

**ANDOVER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
ANDOVER, CT
Board of Education
Meeting Wednesday, January 8, 2025
7:00 pm
Virtual Meeting/School Library**

Members Present: Caitlin Greenhouse (Chairperson), Eric Becker, Gerard Cremé, Brianne Lanzieri (virtual), Shannon Louden, Celeste Willard (virtual)

Members Absent: Mike Beckwith

Administration: Valerie Bruneau, Superintendent
Taylor Parker, Principal
Terri Smith, Finance

Others: Sarah Goodness (virtual), Krysta Carboni (virtual), Jen McGoldrick (virtual), Liz Lokiec (virtual), Kimberly Person (virtual), Joanne Hebert (virtual), Anne G. Cremé, Kirstina Frazier

1. Call to Order, Pledge of Allegiance, Opening Statement

The meeting was called to order at 7:02 p.m. by Chairperson Greenhouse, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chairperson Greenhouse made a statement regarding comments from the public, asking they be concise and focused on the agenda items for this meeting, limiting time to 3 minutes per person.

2. Comments from the Public

Ann Cremé asked if someone from the BOE could attend BOS meeting to address issues such as solar panels and plumbing situation. Next meeting is Monday, January 13, 2025.

3. Communications – None.

4. Student Celebrations – Spelling Bee has kicked off, classroom Bee's will conclude this week, will have celebrations as this moves forward.

5. Approval of Minutes

Minutes from the December 11, 2024 Regular Board of Education Meeting

G. Cremé made a motion to approve the minutes from the December 11, 2024 Regular Board of Education Meeting, seconded by S. Louden. No discussion.

6-0-0 (PASSED)

6. Opportunity to Add or Delete Agenda Items – None.

E. Becker made a motion to amend item 9.E. STIF Account to add possible action, seconded by C. Willard. No discussion.

4-0-2 (PASSED) G. Cremé and S. Louden abstained

7. Other Celebrations – Chairperson Greenhouse noted she hoped all had a nice holiday break.

8. Reports

A. Chairperson’s Oral Report – Chairperson Greenhouse reported that she passed out a copy of letter sent to the BOF which will be discussed later during bathroom project, BOF approved funding for Fuss & O’Neill to do bathroom project.

B. Superintendent’s Report – Supt. Bruneau gave a facilities update. LaFramboise (water contractor) completed water cross connection report, lightboard needed to be replaced on the generator, waiting for additional quotes from Aligned Elevator and Kone, call in regarding check-valve for the boiler which needed to be replaced – a few other valves we are keeping an eye on, music door being replaced, Green Skies did joist inspection, two spots on the roof, we will get report back soon, FPT came and did quarterly inspection of the sprinkler, will check to see what the process would be for a more in-depth inspection (not just visual), outside lights have not been replaced yet. Next month will ask for Board to consider using CABE to do a comprehensive policy audit to make sure policies are accurate and up to date. Presented a memo from Shipman and Goodwin that goes over the BOE roles and responsibilities with regard to property, which came up from discrepancies at the tri-board meeting. Memo will be attached to the minutes for this meeting.

C. Principal’s Report – Principal Parker noted PowerSchool data breach, will be alerting families of this potential breach which was minimal on our end. PowerSchool is addressing the issue. Half day professional development next week, heading to Hebron or welcoming Marlborough to collaborate on BookWorms, BookWorms consultant coming in February. EastConn grant for professional development for this year which will focus on executive functioning in preschool. Staff has been doing a phenomenal job implementing new curriculum. Spelling Bee and Invention Convention are in process at this time. The Invention Convention will be held the same date of the March BOE meeting and winners will be presented at that meeting. Anticipates two new students this month so enrollment will be up to 243.

D. Financial Report – T. Smith reported on the financial reports as presented and answered questions from the BOE members.

E. Liaison Reports

School Readiness – B. Lanzieri noted School Readiness met on Tuesday, there are 4 – 6 more preschool School Readiness spots which will be filled by current students, grants have been expended for salaries, preschool registration has started for next year. Paula (School Readiness Liaison) & Taylor looking at OEC grants for next year, Paula will do site visit on Feb. 13th.

PTA – C. Willard reported that playground has been inspected and can be open for use as of tomorrow. Thanked Supt. Bruneau, Principal Parker, Board and all who supported the work to bring this project to fruition and arranged for the inspection of the playground. Meeting this past Monday, talked about some upcoming fundraisers, moved some dates on pending fundraisers.

Tri Board Meeting – Nothing to report.

Town Meetings – S. Loudon reported it was a big month. BOS discussed AES gym fans, decided to go with Lenco Electric and looking to get that done as soon as possible. Discussed solar panels at length, discussed age of roof and need for repair/replacement and discussion on whether this should go to a Town meeting vote. BOS meeting noted bus routes will be affected by Bunker Hill Bridge replacement. BOF worked on Capital Fund policy, passed and has been presented to BOE, approved MEP request, approved to move forward with Fuss & O'Neill.

CIP – S. Loudon reported that the Fire department presented, significant need for updated self-contained breathing apparatus, will bring updated RFPs to look at funding for that.

STIF Account – Nothing to report.

9. Items for Discussion & Actions

A. Item: Bathroom Project Update/Report

Action: Discussion

Supt. Bruneau noted that now that it has been approved, along with the funding, the only thing needed is the updated authorization to proceed. Once they receive this, they will be able to get the project started. Supt. Bruneau will keep Board updated on the progress of project.

B. Item: Solar Project Update

Action: Discussion

Supt. Bruneau spoke with Ryan Linares, Greenskies, to clarify a few things, the structural engineer came during vacation, will submit a report. They will not do any work if they feel the roof is not structurally sound. Discussed procedure if there is an emergency issue that affects panels (i.e. tree falling, leak in roof, etc.), they will work quickly to maintain/repair solar panels as needed. Supt. Bruneau read an e-mail from Ryan Linares regarding an 824 Process which does not apply to this project, will send this letter to Planning & Zoning.

Chairperson Greenhouse noted that BOS already submitted and voted on an 824 presented by the Town *without* BOE input, that BOS wants a Town Meeting and a Town vote to move forward on the solar project. There are still concerns on the Town side about this project, BOS plans to address this at their meeting on Monday. C. Willard had to re-sign and resubmit some paperwork to Eversource for interconnection agreement. E. Becker & C. Greenhouse will attend BOS meeting (virtually) on Monday.

C. Item: 2025 - 2026 Budget
Action: Presentation and Discussion

Supt. Bruneau had created two video presentations for budget that are posted on the website for the community to see, including budget drivers and areas of need. Past budgets are on this page and any additional information regarding the budget. Supt. Bruneau presented the budget drivers, including enrollment, contracts, special education costs, medical benefits, technical and regulatory fees. Reviewed historical enrollment data, how we meet student needs, increased population in town means that we need to increase the number of classes to make sure that class sizes stay manageable and allow us to meet the children’s needs. Noted that preschool program is still currently self-sufficient and salaries are not included in the budget as that is funded through School Readiness, Smart Start and Tuition funds. Will need more intervention services, such as more support from reading specialist and math specialist. Discussed areas of the budget that will remain the same or decrease as well as the areas that will need to increase.

Total budget request is \$381,096.28 which represents an 8.7647% increase. Significant increases include the following:

- Contract increases: \$15,000 teachers and \$41,000 non-teachers
- New Positions: (3.1FTE) approximately \$220,000
- Benefits: \$61,000 (medical) and \$14,000 (other) for a total of \$75,000
- Tech/Licenses, etc.: \$21,000
- All others: \$7,000

January 23, 7:00 p.m., is family night for budget presentation, will be held in the gym. Supt. Bruneau will present the budget at the Senior Luncheon. Supt. Bruneau answered questions from the BOE members. Discussion of class sizes, enrollment, and providing an appropriate setting and services for each child.

D. Item: BOF Policy on Capital Account
Action: Discussion and Possible Action

Chairperson Greenhouse reported that the BOF did pass this AES Capital Fund policy, email was sent by J. Hebert, C. Greenhouse will send it to all BOE members. Chairperson Greenhouse read the e-mail to the BOE members.

S. Loudon made a motion to pass the AES Capital Fund policy as adopted by the Board of Finance, seconded by G. Crème. No discussion.

6-0-0 (PASSED)

E. Item: STIF Account

Action: Discussion and Possible Action

Chairperson Greenhouse discussed the possibilities of putting the Capital Fund and non-lapsing funds into the STIF account so that those funds generate additional interest, additionally reinvesting interest. Discussion on whether to put both accounts into STIF, Capital Fund needs to be approved by BOF, but the decision on the non-lapsing is within the BOE purview. Chairperson Greenhouse will gather additional information on interest rates and balances in accounts to present to the Board at next month's meeting.

E Becker made a motion to open a STIF account for the 2% non-lapsing fund and invest the entire amount available, seconded by G. Cremé. No discussion.

6-0-0 (PASSED)

B. Lanzieri made a motion to ask the Board of Finance to invest the AES Capital Fund into a STIF account and to ask them that the interest earned be deposited back into the AES Capital Fund, seconded by C. Willard. No discussion.

4-0-2 (PASSED) G. Cremé and S. Loudon abstained.

10. Comments from the Public on Agenda Items

A. Cremé questioned dates for senior luncheon, Supt. Bruneau will confirm this.

K. Frazier noted date for Invention Convention is March 5, but will invite participants to attend BOE meeting on March 12 for the celebration.

11. Other Action Items

12. Upcoming Meetings

- Regular Board Meeting – February 12, 2025
- Items for Next Meeting – School Calendar, CAFE Policy Audit Cost/Information, Voting on Budget, Mid-Term BOE Review & Superintendent Review, Elevator Estimates, 5-year Capital Plan Progress and Forms for BOF

13. Adjournment

C. Willard made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:30 p.m., seconded by G. Cremé. No discussion.

6-0-0 (PASSED)

Respectfully submitted,

Dawn M. Longley, Clerk

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ATTORNEY-CLIENT PRIVILEGED AND CONFIDENTIAL

SHIPMAN

TO: Ms. Valerie Bruneau, Superintendent of Schools
FROM: Jessica Richtmar Smith, Esq.
DATE: January 6, 2025
RE: Board of Education Role and Responsibilities Regarding School Property

You have requested a legal memorandum outlining the responsibilities that boards of education in Connecticut have with respect to school buildings and property. I have prepared this memorandum in response to your request.

Connecticut law firmly establishes that local boards of education have broad and exclusive authority regarding all properties that are used for school purposes. On the one hand, towns or municipalities own the buildings and grounds used for school purposes within their respective school districts in accordance with Sections 10-240 and 10-241 of the Connecticut General Statutes. Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-240 provides, in relevant part:

Each town shall *through its board of education* maintain the control of all the public schools within its limits and for this purpose shall be a school district and shall have all the powers and duties of school districts

(Emphasis added).

Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-241 provides, in relevant part:

Each school district shall be a body corporate and shall have power to . . . purchase, receive, hold and convey real and personal property for school purposes

On the other hand, boards of education have expansive authority regarding all properties used for school purposes under Section 10-220 of the Connecticut General Statutes. In that regard, Section 10-220 expressly provides that the local board of education “shall have the care, maintenance and operation of buildings, lands, apparatus and other property used for school purposes. . . .” The Connecticut Supreme Court has described this division of responsibility as follows: