

MINUTES – WAYLAND SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Regular Session – January 21, 2014

A Regular Session of the Wayland School Committee was held on Thursday, January 21, 2014, at 7:00 P.M. in the School Committee Room of the Wayland Town Building.

Present:

Barb Fletcher, Chair
Beth Butler, Vice Chair
Malcolm Astley
Ellen Grieco
Donna Bouchard (arrived at 7:06 p.m.)

Also:

Paul Stein
Superintendent of Schools

Brad Crozier
Assistant Superintendent

Marlene Dodyk
Director of Student Services

Geoff MacDonald
Business Administrator

Elementary Building Use Task Force:

Bernadette Vanaria
Alexia Obar
Debbie Bearse
Brian Jones
Jim Lee

Barb Fletcher convened the Regular Session at 7:05 p.m. and announced that the meeting was being recorded by WayCAM. The Chair announced that the Finance Committee hearing was canceled and the School Committee's budget presentation has been rescheduled for the following Monday night, January 27. She noted that the order of the agenda would be changed as a result of the weather.

1. **Comments from the Public:**

Stephanie Leong read a statement thanking the School Committee for supporting Dr. Stein's recommendation stating that it is the time for change. As a member of the Task Force, she strongly supports the K-5 model and distributed a picture symbolizing what she wants for her community. Stephanie compared the K-1 model to the K-5 model. She asked the School Committee to trust Dr. Stein's recommendation, as she believes it is the right one for Wayland.

Jane Pursor supported the previous comments and the K-5 model. She also believes that Dr. Stein's recommendation is in the best interest of the town of Wayland.

Michele Shields supported the previous comments, as she has two daughters and would like them to be in the same school. She believes mentor relationships and sibling relationships are valuable.

2. **Financial Matters:**

(a) Continued Discussion of Elementary School Reconfiguration:

The Task Force members present at this meeting described some of their process leading up to Paul's recommendation. The Task Force supported the entire process and unanimously voted that a change was needed and the status quo could not be maintained next fall. Regarding the Task Force's vote, Paul confirmed that the members did not have a unanimous vote for the K-5 model. However, the Task Force's sentiment was to support Paul's recommendation of the K-5 model, although some members still prefer the K-1 model. An educational benefit discussed amongst the Task Force was the lack of transitions in the vertical model K-5, whereas the vertical alignment is lost in the K-1 model. The K-5 model may encourage more family involvement throughout the year, whereas some believed that a K-1 model would not provide continuity

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amongst parent volunteers.

Thankful for the Task Force's work, Malcolm stated that although he is leaning towards the K-1 model for several reasons, and he would need to be convinced to support the K-5 model. Given his opinion that Claypit Hill is too large, he believes that an assistant principal should be considered if the K-5 model is implemented. Malcolm asked Paul and Geoff for a cost analysis for the K-5 model vs. the K-1, 2-5 model in order to determine if other initiatives could be funded as a result of some savings. In his opinion, the K-1, 2-5 model would keep two schools equitable in size, it would solve a one-year grade level transition, it allows for an early childhood model, allows for some growth within the grade levels, supports the full day kindergarten, and it just might solve the issue of the town being divided. However, if the K-5 model moved forward, he would be in favor of the 3-3-3 classrooms.

As a member of the Task Force and a Wayland educator, Bernadette Vanaria offered her personal viewpoint on the differences between the K-5 and K-1, 2-5 models. She feels that both models are great choices and better than the current model. However, she commented that the 3-3-3 classroom model should not be considered as it creates inflexibility for Happy Hollow and Loker going forward.

Also as a member of the Task Force, Alexia Obar commented on the lack of classroom flexibility at Loker School, even though there are currently 19 classrooms. She disagreed that the K-1 model would help to alleviate the town division issue and would not contribute to more family involvement in the schools. In her opinion, busing expenses could be decreased as a result of K-5 neighborhood schools.

Brian Jones, Principal of Loker School commented that research shows that academic achievement can be hindered when there is transition between kindergarten and first grade. He is also concerned about communication and collaboration among the teachers and believes the K-5 model would encourage stronger collaboration, as well a vertical alignment with curriculum. Brian also noted that valuable learning time is lost in the classroom when teachers have to bring their students outside of the classroom for bathroom breaks.

A discussion ensued regarding the impact of transition in terms of academic, social or geographical issues. The Task Force members presented their experiences and thinking in reaching the decision that the K-5 (2-3-4) model would be most effective. The members agreed that this model would certainly offer the potential of forming incredible school communities.

Paul commented that aside from all of the research and the many variables and aspects leading to his decision, it came down to putting everything into two "packages" for the School Committee to consider when making its final decision. He noted that there was more support for the K-1 model from the educators than from the parents on the Task Force.

Ellen also shared her thinking process and perspectives as a member of the Task Force. Leaning toward the K-1 model, she changed her mind and supported the K-5 (2-3-4) model, as the lack of transitions was the most definitive and clear aspect because it is important to children to have that vertical alignment and order of priority. Ellen also felt that a positive school experience for the children is important and more than one grade school in town should not result in a town divide for the children. Once the physical issues of the schools are resolved, the K-5 model provides the most flexibility going forward. Ellen also believes that smaller schools will allow for all-school assemblies and will build a cohesive parental community. She does not support the 3-3-3 classroom model.

Jim Lee, Principal of Happy Hollow, added that after the Loker public forum, there was an overwhelming majority of people who favored the K-5 model. Thus, the Task Force considered what the community was saying about the issue because, and as Bernadette Vanaria pointed out, many thought that the schools would return to the older K-5 model.

Beth recognized the work of the Task Force, as well as the final report. She asked Paul to address the issue of flexibility for either model in terms of class size, programs, and costs. Paul commented that in order to maintain a reasonable class size, buffer zones need to be established. Regarding space and flexibility in the K-1 model, the K-1 school has less flexibility, but there is more flexibility in the other schools.

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Donna asked if children from the same buffer zones would be going to different schools and Paul responded in the affirmative. She asked if the buffer zones could be identified before the School Committee voted on a model, which would also allow for more public feedback. A discussion followed regarding buffer zones for three different scenarios that are being considered by the School Committee. Paul stated that the buffer zones are determined by enrollment, grade level, school, and the flexibility of assigning non-resident (staff) students, and they will be very different from model to model. However, the K-1 model is very similar to what exists now.

Paul also noted the total operating costs for the 2-3-4 proposal; however, different variables were discussed in terms of the final operating costs. They also discussed the added FTE's that would be needed at Loker School, including a nurse and crossing guard for which the status is still being considered. Paul stated that the variation in FTE's lies in the specifics of the SPED, ELL, and guidance staff.

A resident spoke to the current model of transportation in terms the number of buses that ride through the neighborhoods and the length of bus rides. She hopes the K-5 model will eliminate these issues.

Paul reviewed the guidelines for buffer zones, which is based on the oldest child entering kindergarten, giving the younger siblings eligibility rights for that school. Paul will provide buffer zones information from other districts. The issue of lengthy bus rides was discussed further. Paul was also asked to provide the supervision ratios for the different models proposed.

In response to Malcolm's concern of the size of Claypit Hill, Debbie Bearse commented that in the eight years as principal, the number of classrooms increased from 24 to 27 currently. The principals at Claypit prior to Debbie's tenure advocated for an assistant principal to no avail. Because of the many aspects of education that have changed, especially state mandates, Debbie advocates for an assistant principal at Claypit Hill, as it is one of the only elementary schools of its size that does not have one. However, Debbie stated that 20 classrooms can be doable for the principal alone. For future reference, Ellen asked if an analysis could be put together for the possibility of an assistant principal.

(b) Final Review of FY15 Operating Budget Presentation to Finance Committee and Discussion of any Outstanding Related Issues:

Barb noted that she filed the appropriate State Ethics form, as her husband waived his coaching stipend because she serves on the School Committee. Donna and Ellen also filed the necessary State Ethics forms related to fees.

The School Committee discussed raising fees or keeping them status quo. A \$50 increase in the high school athletic fee and a \$25 increase at the middle school were recommended, with an increase in the family cap.

Also recommended was raising the transportation fee from the current \$180, either by \$50 or \$100, with a family cap of \$1,100. Ellen recommended increasing the fee by \$100, as it was commensurate with the fees of other peer towns. Paul suggested a \$50 increase and a \$640 family cap, but exempting the late fee from the cap.

Malcolm noted that he is not in favor of fees.

A discussion ensued about the high school parking fee regarding its impact on the budget in the terms of the snow plowing and the process by which the money from this revolving account is spent down and the district's obligation to the town. The snowplowing costs will be monitored.

Geoff MacDonald stated that there has been a change of about \$55,000 in the proposed FY15 budget, due to WTA employees who want to take advantage of the 10% incentive for early notification of retirement. Also, longevity payments totaling about \$72,000 were not included in the FY15 budget. The School Committee discussed the number of employees, the years of service, and the amount received by those receiving longevity payments.

Donna asked that the parking fee not be included in the vote to raise fees in an attempt to understand the process further regarding the parking lot maintenance and snow plowing expenses.

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Upon a motion duly made by Donna Bouchard, seconded by Ellen Grieco, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to keep the BASE and Pegasus fees the same this year, increase Full Day Kindergarten by 8%, increase The Children's Way by 5%, increase the bus transportation by \$50 to \$230 with a family cap of \$640 and the late fees being outside the cap, keeping the elementary music fee the same, increasing the middle school sports by \$25 to \$125, increasing high school sports by \$50 to \$300 with a family cap of \$1,100, and keeping the student parking at a base level to cover the school costs.

Barb confirmed with Geoff that the budget figure, including picking up the new technology position at the high school, which had been funded this year by a grant, was \$35,433,614. Malcolm asked what percentage increase this figure represented. Barb said she believed it was 6.5 percent.

Ellen raised a question posed to her by Tom Greenaway about the DELTA of approximately \$600,000 attributable to the WTA and the approximate \$1M that was put into the budget for which he would like the detail. Ellen forwarded the request to the administrators and copied Barb on the email. The Chair recommended that this discussion take place in Executive Session since all unions have not completed negotiations and the discussion was not posted on the agenda. Geoff stated that this could be a document about WTA only; however, the budget addresses everyone. Barb suggested that if the administrators find something that the Committee finds, the School Committee can go back to the Finance Committee, as there is time. Geoff stated that the FinCom number is just an estimate of what will be covered based on past practices and history.

Donna suggested that the FinCom may have some information that can assist the Committee, because the reconfiguration is an expensive proposal that requires the town to agree that this proposal is educationally sound based on the information given from the administrators and the Task Force.

Beth stated that although she supports the budget, she does not support adding the technology position at the high school, advocated by Donna, and confirmed that the budget includes the elementary reconfiguration as a placeholder. Ellen also does not support the technology position, given the additional longevity costs to the budget.

Upon a motion duly made by Malcolm Astley, seconded by Ellen Grieco the School Committee voted (2-3) (Donna and Barb voted YES) (Ellen, Malcolm and Beth voted NO) to recommend to the Finance Committee an FY15 operating budget of \$35,481,614. The motion did not pass.

Donna motioned to include the 1:1 technology person and reduce the salary of the librarian at the high school to where it was budgeted originally, which was \$61,000 from \$103,000 and spend the money on the 1:1 technology initiative vs. spending it in the library at the high school. Donna stated that, in her opinion, this technology person is the go-to person, the professional development person, for the teachers in-house to utilize the technology that cost the town "a fortune." There was no second.

Paul questioned the legality of the motion and noted that it could be a violation of the contract.

Donna made another motion to reduce the budget by the \$48,567 and find a way to fund the technology position between now and Town Meeting.

A discussion followed in terms of whether to pursue ways to fund the high school IT position.

Upon a motion duly made by Beth Butler, seconded by Ellen Grieco, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to approve a recommended budget to the Finance Committee of \$35,433,047.

Donna noted that she will support the budget but will look for ways to fund the IT position. The other Committee members agreed.

3. **Educational Matters**

- (a) Hear Superintendent's Report
Tabled.

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- (b) Hear Student's Report
Sarah did not attend the meeting.

4. **Administrative/Procedural Matter**

- (a) Consideration of Appointment to Town Administrator Selection Committee as School Committee Representative:
Barb read the email from John Senchyshyn regarding the formation and process of the Town Administrator Selection Committee, which will be comprised of seven members including one from the School Committee. Donna Bouchard and Malcolm Astley expressed interest in serving on the Town Administrator Selection Committee. Ellen recommended Beth Butler.

Upon a motion duly made by Malcolm Astley, seconded by Ellen Grieco, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to recommend Beth Butler to serve as the School Committee representative on the Town Administrator Selection Committee subject to Barb discussing with John Senchyshyn that Beth will not be running for re-election to the School Committee and will not be a member of the Committee after Town Meeting.

5. **Consent Agenda:**

- (a) Approval of Accounts Payables Warrants:
 - Wayland Public Schools Accounts Payables warrant, dated January 21, 2014, in the amount of \$241,536.97
 - Wayland Public Schools Accounts Payables warrant (Student Activities), dated January 21, 2014, in the amount of \$25,985.00
- (b) Approval of Minutes:
 - Regular Session of December 12, 2013
- (d) Acceptance of Gifts:
 - A grant from the Classical Association of the Atlantic States, Inc. in the amount of \$600.00 for the purchase of Adobe Captivate for Ed DeHoratius's project.

Upon a motion duly made by Beth Butler, seconded by Ellen Grieco, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to approve the Consent Agenda, including the Regular Session minutes of December 12, 2013, as written.

6. **Comments from the Public:**

No public comment.

7. **Executive Session #2:**

Upon a motion duly made by Malcolm Astley, seconded by Donna Bouchard, to enter Executive Session as permitted by M.G.L. 30A, §21(a)(7) under Chapter 214 §1B (right to privacy) because of confidential information as received from our auditor, as well as to review the information related to the METCO account and to discuss which authorities to pursue to resolve the METCO accounts, and to review the Executive Session minutes of December 2, 2013 under M.G.L. 30A §22. A roll call vote was taken as follows:

<u>Roll Call</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
Barb Fletcher, Chair	X	
Beth Butler, Vice Chair	X	
Malcolm Astley	X	
Ellen Grieco	X	
Donna Bouchard	X	

8. **Adjournment:**

Upon a motion duly made by Donna Bouchard, seconded by Ellen Grieco, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to adjourn the Regular Session at 10:30 p.m.

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Respectfully submitted,

Paul Stein, Clerk
Wayland School Committee

Observers:

Stephanie Leong, Wayland
Jane Pursor, Wayland
Michele Shields, Wayland

Corresponding Documentation:

1. Employee Benefits Spreadsheet
2. Accounts Payables Warrants
3. Regular Session Minutes of December 12, 2013
4. Memo re: Gift from Classical Assoc. of the Atlantic States, Inc.