

NORTH ANDOVER PUBLIC SCHOOLS SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

DATE: Tuesday, January 11, 2005

PLACE: Lecture Hall, North Andover High School

PRESENT: Daniel Murphy, Chairman, Alfred Perry, Assistant Chairman, Bruce Baker, Charles C. Ormsby, and Tim Pybus

Also Present: Harry Harutunian, Superintendent, Ronald Binkney, Assistant Superintendent, Paul Szymanski, Director, Management Support Services, Ed Maguire, Ted Tripp, Dawn Crescitelli, Ellen Finneran, Paul Stewart, Anne Lu, Bea Fink, Melinda Coppa, Bill Kelly, approximately 25 budget parents and High School Budget Representatives, et al

I. Call to Order: Dan Murphy, Chairman, called the meeting of the North Andover School Committee to order at 6:35 p.m.

II. Recommended Action:

Warrants of Bills Payable – None

Public Participation – No issues were brought up for discussion.

III. Superintendent's Report:

Completion of M.B.A.--Dr. Harutunian acknowledged that Paul Szymanski, Director, Management Support Services had completed an M.B.A. program at Suffolk University. Dr. Harutunian added that although the degree was not a requirement of his position, Paul had undertaken the task in order to become a more effective administrator. He was congratulated by members of the Committee, as well as the audience.

Tsunami Relief Efforts – Dr. Harutunian stated that all schools throughout the District were contributing to the relief effort in Southeast Asia with a combination of both donations and letters. Chairman Murphy acknowledged the importance of all students being involved in the relief effort, and thanked them for their contribution on behalf of the Committee.

Legislative Delegation Memorandum – Dr. Harutunian stated that for the first time the North Andover School Committee had received a memorandum from North Andover's four State legislators outlining State and local financial information in order to assist in the planning process for the FY06 budget.

Budget Distribution – Dr. Harutunian noted that over 240 copies of the School Department Budget had been produced and distributed to members of the community.

School Committee Goals – Dr. Harutunian stated that the School Committee goals would be discussed during the budget discussion.

IV. New Business

A. Transfer of Land Request to claim in surplus a 4 acre parcel land at the Atkinson School

Dr. Harutunian passed out a description of the land adjacent to the Atkinson School that is slated to be transferred to the Town from the School Committee for the purpose of building a new public safety center. Dr. Harutunian noted that, according to Town Counsel Thomas Urbelis, the land must be declared as surplus by the School Committee; and then Town Meeting will need to vote to transfer the land, with the Board of Selectmen accepting the land subject to the restriction that it will be used as a public safety center. Dr. Harutunian emphasized Counsel's point that no action can be taken on the land by anybody without Town Meeting approval. Dr. Harutunian then asked the Committee to suspend the rules so that it could act on the transfer of the land.

On motion made by Charles Ormsby and seconded by Tim Pybus, it was voted to suspend the rules so the School Committee could act on the transfer of land from the School Department to the Town of North Andover. The vote was 5-0; Mr. Murphy, Mr. Perry, Dr. Baker, Dr. Ormsby and Mr. Pybus voted yes.

A motion was made by Al Perry that the School Committee determine the land on Chickering Road, described in Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Selectmen dated January 10, 2005, and incorporated herein by reference, is no longer needed for school purposes and that the School Committee give notice of such determination to the Board of Selectmen. The motion was seconded by Tim Pybus.

Bruce Baker asked for clarification about what would happen if the public safety center did not move forward. Dr. Harutunian stated that it was his impression that the School Department would essentially give up all right and claim to the land once it had been declared surplus. Chairman Murphy echoed Mr. Baker's concern regarding defeat of the public safety center by the Town Meeting, stating that the statements in Attorney Urbelis' January 6, 2005, memo were contradictory. Dr. Harutunian responded that Attorney Urbelis had made it clear to him that once the land had been declared surplus, it would revert back to the control of the Town Meeting and not the Board of Selectmen. Adding that the School Department would have to go to Town Meeting if it wanted to rescind the transfer of land in order to expand the Atkinson School, Dr. Harutunian stated that he would ask Town Counsel to appear at the January 18 School Committee Meeting in order to clarify the matter.

On motion made by Al Perry and seconded by Bruce Baker, it was voted to table the discussion regarding the transfer of land from the School Department to the Town of North Andover until January 18. The vote was 5-0; Mr. Murphy, Mr. Perry, Dr. Baker, Dr. Ormsby and Mr. Pybus voted yes.

B. Presentation of Superintendent's Recommended FY06 Budget

Dr. Harutunian made available the School Department's FY06 budget to everyone attending the meeting. He explained that he had tried to get as much input prior to tonight's meeting as possible, noting that the School Committee, Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee had submitted over sixty-six questions. Dr. Harutunian advised those present that over 46 parents had been chosen to represent the individual schools, and in addition, four high school students will participate in the budget process. Dr. Harutunian advised the audience that in the spring of 2004, the Committee had developed long-range goals; and in the fall, they were approved. He stated the specificity of the goals and achievement levels would appear in the appendix of the budget. Dr. Ormsby suggested that the goals should be referenced in the budget at some point. Mr. Murphy asked if each goal could be shown as it relates to the funding of the specific line item. Dr. Harutunian replied that the goals were pretty broad, but said that he would try to have a draft of a document prepared for the January 18 School Committee meeting that would address this issue.

Dr. Harutunian advised the audience that the School Committee would spend between 7 to 12 meetings working on cutting the budget. In presenting the budget, Dr. Harutunian explained the four sections delineated by color, noting that the Programmatic Budget (yellow pages) was a new addition this year and a new way to see by level and subject area the amount of money devoted to each, as well as the inherent goals. Dr. Harutunian advised the audience the North Andover school system has more children

enrolled now than at any other time in its history. He explained that a number of factors went into the 10%+ increase in salaries, and that six bargaining units would be negotiating new contracts for next year. Dr. Harutunian also noted the large increase in the Special Education budget due to federal and State mandates, and the fact that transportation, heat and utility costs will go up. The highlight of the budget, Dr. Harutunian told the audience, is the list of positions and programs that the School Department would like to have equaling \$1.6+ million. Dr. Harutunian passed out a number of handouts to the audience which summarized different aspects of the budget, including one which summarized positions funded through outside revenue.

Dr. Harutunian summarized his presentation of the FY06 Budget by saying that this will be the worst budget year the Town has seen in many years, noting that the Town must use free cash just to make the budget balance. He added that he had been looking at sources of revenue with Finance Committee member Paul Stewart, but it will be no where near what the Town Manager or he would like to see. In conclusion, Dr. Harutunian said the School Department will present approximately \$4 million in cuts during subsequent meetings, and that they will be severe.

B. Presentation of Superintendent's Regular-Day Budget

Dr. Harutunian answered the questions which had been submitted to him in writing by the Finance Committee and members of the School Committee. He advised the Committee that the enrollment projections used by the School Department were made by NESDEC, and Dr. Harutunian made their full report available to the Committee and audience members. He noted that in order to bring the primary enrollment to 22 students per class, it would be necessary to hire two new elementary teachers, one at the Franklin and one at the Sargent, with a Sargent 5th grade position moving to the primary level.

Two articles concerning increasing State tax revenues were provided to members of the audience, but Dr. Harutunian noted that there is a preference by the State to fund urban centers. Dr. Harutunian responded to a question from Dr. Ormsby regarding circuit breaker money saying that the \$50,000. to \$100,000. short fall due to unanticipated special education costs should be covered by the circuit breaker funds. In answer to a question regarding how North Andover's budget "pie" compares to other communities, he stated that it was pretty consistent with like communities. He noted that many superintendents had a long history of balancing budgets by deferred maintenance, and he was not in favor of that. Dr. Harutunian also pointed out that urban communities' special education budget consumed a much larger piece of the budget pie.

In addressing the large increase in the Guidance Testing line item, Dr. Harutunian stated that the School Department needed to update its testing system. He reported that the money will be used for such testing as an Interest Inventory to help high school students move into appropriate careers, Stanford Testing in grades 5, 7, and 9 which will provide a baseline of student achievement, and an online SAT course which students could use at home.

Dr. Harutunian explained that the line item for Principals' Office Expense had increased dramatically because of four major numbers contributing to the \$50,000 increase. He explained that the technology equipment in the schools' offices is so antiquated that they could not fulfill their SIMs obligation to the State, that a line item had been added for copiers, and professional development, long neglected in the past, was being addressed.

Dr. Harutunian explained that the High School Facilities Director, overlooked in last year's budget, was added in FY06 at a cost \$80,000 in order to oversee the phone and computer system and maintain the electronic infrastructure at the High School.

Chairman Murphy stated the Special Education and Administration budget would be addressed on January 18, and that questions concerning these areas of the budget should be submitted no later than Friday. He then took questions from the audience.

In answer to Bill Kelly's question regarding how North Andover does in terms of grant money, Dr. Harutunian replied that competitive grants are usually small money and all substantial grants are going to urban districts because their needs are perceived as being greater.

Melinda Coppa asked if the State would reimburse North Andover for busing over two miles. Dr. Harutunian replied that he did not believe the State would give cities and towns money for transportation, but may handle it by eliminating the mandate.

V. Executive Session

On motion made by Al Perry and seconded by Charles Ormsby, it was unanimously voted to enter into Executive Session at 7:55 p.m. for the purpose of conducting strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with the North Andover Teachers' Association, to discuss pending litigation and not return to regular session. The vote was 5-0; Mr. Murphy, Dr. Baker, Dr. Ormsby, Mr. Perry and Mr. Pybus voted yes.

Respectfully submitted,

Harry K. Harutunian, Ph.D., Superintendent
Secretary, North Andover School Committee