

North Andover School Committee
Regular Session

Date: April 29, 2009

Present: Members Allen, Burzlaff, Limpert Nobile, and Rhoton. Also present Superintendent Marini, Assistant Superintendent Hutchinson, Director of Special Education, Joyce Laundre, and Business Manager Fortado. Also present were incoming superintendent Mr. Christopher Hottel, candidate for business administrator, Mr. James Mealey, and Mark Rodgers, Co-Chair of the Finance Committee.

Location: NAHS Lecture Hall

Call to Order

At 6:05 p.m. Chair Limpert called the meeting to order.

Public Comment

Ms. Jalbert asked for a status update on the school calendar/start time subcommittee.

Ms. Burzlaff stated that she and Ms. Jalbert as co-chairs would meet to discuss the types of individuals that should serve on the committee.

FY10 Working Session

Chair Limpert gave a powerpoint presentation regarding the ARRA funds. He discussed some possible projects that could be funded by the ARRA money.

Dr. Marini stated that he had received an email from Kate Rozzi of Representatives Torrisi's office stating that the DOE had confirmed that North Andover is slated to receive \$669,394 in IDEA funding in the first round in July and another approximately \$669,394 in IDEA funding in the second round of funding this fall.

Mr. Fortado stated that the Committee could move salaries of approximately seven people into an ARRA grant account to keep the budget in balance for town meeting.

Elementary Curriculum

Dr. Hutchinson gave a presentation on the first suggested ARRA project, elementary reading curriculum. He discussed the RTI pyramid and the decrease that could be seen in special education costs by implementing the program.

Mr. Hottel discussed the decrease in special education referrals in Nashua since implementing the program.

Mr. Rodgers asked if this could become self-sustaining and whether there would actually be a decrease in costs or just a slow in the growth of increases.

Dr. Hutchinson stated that if the program is built solidly then we would have a core group of classroom teachers who could coach. He stated that early on the savings would be from a decrease in the growth but long term we could see an actual decrease in expenses.

In response to a question from the Committee, Mr. Hottel stated that cost for the program in Nashua has been between \$50,000 and \$75,000 per school for the program.

The Committee discussed the need for these projects to be proven, measurable, sustainable and have a ripple impact.

Special Education Van

Ms. Laundre discussed the rising costs of special education transportation. She noted that further clarification was needed regarding whether ARRA funds could be used to purchase a “vehicle”. After discussion regarding the potential costs to invest in a number of vans, the cost of maintenance and the cost to hire employees to drive the vehicles, the Committee decided to remove this project from the current list but to pursue a meeting with other local communities to determine if a collaborative could be formed to provide special education transportation resulting in savings for all communities involved in the collaborative.

Mr. Rodgers stated that the Committee could consider including a van under the Town’s CIP, especially if the purchase of a van would result in a savings payback.

Facilities Manager

The Committee discussed the possibility of hiring a Facilities Manager to focus on energy conservation. The Committee anticipates that the savings from energy conservation could pay the salary of the manager.

Mr. Hottel and Mr. Mealey discussed their experience with the facilities manager in Nashua. Mr. Mealey stated that the least amount saved over the last four year was \$200,000 and that the savings did not take into account utility increases.

The Committee discussed the possibility of sharing this position with the town so that the town could also take advantage of energy conservation savings.

Mr. Rodgers stated that the FinCom had put together a recommendation for a town wide facilities manager position. He noted that Purchasing Director Joe Lydick has saved the town three times his salary in the first year.

Grant Writer

The Committee discussed the benefits of hiring a grant writer for the district. The Committee discussed many options for hiring the grant writer including sharing a grant writer with another town and having salary be a percentage of the grant money brought in. In addition, the Committee discussed the need to have a focus for the grant writer so the writer is only apply for grants for programs that the district is ready for.

Chair Limpert asked the Committee members for other ideas for use of the ARRA money.

Ms. Burzlaff discussed her concern over technology equity among all the schools in the district. Dr. Marini stated that there is additional ARRA money available for technology grants, some entitlement grants and some competitive grants. Dr. Marini discussed the need to have a meaningful technology plan and professional development in place before purchasing hardware and software. He discussed the void in leadership with no Director of Technology. After further discussion, it was agreed that Technology

Training and Review of Technology would be an item under ARRA surplus fund projects. Subcategories under technology would include Automated Process for Course Selections at High School, Naviance Guidance Training and Professional Development for Technology.

The Committee discussed the final list of projects and assigned leaders to projects as follows:

Add Elementary School Reading Curriculum – Dr. Hutchinson

Purpose: To add capabilities for teachers for reading

Budgetary Cost: \$350k for the first year

Hire A Facilities Manager – Dr. Marini and Mr. Fortado

Purpose: Improve Building and Energy Management

Budget Cost: \$75k

Hire A Grant Writer – Mr. Limpert and Ms. Allen

Purpose: Coordinate and support grant applications

Budgetary Cost: \$50k

Technology Training/Review of Technology Plan – Ms. Burzlaff and Ms. Rhoton

- Automated Process for Course Selections at High School – Mr. Nugent
- Naviance Training – Mr. Nugent
- Professional Development for Technology

Special Education Van – Mr. Nobile

Removed from potential projects list. Mr. Nobile will schedule meeting with local communities re: possible future collaboration for sped transportation

Athletics

After budget presentation by Athletic Director, Committee may discuss possible projects relating to athletics

Business Administrator

Chair Limpert introduced business administrator candidate, James Mealey. Chair Limpert asked Mr. Mealey to give a brief overview of his experience.

Mr. Mealey discussed his experience including his work as Chief Operating Officer of the Nashua Public Schools. He discussed the success of the performance based budget used in Nashua, his work on negotiating employee contracts, and his work to build the relationship between the city and the school district. He stated that his past experiences as Director of Public Works, Director of Human Resources, and teacher have been a major asset to him as Chief Operating Officer.

In response to questions from the Committee, Mr. Mealey discussed the ease of transitioning from being a business manager in New Hampshire to being a business manager in Massachusetts, the importance of providing data to show measurable results that will justify or not justify the validity of programs, and the importance of transparency in the budget process. Mr. Mealey described the budget in Nashua and how it is broken down in five different forms so that the community can look at the budget in a variety of ways.

Chair Limpert thanked Mr. Mealey for attending this evening's meeting.

In response to a request from the Committee, Chair Limpert stated that at the next meeting the Committee would discuss further how information would be presented at Town Meeting and what information would be included in the presentation.

Mr. Rodgers stated that it is important to communicate to the Town that the stimulus funds are not being spent on raises, additional staff, or anything that would create a long term commitment by the Town.

At 8:41 p.m. Ms. Allen moved to adjourn. Mr. Nobile seconded the motion. The vote was 5-0 Ms. Allen, Ms. Burzlaff, Mr. Limpert, Mr. Nobile and Ms. Rhoton.

Approved 6/4/09