

**ANDOVER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
ANDOVER, CT
Board of Education
Meeting Wednesday, February 12, 2025
7:00 pm
Virtual Meeting/School Library**

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

Members Absent:

Administration: Valerie Bruneau, Superintendent
Taylor Parker, Principal (Absent)
Terri Smith, Finance (Virtual)

Others: Krysta Cariboni (virtual), Jen McGoldrick (virtual), Kirstina Frazier (virtual), Amanda Beloin (virtual), Melissa Loteczka (virtual), Carrie Gilbert (virtual), Jaime Webber (virtual), Jen LaRosee (virtual), Lisa Hopkins (virtual), Jennie Morrell (virtual), Erik Loteczka, Everly Loteczka

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

The meeting was called to order at 7:03 p.m. by Chairperson Greenhouse, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Comments from the Public

Amanda Beloin – asking BOE to support 2025-2026 budget, really hopes that the Board takes into consideration need for staff in upper grades.

Melissa Loteczka – thanked BOE for hard work during budget process, appreciates the addition of staff members for the growing school.

Kirstina Frazier – hopes the BOE will accept the budget tonight, understands the importance of the budget, increase in staff members will be felt in a positive way for staff and children, staff works hard to put budget to best use to continue to provide quality services to children.

Carrie Gilbert – spoke to the importance of class sizes for the success of children and the need for decreased class sizes in upper grades, thanked Supt. Bruneau for putting together this budget.

Jen McGoldrick – speaking in support of the budget, thanked Supt. Bruneau for work on budget.

Jaime Webber – thanks the BOE for work on budget, appreciates addition of teachers in the upper grades, from firsthand experience with the large sizes she notes that it is a challenge to meet the needs of 28 students.

Jen LaRosee – shared appreciation for Supt. Bruneau and BOE for hard work in developing budget, supports the addition of teachers in the upper grades.

Krysta Cariboni – reading specialist at school, sees more students struggling to meet benchmarks, students receiving support has greatly increased in upper grades, classroom teachers need smaller class sizes to meet the children’s needs to improve their performance.

Lisa Hopkins – offered thanks for hard work and support, appreciates the addition of staff members in budget.

Jennie Morrell – feels lucky to be part of the Andover community, appreciates the BOE being responsive to changing needs of the district, our impact on children is at its best when we have lower class size.

Erik Loteczka - involved in Board and Andover community as wife is on staff, BOE has his confidence in being responsible to keeping needs of students in mind.

3. Communications

G. Cremé noted he received a petition he would like to sign, confirmed as an individual he can sign the petition.

4. Student Celebrations

Supt. Bruneau introduced Everly Loteczka, 4th grader, winner of the AES Schoolwide Spelling Bee which is for students up to 6th grade. Will represent AES at Regional Spelling Bee on March 7, has won her grade level for the last four years.

5. Approval of Minutes

Minutes from the January 8, 2025 Regular Board of Education Meeting

S. Louden made a motion to approve the minutes from the January 8, 2025 Regular Board of Education Meeting with the following amendments: Ann Cremé should be Anne G. Crème in the attendance section; in agenda item 2, in Principal’s Report, agenda item 8.C. “breech” should be “breach” (2 places), and under CIP add in S. Louden reported that the Fire Department presented, seconded by G. Cremé. No further discussion. M. Beckwith abstained.

6-0-1 (PASSED)

6. Opportunity to Add or Delete Agenda Items

E. Becker made a motion to add possible action to agenda item 9.F. Solar Update, further move to table Executive Session to March, and move up agenda item 9.C. Budget to item 9.B. on the agenda, seconded by C. Willard. No discussion.

7-0-0 (PASSED)

S. Louden made a motion to move agenda item 9.F. Solar Update to agenda item 9.D., seconded by G. Cremé. No discussion.

7-0-0 (PASSED)

7. Other Celebrations – None.

8. Reports

A. Chairperson’s Oral Report – Chairperson Greenhouse noted that all of her items for reporting will be addressed in other areas of the agenda, nothing further to report.

B. Superintendent’s Report - Supt. Bruneau provided BOE members (to be sent to those attending virtually) a letter that was sent to admin and staff that addresses any issues that may arise with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). Letter was reviewed with appropriate staff so that everyone is aware of the policy and procedures that are in place if needed. No new grants to apply for at this time. Working with Scott (head custodian) to put together a 5-year plan which will include the boilers. Boilers will not be addressed in this budget cycle but getting data to prepare for future maintenance or repair needs. Lights outside are scheduled to be replaced on Tuesday. J. Murray is working with Principal Parker for the installation of gym fans.

C. Principal’s Report – Principal Parker is absent tonight. Supt. Bruneau reported that there will be a half day professional development day this week. Due to snowstorm last week, BookWorms training that was scheduled needed to be cancelled. Additional professional development in the works. Reviewed enrollment report as presented.

D. Financial Report – T. Smith reported on the financial reports as presented and answered questions from the BOE members. Supt. Bruneau explained the overage in the IA (instructional aide) substitute line item and the struggle to fill paraprofessional positions, this line item for paraprofessional salaries will have a balance left that will transfer to the IA substitute line item to cover overage. Rising costs for equipment maintenance, etc. has increased printing and binding line item. Noted repair and maintenance is also high. Auditors were in Monday and Tuesday, returning next Thursday to finalize everything, and should have a solid number of budget surplus at next meeting. Chairperson Greenhouse noted that BOE members have two balance sheets from the Town highlighting the balance of the 2% and Capital Funds held by the Town, will get these reports monthly from the Town.

E. Liaison Reports

School Readiness – B. Lanzieri noted no updates, no meetings since last report. BOF reached out asking for specific budget reporting of the School Readiness funds for preschool specifically. Supt. Bruneau sent a video that shows the data that is shared at School Readiness meetings, along with written information. School Readiness and Smart Start grants are part of the school audit.

PTA – C. Willard reported that PTA is discussing fundraisers and activities, nothing specific to report.

Town Meetings – BOF, see above issue on School Readiness, BOS discussed Solar Panels, will be addressed below. Supt. Bruneau is in discussion with BOS regarding Town replacing a handicap equipped van, school does pay the Town to use this van when needed for special education students, will explore if the Town can take advantage of any rebate options.

CIP - S. Louden reported that the Fire Department returned regarding need for SCBA and that has gone to BOS for approval.

9. Items for Discussion & Actions

A. Item: 2025-2026 AES Calendar

Action: Discussion and Possible Action

Discussion about how decisions are made to choose holidays off, paid holidays are based on contractual agreements. Language “Early Dismissal” and “Early Release” are used interchangeably on the document, should be consistent throughout the document. Do we take family needs into consideration when planning days off as far as half or full days? Suggested to get family input on this process. Teachers get a copy of the calendar and give feedback to the principal before the finalization of the calendar.

S. Louden made a motion to approve the 2025-2026 AES calendar as amended, seconded by M. Beckwith. No further discussion.

7-0-0 (PASSED)

B. Item: 2025 - 2026 Budget

Action: Discussion and Possible Action

Supt. Bruneau reported that the budget has been presented to the Board, has posted it and disseminated it via video online. Family night, one parent showed up, most people are reviewing it online. Supt. Bruneau gave a quick recap of the budget. Overall increase this year of \$381,096 is attributed to just a few categories including salaries for addition of 3.1 FTEs to bring down class sizes to a manageable level to meet needs of children. Holding off on adding staff to sixth grade this year. Teacher increases were 3%, basically a cost-of-living increase, and they are taking on an additional 2% of insurance benefits cost. Teachers showing their investment in the AES community. Budget is very lean so there is no area to cut. Only \$28,000 of the increase is non-staff related, the rest of the increase is focused on salary increases and benefits.

S. Louden made a motion to approve the 2025-2026 Budget as presented by the Superintendent, seconded by G. Cremé. Discussion.

M. Beckwith thanked the teachers and noted that he is proud to support this budget as a BOE member, fellow teacher, parent, and community member, and appreciates the teachers. E. Becker echoed M. Beckwith’s sentiments and noted the appreciation for the facts of this budget and is eager to work with the Board to bring this budget to the community and

advocate for its approval. G. Cremé thanked Supt. Bruneau for the hard work on this budget. B. Lanzieri apologized to the teachers, as part of the BOE, regarding the size of classrooms and appreciates the work of AES teachers.

7-0-0 (PASSED)

C. CABE Audit of BOE Policies: Hire to Audit

Action: Discussion and Possible Action

S. Louden made a motion to hire CABE to audit the BOE policies, seconded by M. Beckwith. Discussion.

CABE to go through policy manual to see what we have and do not have, what gaps we might have based on recent regulations. CABE confirmed that if we move ahead, they will honor \$1800 fee which is the smallest district size cost. At end of audit they will provide lists of recommendations and templates for updated policies. Discussion on which line item this expense could be applied to, which would be legal or BOE expense.

7-0-0 (PASSED)

D. Solar Project Update

Action: Discussion and Possible Action

Ryan Linares from Greenskies was in attendance (virtually) and answered questions. In case of lightning or weather issues, equipment is insured through their own policies, Greenskies' insurance coexists with the school insurance, and they have worked with Cirma (school insurance) before on many projects. Installation of panels does not affect the warranty of the roof. Ryan needs access to the manufacturer's warranty for the roof so that they can install it appropriately but have been unable to get this. Invertors warranty for 10 years and panels for 20 years, what happens if invertors break after 10 years and damage roof? Ryan noted section 4.1 of the contract, as Greenskies maintains ownership, all equipment is their responsibility including invertors. Design is to code and will allow for access to the HVAC system with multiple feet around each HVAC unit, this is a requirement for code and allows for access to HVAC system. Performed a significant structural analysis of the roof, even going inside and checking the decking of the roof. Plenty of real estate on the roof to adjust design as needed and maintain code requirements. In case of leak or damage to the roof, Greenskies would remove and replace the panels during the repair of the roof. There is a cost to this service which is determined on a case by case basis depending on issue that requires repair. If it is normal wear and tear or if the system is offline for a length of time they will need to recoup costs of income loss while system is offline. Cost will be billed through an increased invoice in the following month. Everything is documented and there will be information on lost income based on the previous year's performance. Has not had this situation arise on any of their installations. The system is monitored through a specific system (Deck Monitoring), they can send the link to this system to the BOE and it is often used by science classes to see how the

solar panels work and what the production is. It is an interesting tool that also shows how much carbon is being offset. Interconnection agreement with Eversource has been received, will get the updated site plans/drawings based on structural analysis. Ryan indicated this will be a very efficient system. Supt. Bruneau noted that in another district, with the monitoring system in place for solar panels, Greenskies sent someone to fix something based on notification from the monitoring system. In order to move ahead, we will need the updated plans, permits and to provide Greenskies with manufacturers’ warranty documents and insurance information.

E. Becker made a motion to send a letter to the BOS recommending a special Town meeting specifically to address solar at AES, with no other agenda items on the calendar, to get approval for moving forward with the solar project, seconded by C. Willard.

Discussion included the reasons why we need to move forward to get their approval since it is under BOE purview. E. Becker noted that while the BOE has full authority to move forward with this project without additional approval, felt that this was a way to build community support, answer questions, it is a large project that community members will see when they drive by, and a chance to set what a capital project is. Concern that this sets a dangerous precedent that takes the responsibility away from the BOE, as this project has been in process for two years, there has been plenty of time for people to come to BOE meetings and ask questions. Concerns about timing as well with grant deadlines and Greenskies scheduling. Ryan indicated that construction would start near the end of the school year, but procurement process takes many months to get equipment, store it, etc., and this takes place after permits are issued, so there is a considerable amount of lead time required. At this time, we are close to bumping into the end of the school year in order to have project completed before school started again. Two or three weeks should not pose a problem. Supt. Bruneau indicated September 14, 2022 was when discussions began, project has been on agenda twelve times, grant was applied for three times and didn’t get it until the third time. Supt. Bruneau feels the project is supported and noted that there was not a Town meeting required for the building of the senior center. This project approval does not meet standards for Town vote requests. Since beginning of project in 2022 has not had anyone vote against the project through this BOE. Board has done its job. If the scheduling of this meeting takes more than 2-3 weeks, we are pushing out the start of the project and jeopardizing the timeline of the project and grant funding. Supt. Bruneau appreciates the BOE is in charge of this decision but respectfully asks that the BOE choose to move forward with the project tonight. What happens if the Town says no? Chairperson Greenhouse noted that she has had some questions from Town members. C. Willard wants to ensure the BOE is in lockstep with the community, making this move will heal a strained relationship. Discussion about instead having a special BOE meeting for people to come and ask questions to the BOE.

Roll call vote: C. Greenhouse – yes E. Becker – yes
M. Beckwith – no G. Cremè – no
B. Lanzieri – yes S. Louden – no C. Willard – yes

4-3-0 (PASSED)

E. Item: Bathroom Project Update/Report
Action: Discussion

Supt. Bruneau noted Fuss & O’Neill is the oversight company for bathroom project. Met with Josh, site manager, on several occasions. Currently in Phase 1, they have to come in to take pictures, done measuring and are working on designs. The Board of Finance approved \$43,000; first check will be cut this week in order to move forward to complete Phase 1. The exact timeline will be determined after Phase 1 is completed. They have been instrumental in bringing forth creative ideas on how to make the bathrooms work most efficiently and be the easiest to clean and keep hygienic. Payments will come through Capital Fund from the Town.

F. Item: Elevator Estimates
Action: Discussion and Possible Action

Was a BOE identified top 3 priority. Have received three quotes. TK is company that does current service, and are happy with the service they provide, yearly maintenance from 2001 to now is approximately \$2700 – \$2800. \$140K for full replacement, \$20K for soft modification (update panel). Align \$2998 annual maintenance fee, quarterly contract stated anything over and above maintenance is \$355/hr and \$670/hr for overtime. Align quote for soft modification \$16,800 but they didn’t think they needed it now, they would purchase that now to store at AES (since this is a discontinued elevator model), does not include installation, would have to pay hourly rate to install it. The quote indicated \$5900 in repairs that need to be done now, but TK did not think those repairs need to be done now. KONE is the third company, high end company, full replacement would be much higher than \$140K, declined to bid on soft modification as they do not do this small of a job. Supt Bruneau and Scott recommend staying with TK for maintenance service and have them to do the soft modification of the panel. Request a vote to move forward to get a contract to bring to the next BOE meeting for final approval of project to replace panel board in the elevator.

S. Louden made a motion to have TK prepare a contract with quotes for the elevator repairs, seconded by G. Crème. No further discussion.

7-0-0 (PASSED)

G. STIF Account
Action: Discussion

Chairperson Greenhouse noted that there is conflicting information on whether Town can have more than one STIF account. J. Hebert from BOF is looking into this so we can move forward. T. Smith noted that the auditor said the Town could have multiple STIF accounts and would make sense for them to invest it.

Supt. Bruneau noted that BOE members had several handouts, CABE documents with State schedule with goals and objectives for the year, legislative priority summaries, March 4 is Day

on the Hill for any Board members who would like to participate. Also included two CAPPS documents which describe the CAPPS mission and legislative proposals. Will make sure B. Lanzieri and C. Willard get copies.

10. Comments from the Public on Agenda Items

J. Morrell – thanked the BOE regarding the approval of the budget and the ability of BOE to see the needs of all the children and the school, especially the social-emotional needs of students post-Covid.

J. McGoldrick – thanked the BOE for passing the budget for teachers and students.

J. Webber – thanked BOE for everything.

A. Beloin – thanked BOE for support over the years.

11. Other Action Items – None.

12. Upcoming Meetings

- Regular Board Meeting – March 12, 2025
- Items for Next Meeting – Executive Session for Midterm Review, Boilers, TK Elevator Contract, Solar, STIF Update, BOF is March 19 for Budget Presentation.

13. Adjournment

C. Willard made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:22 p.m., seconded by S. Loudon. No discussion.

7-0-0 (PASSED)

Respectfully submitted,

Dawn M. Longley, Clerk