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Harutunian logged 900 calls to school secretary with town-paid phone

By **Shawn Boburg***Staff Writer*[\(single page view\)](#)[\(view as multiple pages\)](#)

NORTH ANDOVER — Embattled Superintendent Harry K. Harutunian used his school-issued cell phone 900 times over five months to talk to the school secretary with whom he was having an affair, phone records show.

An Eagle-Tribune analysis of the town-paid phone bills also found:

* Harutunian spoke to special education secretary and high school gymnastics coach Brenda Shea an average of 7.6 times a day between July 26 and Dec. 25. That includes calls to Shea's cellular phone and her North Andover home, where she lived with her husband and son, as well as calls received from those numbers. The two logged 152 hours of talk time during the five-month period, accounting for over half the 272 hours Harutunian used the school phone.

* About one-third of the phone time with Shea occurred during working hours, or between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. Monday through Friday. Harutunian and Shea spoke 276 times, totaling 15 hours, during working hours. That is the equivalent of almost two traditional work days. On four occasions, they talked more than half an hour during the work day. Shea's desk is only about 20 yards down a corridor from Harutunian's office.

* Twenty-nine calls were longer than one hour, and two calls were longer than two hours. Most of the longest calls were to Shea's home late on weeknights or early Saturday mornings. For example, Harutunian logged a 143-minute call to Shea's home on the evening of Monday, Nov. 7. In the five minutes before that call began, Harutunian dialed Shea's cellular phone 19 times. Most weekday mornings Shea called Harutunian's

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cell phone before school, between 6:30 and 7 a.m.

* All those calls caused Harutunian to exceed the 600 peak-time minutes per month allowed under his phone plan, resulting in over \$420 in bills over the five-month period. Some \$828 worth of over-limit calls to Shea were charged to Harutunian's account, but, in many cases, the extra charges were canceled because the phone plan allows Harutunian to borrow unused minutes from other school-issued phones. In December, however, his phone bill totaled \$219.

Harutunian began calling Shea from his cell phone on Aug. 3, one month after he removed her from the secretary's union and gave her a 29 percent pay raise, amounting to \$10,000. The phone bills show no calls to or from Shea before the July 1 raise. School officials are investigating whether the relationship began before he gave her the raise. The phone records analyzed run from April 25 through Dec. 25.

Harutunian did not return phone calls or e-mails seeking comment. His lawyer, Michael Long of law firm Long & Long, said Harutunian and the School Committee agreed not to talk to the media until the end of the investigation. Shea, reached on her cell phone, also declined to comment, as did school officials.

Harutunian, whose wife filed for divorce Nov. 1, admitted to and apologized for the relationship with Shea last week after the School Committee confronted him during a closed-door disciplinary hearing. Harutunian also paid Shea's son, a student at North Andover High School, \$540 to do after-school janitorial work this school year, payroll records show. During the hearing, Harutunian agreed to take two weeks of paid vacation while a private investigator hired by the School Committee looks into his relationship with Shea.

School Committee members have not said what information the investigator is looking for, or what disciplinary action they are considering, but they said they will wait to make a decision until the investigator completes a full report. Harutunian's contract says the School Committee can fire him only for "good cause" and allows the superintendent to appeal the decision to an arbitrator and seek a payout for the remainder of his contract. The contract runs through July 1, 2010, making it worth more than \$650,000. Harutunian earned about \$173,000 last year, including a \$10,000 bonus.

BOX

Total phone calls with Shea: 900

Average phone calls per day: 7.6

Most calls in one day: 24 (Nov. 11)

Calls during work hours: 276

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Date of first call to Shea: Aug. 3

Phone bill total from July 26 to Dec. 25: \$420

Longest call: 143 minutes

Calls longer than one hour: 29

Calls longer than two hours: 2



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