

**Town of Auburn
Board of Selectmen
July 14, 2014**

School Board Members Present: Alan Villeneuve, Brian D'Amelio, Anita Gildea, Keith LeClair and Mark Comeau

Selectmen Present: Russell Sullivan, James Headd & Richard Eaton

Also Present: Dr. Charles Littlefield, Superintendent of Schools; Karen Lessard, Business Administrator; and William Herman, Town Administrator

Mr. Villeneuve called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

The Board of Selectmen joined the Auburn School Board to have a discussion on the potential of the Auburn School District and the Town of Auburn combining their needs to share the Director of Maintenance position the school district currently shares with the Candia School District.

Dr. Littlefield reported Peter Barbuto is leaving his position on July 28th to accept a new position with the Town of Bedford. He indicated that approximately five years ago there had been an opening in the Candia School District and the Auburn and Candia school boards discussed combining into one position. He indicated this was cost effective for Candia and lead to a cost reduction for Auburn. Mr. Villeneuve indicated in general terms the Auburn School District secured three days per week and the Candia School District secured two days per week.

Mrs. Lessard reported the position is budgeted for a total of \$114,000 in the 2014 – 2015 budget, inclusive of wages and all benefits. In general terms, the Auburn School District covers 60% of the cost (\$69,000), while the Candia School District covers 40% (\$45,000). Mechanically, the individual is an employee of the Auburn School District, and the Candia School District reimburses Auburn for their share of the expenses.

Dr. Littlefield indicated the position has been advertised at this point. He felt there was a possibility the town and school district could work together, and there was no issue with the concept. He felt there would be issues to work out such as apportioning time, costs, etc., but they were issues that could be worked out.

A general conversation among School Board members indicated support for the concept and idea, and that it could be advantageous to have one person overall responsible for the facilities in the community. There was a sense it could build a better bridge between the school district and the town.

Dr. Littlefield felt it would be helpful to have a model of how this has worked elsewhere to help work out the mechanics. He also thought it was important to match the skill sets needed to meet the town's needs and the school district's needs. He felt everyone would need to work very quickly if the school district was going to move forward with this before filling the vacancy, noting they had five applicants who have already applied.

On behalf of the Board of Selectmen, Mr. Sullivan reported that it was too soon for the Selectmen to answer the question of whether the Town could utilize someone for 40% of the

time or cover those costs. He indicated the Board needed to discuss this more fully, and would begin to do so at their meeting later this evening.

Mr. Villeneuve also felt the School Board needed to decide what the needs are for the Auburn Village School and whether Auburn needs more than 60% of the time from this position.

Mrs. Gildea felt an immediate decision to change would leave Candia in the lurch as we were already into July. She felt the potential of doing something with the Town was worth pursuing, but maybe not in the short term.

Mr. LeClair said he was in favor of maintaining the current arrangement with the Candia School District and was not in favor of increasing costs for the Auburn School District.

Mr. D'Amelio felt a joint position with the town could be something for the future. Such an arrangement would need to have a clear line of authority defined as to who would ultimately be in charge of this employee. He felt two schools and their needs would appear to be more in line with each other than a school district and a town.

Mr. Villeneuve was in favor of pursuing a joint arrangement with the town. He felt it would be a good effort for the taxpayers of Auburn, and that the need for this type of service for the town and school district would only increase in the years ahead.

Mr. Comeau asked what opportunity would there be to make a change in the future if the school district moved forward as is now, but wanted to change a year from now. Dr. Littlefield and Mrs. Lessard reported historically the school district has signed an annual employment contract with the Director of Maintenance, so changing the contract could take place year to year.

Mr. Villeneuve felt this was a prime opportunity to move the community forward in terms of maintaining and preserving all of their facilities by having one responsible individual in Auburn all the time. He saw this as a great benefit to both the school and the town. He also suggested this was nothing new from his perspective, as he has suggested in the past there were areas the town and school district should be sharing resources to maximize a return on investment. He indicated information technology services was one area he thought it possible the school district and town could combine their efforts and save some money.

Dr. Littlefield felt the School Board had to look at anything like this and determine does it enhance the school district's ability to meet its needs and obligations? He had the sense a joint facilities position appears to meet an emerging need for the municipality, but does it meet the needs of the school district?

Mr. Sullivan indicated he would have the Board of Selectmen discuss this potential further at their meeting this evening. He noted it would be helpful to the Selectmen to be able to look at a job description for a better idea of all that might be involved, and the Selectmen would have to look at how they do business now and if there is a balance point that makes the joint effort cost effective.

The Selectmen thanked the School Board for hosting the discussion and providing them with something to consider. Mr. Sullivan indicated the Board would report back as quickly as possible to Mr. Villeneuve.

The Selectmen and Town Administrator Herman left the meeting at 6:50 p.m.