

**AUBURN PUBLIC SCHOOLS**  
**MINUTES from February 26, 2020**  
**School Committee Meeting**  
**5 West Street, 6:00 p.m.**

**In attendance:**

George Scobie  
Jessie Harrington  
Gail Holloway  
Dottie Kauffman  
Meghan McCrillis

Maryellen Brunelle  
Beth Chamberland  
Rosemary Reidy

Casey Handfield  
Gregg Desto  
Wendy Quirion

Vin Benacchio  
Kathryn Perreault  
Jackie Quirion

**Students:**

Avery Pellegrino

Lia McDonald  
Ali Schoenfeldt

Griffin Handfield  
Aaron Zheng

**Visitor:** Mrs. McDonald

**Call to order and Pledge to the Flag:**

At 6:00 p.m., Mr. Scobie asked if anyone else was taping the meeting; there being none, he asked that everyone join him in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

**Citizens' Comments:** None

**STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES' REPORT:**

Ali reported that the National Honor Society had held their elections for next year and she shared that her fellow representative to the School Committee, Aaron Zheng, is following her as President. The NHS Induction Ceremony is scheduled for March 19th. She reported that the Rockets to Rockets Club was having a Friendship Ball, which had been a lot of fun last year and Mr. Auburn was scheduled for March 5th. She shared that she and Griffin Handfield would be taking part in Congressman McGovern's Youth Congress in Amherst. The freshman class is running a dance in late March. The We The People were sworn in by Town Clerk, Deb Gremo, that day to help with elections next week.

Aaron reported that he was happy to be back attending meetings after a break due to Marching Band commitments. He noted that the TriM Society members would be going to AMS to promote band and chorus to the 8th grade; there were All-Town concerts coming up on March 10th and March 12th, with the purchase of tickets being online for the first time! The Model UN was looking forward to a competition at Boston College High School on March 7th. The Science Olympiad tied for first in their league with Uxbridge High School. Their final state event will be held on March 21st.

**Minutes**

Mrs. Harrington made a motion to approve the minutes of the meetings held on January 21st, 27th and February 5th. Mrs. Holloway seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

**SPECIAL RECOGNITIONS:**

**Project 351 Ambassador: Lia McDonald**

Lia McDonald, 8<sup>th</sup> grade ambassador to Project 351 was in attendance to provide an update on her experiences during her day at the State House on Saturday, January 18, 2020. Lia stated that *Launch Day* was her best experience ever! Congressman John Lewis was the inspiration for the day. She noted that 46,008 people would be helped with this year's Project 351 initiative. Lia's service project is going to

be with Cradles to Crayons, where she will be holding a clothing drive for new or gently used clothing for infants to age 12.

The Committee thanked her for the update.

### **SUPERINTENDENT'S MEMO:**

#### **AHS Project 365Z**

Mr. Handfield was in attendance, along with teachers Kathryn Perrault and Vin Benacchio and students Avery Pellegrino and Griffin Handfield, to provide a presentation on Project 365Z.

Avery and Griffin presented and explained how Project 365Z had come to be and how Auburn High School became involved. They shared the 365Z Mission Statement, "The 365S Foundation, Inc. is an organization whose mission is to provide ideas, guidance and resources that will encourage, inspire and challenge individuals to perform conscious acts of kindness." They explained that it is not a club but a mentality and the entire school is immersed in 365Z kindness. Their accomplishments thus far include a "No student sits alone" initiative; a drive for items needed at Veterans Inc. in Worcester and Valentine's Day goody bags for the Auburn Senior Center. Coming up they have plans for a toy drive for Boston Children's Hospital; a memorial for Mr. Edward Bedard and to collaborate with the elementary school 365Z kids on what it means to be kind.

The Committee thanked them for the presentation and the good work they are doing with 365Z.

#### **Transition Coordinator/Job Coach Update**

Auburn High School's Transition Coordinator/Job Coach, Wendy Quirion, was in attendance to provide an update on how the position was going and what has been accomplished at the mid-year point. She shared that the students' in-house vocational opportunities included the cafeteria, recycling, stocking copier rooms, clerical tasks and being a disc jockey. Community-based vocational opportunities were had at Big Y, Southbridge; AYFS, Auburn; Dialed-In Nutrition, Auburn; Masterman's, Auburn; Auburn School Department Central Office; Horgan Ice Skating Rink, Auburn; Auburn Town Pizza and St. Vincent's Hospital, Worcester. In all there are 18 students going to 12 different sites.

In addition, Mrs. Quirion shared that she has been able to develop a vocational schedule, design a vocational data collection sheet and do digital portfolios for the students. It has also afforded her the opportunity to attend IEP meetings upon request; do transition assessments; prepare reports and share them at Team meetings; meet regularly with the Department of Disability Service (DDS), the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) and Viability; to attend Transition Fairs as well as the Shrewsbury Interagency Transition Meeting which meets twice a year; implement Parent Input as part of the Transition Assessment; make resource binders for transition; and work with her mentor, Mary Sharma, from Assabet Valley Collaborative.

Mrs. Quirion was thanked for her thorough presentation.

#### **Program of Studies 2020-2021**

Mr. Handfield was in attendance to provide the updates to next year's Program of Studies for the Committee's approval. A summary of the changes made was provided. Dr. McCrillis made a motion to approve the updated Program of Studies for the 2020-2021 school year; Mrs. Holloway seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

#### **AHS Foreign Language Trip to France in April 2021**

Ms. Karyn Ferdella, Foreign Language teacher at AHS, sought the Committee's approval to take a group of her French students on a trip to France in April of 2021, specifically April 16<sup>th</sup> through 24<sup>th</sup>. She is asking this far in advance so that she can have a meeting to determine how much interest there is and so that there will be plenty of time for students to raise the funds for the trip. There are scholarship opportunities available for students if the trip is booked by March 2020. It was Dr. Brunelle's recommendation that the Committee approve this trip which has been held successfully in the past,

understanding that we will, as has been done in the past, monitor for any travel advisories as the date approaches, keeping parents informed of the same.

Mrs. Kaufman made a motion to approve the AHS trip to France in April 2021: Mrs. Holloway, noting that she had recently watched the video of Ms. Ferdella's trip with students to Quebec and stating that Ms. Ferdella goes above and beyond, seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

#### **AHS Social Studies Field Trip to Newport, RI**

Mr. Vin Benacchio submitted paperwork seeing to take the AHS AP US History students to The Breakers Mansion, home of Cornelius Vanderbilt, in Newport, RI on Friday, May 15<sup>th</sup>. It was Dr. Brunelle's recommendation that the Committee approve this trip.

Mrs. Kauffman made a motion to approve the trip to The Breakers in Newport, RI. Mrs. Holloway seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

#### **2018-2019 Drop Out Data**

Dr. Brunelle noted that she was pleased to share that the Drop-Out Rate for 2019 was 0.8%, a rate that reflects our concerted efforts to ensure that students remain in school and graduate. She thanked everyone at AHS and across District for their efforts to this end.

#### **Humanities Scholars Program**

Noting that an overview of the 2019-2020 Humanities Scholars Collaborative which this year concentrates on "The Environment and U.S." was included in the Committee's packet. Dr. Brunelle stated that she had been able to be in attendance at their meeting at Clark University on Wednesday, February 5<sup>th</sup> and plans to attend again on Thursday, April 2<sup>nd</sup> when they hold their final meeting of the year at Worcester State University. She took the opportunity to thank Mr. Dufour and Mr. Martin, AHS English teachers, for their leadership and work with the AHS Humanities Scholars. She noted that each college provides their own professors who give a talk/presentation on different topics and there is a question and answer session that the students take part in.

#### **Calendar for 2020-2021 School Year**

Dr. Brunelle provided a copy of the proposed calendar for the 2020-2021 school year, noting that both the Leadership Team and the AEA Board have endorsed this version of the calendar which has teachers returning on August 31<sup>st</sup> with the students' first day of school being Wednesday, September 2<sup>nd</sup> and the 180<sup>th</sup> day of school, barring no snow days, being June 17, 2021. Mrs. Kauffman made a motion to approve the calendar as presented; Mrs. Holloway seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

#### **Strategic Plan January 2020 Update**

Dr. Brunelle provided the updated Strategic Plan Action Plans as of January 2020, giving sincere thanks to the Design Team, the Leadership Team and all for their efforts in realizing the continued substantial progress. Mrs. Harrington made a motion to approve the January 2020 updates to the Strategic Plan; Mrs. Holloway seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

#### **Special Education Stabilization Fund**

Dr. Brunelle respectfully requested the Committee's approval of the use of funds from the Special Education Stabilization Fund in the amount of \$81,700.36, this due to changing student needs related to student safety. Dr. Brunelle shared that after a detailed conversation she and Dr. Chamberland had with Town Manager Jacobson and CFO Kazanovicz, they indicated they are in full support of this request and will indicate the same when this goes before the Board of Selectmen - as required by the regulation and our policy - for their approval as well.

Dr. McCrillis made a motion to approve the request to use funds from the Special Education Stabilization Fund in the amount of \$81,700.36 to address changing student needs related to safety; Mrs. Holloway seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

### **Donations for School Lunch Debt**

Dr. Brunelle reported that Mrs. Janice King, Director of Food Service, recently shared with her that she had received two donations towards defraying the cost of student lunch debt and it was Dr. Brunelle's recommendation that the Committee formally accept these donations with gratitude.

Mrs. Kauffman made a motion to accept the donation from Ms. Donna Bacon in the amount of \$50 and the donation from Mr. James McGlynn in the amount of \$197 towards defraying the cost of student lunch debt; Mrs. Holloway seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved. To answer a question from a member, Dr. Brunelle indicated that donors can specify which school they would like to donate to but, in these two cases, the donations were made to the general food lunch debt account.

### **UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

#### **AT&T Cell Tower**

As requested, Dr. Brunelle brought the questions and concerns the Committee posed at a recent School Committee meeting regarding the potential placement of a cell tower on the Swanson Road property to Mr. Simon Brighenti and included his responses in the packet. Dr. Brunelle noted that at the Committee's direction, she was happy to have a discussion with Town Manager Jacobson regarding potential next steps, or handle it in the fashion the Committee would like.

After some general discussion, the Committee, through a motion from Mrs. Kauffman, directed the Superintendent to let Mr. Brighenti know that their decision was not to have the tower on the Swanson Road Intermediate School property or that of any other school in the District; Mrs. Harrington seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

#### **FY 2021 Draft Budget Changes**

Dr. Brunelle noted that as previously shared with the Committee, Town Manager Jacobson and Chief Financial Officer Kazanovicz have requested and are recommending a budget increase of 2.75% for the school department, with the aggregate of Town departments at that same level. Dr. Brunelle noted that the potential budget changes will be brought before the Committee on March 11<sup>th</sup> for their review and vote. She noted that the Leadership Team has likewise reviewed these and they are currently at a 2.96% increase over last year.

### **NEW BUSINESS:**

#### **FY2021 Public Hearing:**

Dr. Brunelle shared a recommendation with the Committee that the Public Hearing be switched to the meeting of April 8<sup>th</sup>, this to allow time to potentially get budget numbers from the House, instead of Wednesday, March 25<sup>th</sup>. Dr. Brunelle reminded the Committee that the Public Hearing had been held in the School Committee Room last year as the Auditorium was not available. While it is available for April 8<sup>th</sup>, she stated that it was up to the Committee to decide where they would prefer to hold it.

Mrs. Kauffman made a motion to schedule the FY21 Public Hearing on April 8<sup>th</sup> to begin at 6:00 p.m. in the School Committee Room at 5 West Street; Mrs. Holloway seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

#### **Warrant Articles for Annual Town Meeting**

Dr. Brunelle shared that at their meeting on February 10<sup>th</sup>, the Board of Selectmen voted to open the Warrant for the Annual Town Meeting scheduled for May 5, 2020. She noted that the Warrant closes on March 2<sup>nd</sup> at 7:00 p.m. therefore the Committee would need to approve the Warrant Articles for the School Department at this meeting.

Mrs. Kauffman made a motion to approve the Warrant Articles for the FY 2021 Annual Town Meeting, as presented; Mrs. Holloway seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

### **Secretaries' New Contract**

Dr. Brunelle shared the good news that the Auburn School Secretaries have ratified their new contract. Dr. Brunelle, on behalf of herself, Dr. Chamberland and Mrs. Wirzbicki, shared the highlights of the new contract which sees a 2% COLA increase for each of the contract years which is in alignment with the guidance provided. They also agreed to OPEB and the new health insurance rates.

### **Instructional Assistants' New Contract**

Dr. Brunelle noted that, likewise, the Instructional Assistants have ratified their new contract. Dr. Brunelle, on behalf of herself, Dr. Chamberland and Mrs. Wirzbicki, shared the highlights including their acceptance of a 2% COLA increase for each of the contract years, with an added step in years one and two. They have also agreed to OPEB and the new health insurance rates.

Dr. McCrillis made a motion to approve both the Auburn Secretaries' Contract and the Instructional Assistants' contract for the years 2020-2021; 2021-2022 and 2022-2023; Mrs. Holloway seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

Dr. Brunelle thanked both groups for their flexibility throughout the process. She also thanked Dr. Chamberland and Mrs. Wirzbicki for negotiating both contracts with her.

### **Location of Central Office**

Dr. Brunelle shared that on February 5<sup>th</sup>, she, Dr. Chamberland, Mr. Fahey met with Town Manager Jacobson, Chief Executive Officer Kazanovicz and Fire Chief Coleman as part of an update on the proposed new Safety Complex. She noted that as has been informally discussed over the years, should the joint Safety Complex be ultimately approved, it would leave open the Police Station as a potential site for Central Office. On Wednesday, February 12<sup>th</sup>, Dr. Brunelle, Dr. Chamberland and Mr. Fahey toured the Police Station and at the meeting noted that it would be a good space for Central Office if it is the Town's decision to close the Randall Building.

### **Unified Games at Auburn High School**

Dr. Brunelle had previously shared with the Committee that Auburn is hosting the Unified School Day Games at Auburn High School this year. She shared that it is scheduled to take place on Friday, May 29, 2020 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. with a rain date of Monday, June 1<sup>st</sup>. Events taking place that day include Standing Long Jump; Relay Race; 50M Run; 50M Walk; 100M Run and Throwing Vectors. She noted that is sure to be a fun day and encouraged everyone to mark their calendars and plan to stop by.

### **Revote on School Committee Representatives on the AHS Principal Interview Team**

Mrs. Holloway made a motion to nominate Dottie Kauffman and Jessie Harrington as the Committee's representatives on the AHS Principal Interview Team; Dr. McCrillis seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

### **TEACHING/LEARNING REPORT:**

#### **DESE Report Cards**

Dr. Chamberland shared that the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education recently made the 2019 school and district report cards available on the [report cards website](#). She noted that the report cards provide information on student demographics, teacher qualifications, and access to the Arts and advanced coursework completion, discipline, MCAS results and accountability ratings. The federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) requires that districts receiving Title I funds distribute report cards to all parents or guardians of students enrolled in district schools. This information has been shared electronically with all families by each of the principals and Dr. Chamberland provided links to each of the reports. She noted that DESE worked hard to make the data more accessible to families and she encouraged the members to take a look at them.

### **ACCESS for ELLs Tests**

Dr. Chamberland shared that federal and state laws require that English learner (EL) students be assessed annually to measure their proficiency in reading, writing, listening and speaking English, as well as on the progress they are making in learning English. She noted that in fulfillment of these laws, EL students are required to participate in ACCESS for ELLs tests, which replaced MEPA tests beginning in the 2012-2013 school year and was pleased to report that testing of our EL students was successfully completed in line with all established testing protocols, guidelines and deadlines.

Dr. Chamberland thanked staff who support English learners, noting that they are top notch, professional, prepared and follow the letter of the law with testing procedures at all times.

### **BUSINESS/FINANCIAL REPORT:**

#### **Year-to-Date Budget Report**

Mrs. Wirzbicki shared a year-to-date budget report as of February 12, 2020.

#### **Transfers**

Mrs. Harrington made a motion to approve the transfers between the Series as provided by the Business Manager; Mrs. Holloway seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

#### **Busing Bid Results FY21-FY23 with option to extend for two (1) year options**

Mrs. Wirzbicki provided a memo detailing the Busing Bid Results for FY21-FY23, noting that an Invitation to Bid was issued on January 6, 2020 with only one bid being received from AA Transportation. She noted that it was a valid bid response with a reasonable 3% increase for the first three years, with pricing options to extend the Contract for two one-year periods. Mrs. Wirzbicki noted that the District will recognize a savings of \$22,654 in the Regular Education Transportation line. She recommended that the School Committee vote to approve the bid.

Mrs. Kauffman made a motion to approve the Bid for School Bus Transportation from AA Transportation for FY 2021-2023 with the option to extend this contract for two one-year periods should it be in the best interest of the District at that time; Mrs. Holloway seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

#### **Bus Applications**

Mrs. Wirzbicki reminded the audience that bus applications were available and due by June 1, 2020.

### **PERSONNEL:**

#### **Job Description, Physical Therapist**

#### **Job Description, Occupational Therapy Assistant**

Dr. Brunelle noted that with the retirement of Mrs. Joan Boulay and Mrs. Cindy Cournoyer at the end of the school year and their positions being filled with new staff members, the job descriptions were updated and it was her recommendation that you approve both as presented.

#### **Job Description, Assistant Vocational Coach**

Likewise, with the ENCORE program being introduced in the 2020-2021 school year, Dr. Brunelle noted that there would be a need for an Assistant Vocational Coach to work with the Transition Coordinator/Job Coach. She also noted that while this is a new position, it will likely be filled internally with no additional cost to the District.

Mrs. Holloway made a motion to approve the job descriptions for Physical Therapist, Occupational Therapy Assistant and Assistant Vocational Coach as presented; Mrs. Kauffman seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

### **POLICIES:**

#### **JBB, Educational Equity on Second Reading**

Mrs. Harrington made a motion to approve the above-named policy on 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading; Dr. McCrillis seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

**BEDH, Public Comment at School Committee Meetings with Tracking for Update**

**IC/ICA School Year – School Calendar with Tracking for Update**

**ID, School Day with Tracking for Update**

**IE, Organization of Instruction with Tracking for Update**

**IGD, Curriculum Adoption with Tracking for Update**

**IMG, Animals in Schools with Tracking for Update**

**JKAA, Physical Restraint of Students and Physical Restraint Procedures for Update/Approval**

Mrs. Kauffman made a motion to approve the updated above-named policies; Mrs. Holloway seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

At 8:00 p.m., Mrs. Holloway made a motion to enter Executive Session per MGL Chapter 30, Section 21(a) (2) to conduct strategies for negotiations with union and non-union personnel; Dr. McCrillis seconded the motion and a roll call vote was taken:

Dr. McCrillis - Yes; Mrs. Kauffman - Yes; Mrs. Holloway - Yes; Mrs. Harrington - Yes; Mr. Scobie - Yes;

Dr. Brunelle, Dr. Chamberland, Mrs. Wirzbicki and Mrs. Zautner were excused.

Respectfully submitted,



Ailaine Zautner

Recording Secretary

**Referenced Documents:**

Minutes from 1/21/2020; 1/27/2020 and 2/5/2020

AHS Project 365Z PPT

Transition Coordinator/Job Coach PPT

Changes to Program of Studies

AHS Field Trip Request for France

AHS Field Trip Request for Newport, RI

Humanities Scholars Program

Calendar for 2020-2021 School Year

Strategic Plan January 2020 Update

Memo re SPED Stabilization Fund Request

Thank you letters for School Lunch Debt Donations

AT&T Cell Tower Responses

Warrant Articles for Town Meeting

Secretaries New Contract

IAs New Contract

Year-to-Date Budget Report

Transfers

Memo re Bus Bid Results

Job Descriptions: Physical Therapist; OTA; Assistant Vocational Coach

Policies: JBB; BEDH; IC/ICA; ID; IE; IGD; IMG; JKAA

