

ANDOVER BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
ANDOVER BOARD OF EDUCATION  
Special Meeting/Public Hearing Minutes  
January 17, 2019 7:00 P.M.  
Andover Elementary School Gym, 35 School Road

BOS Members Present: Vice First Selectman Jeff Maguire and Selectman Cathleen Desrosiers  
BOS Members Absent: First Selectman Robert F. Burbank, Selectman Julia Haverl and Selectman Jay Linddy

BOE Members Present: Chair Shannon Loudon, Gerard Crème, Cynthia Murray, Danielle Maguire, Michael Russo

BOE Members Absent: Lisa Hewett and Jay Linddy

Others Present: AES Principal John Briody, Superintendent of Schools Dr. Sally Doyen, Amanda Cleveland (project manager), Jillian Tara (lead designer) from Silver/Petrucelli & Associates, Recording Secretary Linda McDonald, Ed Sarisley, Dianne Grenier, Catherine Palazzi, John Handfield, Planning and Zoning Commission Chair Eric Anderson, Mike Palazzi, Curt Dowling, Wallace Barton, Gerry Wright, Journal Inquirer reporter Chris McDermott, Paula King, Michael Russo, Carol Barton, Mike Donnelly, Lois Handfield, Anne Crème, Brian Clate, Georgette Conrad, Clyde Conrad, Elinor Skoog, Marge Surdam, Judith Knox, Rosemary Crandall, Amy Knox, George Knox, Adrian Mandeville, Anne Merry, Karen Zito, Wendy Kopp, Daniel Foran, Elaine Buchardt, Don Keener, Ellen Repay, Fred Oliver, Amanda Gibson, Lori Blake, Tiiu Anson, Ylo Anson, Jeanne Person, Susan Slater, Davis Gostanian, Grace Gostanian, Kevin Regan and others.

1. Call to Order: S. Loudon called the meeting to order at 7:06 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. She explained the purposes of the meeting are to provide information on the Town and Andover Elementary School (AES) and what has prompted the Board of Education (BOE) to offer the grades 3 and 4 wing at AES for use by the Town. She said the boards look forward to input from the community as to what they want to occur in the space.

2. Overview by Board of Education and architect on proposal to use space at AES for community activity:

S. Loudon said as far as the BOE is concerned the school is an incredibly well-maintained facility that is not being fully utilized. The school population demographics do not support the size of the school. S. Loudon said there has been a decline of over one-third in the student population decline over the past decade. She explained there are currently 190 students and it is projected there will be only 160 students next year and that is the trend for at least the next five or six years.

S. Loudon said this offers the opportunity to relocate students to free up the grades 3 and 4 wing. The BOE thought, given the Town's current need for space, the best possible use for that wing would be to offer it to the Town for its use by the seniors, boy scouts, girl scouts, yoga, and any other Town group or entity that potentially wants to use that space. The BOE, BOS and the Town have been negotiating a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) about what is going to happen to that space. She emphasized that, first and foremost, this is Andover Elementary School and will remain Andover Elementary School. Anything that goes on regarding use of the wing by any other group is going to be separate. All students and persons coming into the school for school purposes will remain secure. The wing would only be used by the Town only while it is not needed by the school. No construction

would be done in the wing that would not allow it to again for its intended purpose of Andover Elementary School.

S. Loudon commented she does not believe the cost of renovation or re-purposing would be in the hundreds of thousands of dollars as has been rumored. She said it is not yet known what the cost of renovation would be, as currently, there is no scope of work. The BOE doesn't currently know what the Town wants for the use of the grades three and four wing, which is the purpose of tonight's meeting. She said all entities would make every effort to keep costs down if the decision was made to proceed with construction.

J. Maguire explained the Board of Selectmen looks at this as an opportunity to use the best maintained building in town. The Board has been struggling with seniors to find an adequate place for them to have their activities. This is an opportunity to look at this space to determine if it is a viable location for the Town to use. He commended the BOE and administration on the best maintained building in Town, by far. He said it is in the Town's interest to see if the Town can utilize some of this space for use for the benefit of the seniors or any organization within the Town.

Dr. Doyen emphasized the school sees moving the students out of that wing as a security issue. A few years ago, a security audit was performed for the entire school and one issue raised was the number of times students in the grades 3 and four wing must walk through from that area completely through the vestibule across the main entrance to the school through the door and by the windows could pose a security issue. The school has the room to move the students and it seemed to be another important reason to look into doing this. Slides were presented showing data on the decline in student enrollment. Some enrollment figures are as follows: September 2002 – 367 students, September 2007 – 350 students (this was the year the addition was put on), September 2018 – 191 students, of which 40 are in pre-school.

E. Anderson gave a presentation on the planning the town has done, population and school enrollment demographics: One goal in the 2015 Town's Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) was that Andover needs a functional community center, citing rapid increase in the elderly population and shrinking school age population. He noted the overall population in Andover is projected to decrease 22% in 25 years down to 2,700 residents per census data, with a 48% drop in the school age population over that item period. Andover is older than the State average.

E. Anderson explained the old senior center was in the former fire department with 1,500 square feet of usable space. This building has high mold contamination as determined in a recent survey by an environmental testing company and is probably too costly to renovate. Other renovations need to be done to address leaking water, roof replacement, foundation issues, and gutter improvements. The road would have to be dug up to provide a place to dump water run-off.

E. Anderson said the Long-Term Planning Committee distributed a town-wide survey in summer 2018 to help with long term planning. He reported that 73% of respondents were in favor of new senior/community center and the most popular location was around the elementary school and Town Hall. In summary he said:

- The old senior center is no longer usable
- There is an Increasing need for senior services
- Residents want a community center located near the elementary school
- Student enrollment is far below building capacity

- Decreasing population and fiscal restraints will make it difficult to bond for a new community center building

Amanda Cleveland from Silver/Petrucelli and Associates introduced herself and Jillian Terra and said the goals tonight were to walk the space to look at what the existing space has because what they are taking two different uses, school use and business use, and blending them. She explained there is a lot in the code that requires the functions to be separated. There is a lot that must be done for security to keep the students during business hours as well as the safety of seniors or the community using the building. She said they are here to hear from the residents on what they want to see done with the community center. The charge from the Town and BOE is to leave as much of the structure intact so it could be easily switched back to school use, a "fit and finish" type of renovation considering, if required, accessibility updates and meeting building and fire codes.

### 3. Public Participation/Public Hearing: S. Loudon opened the floor to public comment.

Adrian Mandeville of 141 Boston Hill Road spoke to how he can't think of any upgrades that would have to be done to convert the school wing. A. Cleveland responded, since the building would be going from strictly school use to multi-use, there must be a fire separation as the cafeteria is directly below the grades three and four wing. She said her firm would also be checking for code compliance separation of the spaces for security purposes.

Mike Donnelly of 27 Hebron Road asked for an explanation of the details on the slide of the interior layout of the space.

Georgette Conrad of Lakeside Drive asked if there is there a kitchen facility planned. S. Loudon responded the health room could be retrofitted to a kitchen. She also commented a food service company (Coventry Public Schools) is interested in providing senior lunches as well at a small charge. Dr. Doyen said not much cooking would have to happen.

Tiliu Anson of 138 Boston Hill Road asked about the timeframe for the proposal. A. Cleveland said first step is a feasibility study which could possibly be completed and delivered to the BOS in February or March.

Ed Sarisley of 28 Wales Road complimented the BOE and BOS for listening to the results of the town-wide survey. He commented on how he has inspected the old firehouse and said renovation would cost more than a new building and the Long-Term Planning Committee will pursue planning for a new facility in the future behind Town Hall. E. Sarisley recommended keeping the proposal simple and flexible.

Gerry Wright of 407 Lake Rd commented the seniors need a community center and hopes the residents will appreciate the services the senior transportation provides. He emphasized that seniors and veterans need a space to meet and he would do what he can to support it.

A. Mandeville pointed out that if a resident does not volunteer on a board or commission, they don't realize the struggle to find space to have meetings. Losing the access to the old firehouse as a meeting space has created difficulties. He said the proposal for a multi-use space needs to be inexpensive.

Lori Blake of 8 Shadblow Lane asked if the proposal would go to an official town vote. J. Maguire responded that there would have to be a vote as to how much money is spent. L. Blake asked if there

is space at Town Hall (a few rooms). J. Maguire responded there is only one room at Town Hall for meetings. L. Blake said it would be beneficial to families to know why the Town is coming to the school for space, aside from population issues. She said she agrees the Town needs a community space and a senior center, but the school is not the best option. She expressed concern about student safety with non-school personnel on site during school hours, the need for background checks, and the security of the proposed locked door. She commented the renovated space would have to meet State requirements and hoped the Town would strive to meet more than the minimal requirements. L. Blake expressed additional concerns with the renovations, parking issues, and scheduling conflicts with special student events at school. She was concerned with the proposal to spend money to air condition the wing when the rest of the school housing the students and staff has no air conditioning. She questioned the benefits to the school having the school function as a multi-use building.

G. Wright supported moving the State Trooper's office to the school and said the Town must look down the road for solutions.

Marge Surdam of 83 Merritt Valley said she has been a town resident for 40 years and is secretary and program chairman for the seniors. She said the seniors need a space that works for them.

Daniel Foran of 19 Ridge Road thought this plan is a great opportunity if done safely. He commented there is also a safety issue using space at new firehouse as a community center. He reminded those present that the State is considering regionalizing school systems and, if the entire space at the school was being utilized, this would be a reason not to regionalize. He asked if the cost for utilities would be split up. S. Loudon responded the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the Town will address that. D. Foran said it is time to come together as a community and do what's best for everyone.

Amy Knox of 236 Boston Hill Road said she trusts in the people planning the project and many groups currently use the school. She expressed the need to have cost estimates necessary to renovate the old firehouse. She suggested the space in the school wing could be used by middle students as well. She inquired about the Town and school sharing expenses and renovating costs. J. Maguire responded the town would be responsible for the cost of renovation.

Paula King of 33 Oak Farms Road said she does not have enough information to make a decision tonight and asked what the next steps would be. S. Loudon responded this is a purely informational meeting and no one would be asked to make a decision tonight. She explained the next step is for Silver/Petrucelli to do a feasibility study, using input from tonight, and come back to the town with what they think is feasible for use of that space given the parameters which are to minimize any disruption or reconfiguration of the space and keep costs to a minimum while still meeting the building and fire codes because the space is above the cafeteria and the Town needs to know about fireproofing between the floors.

P. King inquired if there would be another meeting to update the public on numbers and information and how will this be communicated to the residents. J. Maguire responded the architect will come back with their recommendations and that would go before the BOS and Board of Finance (BOF) who would determine if the numbers presented were appropriate for the Town to move forward. If the boards voted in the affirmative to move forward, the costs would be brought for vote at a Town meeting and may end up in the next budget, so everyone would have the opportunity to determine if the cost is too high.

John Handfield of 230 Gilead Road said maybe someday the Town can build a new community center and thanked E. Anderson for the constructive review.

A. Mandeville asked if it is possible to move things along for construction this summer and if the PTA could provide input in the process on a formal basis. In response, J. Maguire said the Town is trying to be transparent and welcomes input from the community. He said the Principal would be responsible for vetting people using the space.

George Knox of 236 Boston Hill Road said, in his opinion, the main goal is to save Old Firehouse. He said he drives for the seniors and wants the Town to consider holding on to the Old Firehouse. The Capital Improvements Planning Committee (CIP) is investigating building a space near the Town Garage to house the senior vehicles. G. Knox said vehicles must be under cover and locked up.

Catherine Palazzi of 100 Hutchinson Road spoke about how she helps to provide programs on Fridays for senior lunch, explaining the seniors currently meeting at Andover Pizza for their weekly lunches, but the seniors would like a space they could put their stuff in. She emphasized the seniors are not going to cook at the school (no need for kitchen equipment) and she will be meeting with the school's food service company to discuss menus. It is becoming expensive for the seniors to meet at the restaurant. She said the lunches are meaningful and usually draw 26-35 people. She agrees the senior van and two buses must be housed in a space that is secure and under cover.

C. Palazzi thanked the BOE, BOS, Dr. Doyen and, especially Principal Briody, for doing everything they can to help the seniors. She added that the seniors have their own chairs and tables, TV's, and exercise equipment they would like to put in the space. C. Palazzi emphasized the seniors are not going to cook in the room at the school, if they are lucky enough to get the space. The seniors are not asking the Town to spend a lot of money on the space.

C. Palazzi commented the PTA is a great organization and it is important that the students and seniors are safe. She said the seniors are intergenerational and go to the school to teach 6<sup>th</sup> graders how to vote and commented the students are bright and polite.

Kevin Regan of 67 Wales Road asked if there is no other option for a community center. He said the Town needs a Community Center and renovations should not be that complicated. He commented the Town needs to provide more amenities to attract people to the area and should investigate building a community center.

Wendy Kopp of 176 Hebron Road thought re-purposing the school wing is a good idea. She asked who would coordinate groups using the space. J. Maguire responded the logistics would have to be worked out and someone at Town Hall would keep a master calendar.

Karen Zito of 186 Long Hill Road spoke about her concern with safety as school nurse, commenting times are different today and security is high on her priority list. She said she is disheartened that buildings in Town are in disrepair and things aren't being done to protect buildings for the future. She suggested the community room at firehouse could be used by seniors. Other concerns she expressed were about providing an ADA bathroom in the new health room, a storage area and that the new health room would have a room for private conversations.

Curt Dowling of 389 Lake Road commented that, during the planning stage, the firehouse plan was to include building a fire safety complex with meeting space on the lower level, but the entire project

was turned down. He commented the Town needs a public building committee. He said he likes the idea of using space at the school on a temporary basis.

Cathy Desrosiers of 232 Bear Swamp Road explained the seniors would use space in the wing at the school four Wednesdays and four Fridays a month. Her suggestion was that the space be used only for seniors at this time. She said a safety study should be done and the project could be expanded in stages. She said the Town does need a community center, but renovations to fix the old firehouse or building a new center cannot be accomplished within a year's time. The roadblock is getting residents' support to do these projects. She supported the viable solution of using space at the school taking into consideration safety issues the PTA raised.

K. Zito asked what the procedure would be for residents to vote on this proposal. J. Maguire responded that the cost would probably be a separate line on the budget proposal.

P. King asked if mold remediation at old firehouse could be done. J. Maguire responded the entire structure must be repaired and the community would have to vote the funds to maintain the building before the mold could be remediated. J. Maguire encouraged residents to come to meetings.

C. Desrosiers explained the BOS had a mold report done and, based on the results; the decision was made to close the building to the public. She said efforts are being made to obtain three preliminary bids for repair costs to the building.

E. Anderson spoke to the status of the old firehouse. The Town would have to address the roof leak issues and water infiltration through the foundation. The building is past its building life expectation. He said the Long-Term Planning Committee is looking at a plan for maintenance of Town buildings, but there is a problem getting funding.

K. Regan commented the issues are old firehouse and town garage and asked if the location of the old firehouse was considered for a new community center. E. Anderson responded there was a past proposal to use open space funds to buy an additional 12 acres that abut the property. However, installation of a septic system would not have been allowed.

L. Blake asked for clarification on the use of the space, a senior center or community center, and how the space would be used during the school day. She commented the plan should include renovation costs associated with the new location for the health room and asked the boards to consider putting funds toward retrofitting the area of the new health room to State standards.

D. Foran expressed frustration that the town can't even pass a budget for miniscule things. He said the town needs to fix infrastructure and provide better public safety. The residents must support town improvements to draw new people to Town and can't keep following the idea the Town is only being fiscally conservative.

J. Maguire said the boards will consider all comments brought up at tonight's meeting. A. Cleveland said the comments and concerns expressed tonight were very helpful and thanked the audience for coming out.

4. Adjournment: S. Loudon adjourned the meeting at 9:12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Linda H. McDonald

*Linda H. McDonald*

Please see the minutes of subsequent meetings for the approval of these minutes and any corrections hereto.

## SIGN IN SHEET

JANUARY 17, 2019 BOS/BOE SPECIAL MEETING/PUBLIC HEARING

1. Joanna S. Perisich
2. Kathy W. O'Leary
3. Elmer Stora
4. Marge Surdam
5. Jo B. L. L. L.
6. Marion S. Fakan der
7. Judith Karp
8. Don J. O'Leary
9. Rosmary Crandall
10. Amy Knox
11. George Knopf
12. Bill Blake
13. Cathy Ry
14. Mike Pellegrini
15. Adrian Marshall
16. \_\_\_\_\_
17. \_\_\_\_\_

## SIGN IN SHEET

JANUARY 17, 2019 BOS/BOE SPECIAL MEETING/PUBLIC HEARING

1. Tina Hissow
2. Y. Arison
3. E. Anderson
4. Michael Russo
5. W. Barton
6. C. Barton
7. Amanda Cleveland
8. Lillian Tara
9. John Handfield
10. Mike Donnelly
11. Lois Handfield
12. Paula King
13. Susan Slater
14. Anne Crepie
15. Brian Clark
16. Georgette M. Conrad
17. Clyde Conrad



## SIGN IN SHEET

JANUARY 17, 2019 BOS/BOE SPECIAL MEETING/PUBLIC HEARING

1. Anne Merry
2. Karen Zito
3. Chris McDermott (Journal Inquirer)
4. JEFF MACHINIE
5. Wendy Kopp
6. Daniel Foran
7. Elaine B. Buckardt
8. Don Keener
9. Patricia Polizzi
10. DAVID GOSTANINIU
11. GRACE GOSTANINIU
12. Dianne Grenier
13. Larry Wright
14. Clayton Repay
15. Fred Olin
16. Ed SARISLEY
17. Amanda Gibson

Superintendent  
Principal Doyen  
Brilody

Health

Office  
Crandall  
Kane

Stairs  
Lav  
G  
Main  
Entrance

Ramp Door

Upper Parking Area

