr. Ormsby voted yes, Ms. Allen, Mr. Kelly, Mr. Pybus and Ms. Whidden voted no. The motion did not pass.**

Ms. Allen moved to accept the superintendent's recommended budget with the addition of the .5 music teacher. Mr. Pybus seconded the motion.

After discussion, Ms. Allen withdrew her motion.

**Ms. Allen moved to accept the Superintendent's revised budget of 4.75% over the FY08 budget for a dollar amount of \$36,954,224 and in addition to that up to a .5 music position at the high school for a total of \$36,979,224 Mr. Pybus seconded the motion.**

The Committee discussed whether the elementary librarians should be added to the budget as well.

Dr. Ormsby made a motion that the added position not included health benefits. There was no second to the motion.

**The vote was 4-1 Ms. Allen, Mr. Kelly, Mr. Pybus and Ms. Whidden voted yes, Dr. Ormsby voted no.**

#### **Other Business**

Approval of Minutes

**Mr. Pybus moved to approve the minutes of December 20, 2007. Ms. Allen seconded the motion. The vote was 4-0-1 Ms. Allen, Dr. Ormsby, Mr. Pybus and Ms. Whidden voted yes, Mr. Kelly abstained.**

**Mr. Kelly moved to approve the minutes of January 3, 2008. Ms. Allen seconded the motion. The vote was 5-0 Ms. Allen, Mr. Kelly, Dr. Ormsby, Mr. Pybus and Ms. Whidden voted yes.**

**Mr. Pybus moved to approve the minutes of January 8, 2008. Mr. Kelly seconded the motion. The vote was 5-0 Ms. Allen, Mr. Kelly, Dr. Ormsby, Mr. Pybus and Ms. Whidden voted yes.**

### **Subcommittee Reports**

Facilities Usage Fee Committee – Mr. Kelly stated they would be meeting on Tuesday.

Athletics Subcommittee – There was no update.

Facilities Review Subcommittee - Ms. Allen and Mr. Limbert gave a presentation on the middle school facility. Ms. Allen noted that with the change in the middle school schedule next year the classroom usage chart would need to be updated.

The Committee discussed the roof leak at the middle school where the old and new roofs join and they discussed the conditions of the curtains in the auditorium. Mr. Fortado will discuss the roof issue further with Mr. Valentino.

Ms. Allen stated that the subcommittee would be compiling all information into one book. She asked any members who wanted to provide input into the final book to contact her.

Ms. Allen stated that it was the subcommittee's conclusion that it would benefit the overcrowding at the elementary schools to move the preschool into its own facility. The move of the preschool would free up classroom space and a centralized facility would allow for an accredited preschool program. She stated that it was the conclusion of the subcommittee that the high school and middle school were not good options for the preschool or the central offices. She stated that the high school and middle school are not quite at 100% capacity but they could not accommodate any non-academic use in the building. She stated that it is clear after the study that the elementary schools must see relief in terms of space. She stated that inequities exist at the elementary schools because of compromised specialized space.

Ms. Allen thanked the members of the subcommittee for their work and dedication to the process.

Budget and Communication Group – meeting tentatively scheduled for February 6<sup>th</sup>

Regional Collaboration – There was no update

Chair Whidden stated that there may be an executive session meeting at 6:30 on February 7<sup>th</sup> to discuss litigation.

## Adjourn

**At 9:35 p.m. Mr. Pybus moved to adjourn. Mr. Kelly seconded the motion. The vote was 5-0 Ms. Allen, Mr. Kelly, Dr. Ormsby, Mr. Pybus and Ms. Whidden.**