

MINUTES – WAYLAND SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Regular Session – January 27, 2014

A Regular Session of the Wayland School Committee was held on Monday, January 27, 2014, at 6:00 P.M. in the School Committee Room of the Wayland Town Building.

Present:

Barb Fletcher, Chair
Beth Butler, Vice Chair
Ellen Grieco (left the meeting at 7:12 p.m.)
Donna Bouchard

Absent:

Malcolm Astley

Also:

Paul Stein
Superintendent of Schools

Brad Crozier
Assistant Superintendent

Marlene Dodyk
Director of Student Services

Geoff MacDonald
Business Administrator

Leisha Simon
Technology Director

Also:

Finance Committee: Cherry Karlson, Tom Greenaway, Carol Martin, Bill Steinberg, Gil Wolin, David Gutschenritter
Brian Keveny – Finance Director

Barb Fletcher convened the Regular Session at 6:07 p.m. and announced that WayCAM is taping the meeting.

1. **Financial Matters**

Presentation to and Discussion with Finance Committee regarding School Committee's Recommended FY15 Operating Budget:

Barb presented the budget process that the Superintendent and the School Committee followed to arrive at its recommended FY15 budget. Barb reviewed the enrollment history and summarized the expense pages at each grade level – K-12. Barb also reviewed the funds received from other sources, highlighted the cost savings and/or efficiency measures that were put in place, the new initiatives, initiatives not supported by the budget, and the reductions needed to meet the Finance Committee's guidelines. The budget drivers and a peer community comparison were reviewed.

Barb explained the vision of the system-wide goals, which are at the heart of the School Committee's recommended budget: Health, Evaluation, Achievement Gap, Response to Intervention, and Technology. Included in these goals is the emphasis placed at the building level. Included in the presentation were the School Committee Budget Guidelines, which provided the administrators some guidance in developing their individual school budgets.

From the point of receiving the FinCom's Guidelines, Barb gave the background of how the School Committee developed their budget. Barb noted the changes made to the budget after the Superintendent presented his budget, which are retirement notifications and a change in longevity stipends.

Barb walked through the process of how the Superintendent developed the Maintenance of Effort Budget, taking into account enrollment changes, increases in mandated Special Education and ELL services, utility costs and contractual obligations, while still looking for efficiencies and cost saving measures.

MINUTES – WAYLAND SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Regular Session – January 27, 2014

Barb commented that after much discussion, the School Committee made one change to the Superintendent's recommended budget which was to increase the transportation fee. Barb informed the FinCom that there was an interest to find the funds to support an instructional technology position at the High School though not included in the budget. However, Barb noted that the cost of the proposed elementary reconfiguration was included in the budget, while the vote on which model (K-5 or K-1) to implement will be determined at a future meeting.

Although the proposed budget is over the recommended guideline by about \$300,000, most of which is due to Special Education obligations and other state mandates, the School Committee voted unanimously on the recommended FY14 budget. Barb pointed out that the priority now is to address the concerns raised regarding the elementary schools. Barb reviewed the enrollment and staffing ratio in the elementary schools, which led to the reconfiguration decision. Also noted was the Middle School and High School student to staff ratio, as well as the Middle School cluster model.

Barb commented that two years of actual information was provided for each grade level in terms of the current FY14 and the proposed FY15 budgets prior to the recommended elementary reconfiguration. Barb reviewed the kindergarten projections, as well as the enrollment projections for grades 1 to 5 at Claypit Hill and Happy Hollow. At the Middle School, Barb explained the need to increase the Grade 6 cluster model to three, and the reallocation of staffing at the High School, as well as a reallocation of funds for PE, health education, the Athletic Director, a new Life Skills Program and the addition of an assistant principal.

Barb also reviewed the details of the Special Education, Athletics, Technology, Facilities, and Central Office recommended FY15 budgets. Also noted was a change in reporting after the current fiscal year was underway. However, the FY14 budget was adjusted to reflect those changes, with the exception of the transfer of the Circuit Breaker funds, as they will be done quarterly. Also reviewed were the other sources of funding and the cost savings/efficiencies, which includes staff exchange turnover savings and the SPED tuition prepay.

Barb reviewed the two major initiatives included in the budget – the STEM Initiative, which includes the expansion of computer science education with MassCAN in partnership with Code.org. Barb reviewed the immediate concerns and needs of the elementary schools, which led up to the formation of the Elementary Building Use Task Force. She elaborated on the Task Force's work and discussions that resulted in the Superintendent's reconfiguration recommendation, as well as the incremental capital and operating costs associated with the K-5 (2-3-4) model.

Barb reviewed the initiatives not funded by the recommended FY15 budget, which included, but were not limited to, Full Day Kindergarten and World Languages. Barb reviewed the reductions that would be needed to meet the FinCom's guidelines; however, they were not supported by the School Committee. Finally, Barb reviewed the Budget Drivers (not including the elementary reconfiguration) for personnel and non-personnel changes.

In summation, Barb stated that the FY15 recommended budget is about a 4.18% increase over the FY14 projected results and, when compared to actual expenses of the last five years, the budget has increased, on average, approximately 2.37% annually. If including the elementary school reconfiguration, the budget represents a 5.96% increase over the FY14 projected results and as compared to actual expenditures over the last five years, the budget has increased an average of 2.67%.

Providing a peer comparison of FY12 per pupil expenditures, Barb noted that Wayland rated in the middle of the pack, 5th out of 10.

The meeting was opened to the Finance Committee for questions and discussions with the School Committee. The Committees discussed WaylandCARES, the elementary school reconfiguration, the middle school clusters, student to staff ratios, Special Education costs, and student parking and bus fees. Tom Greenaway provided the timeline for the FinCom and noted that more questions may be raised prior to the FinCom's next meeting.

The Finance Committee left the meeting at 7:12 p.m.

2. **Comments from the Public:**

Cliff Lewis, Chair of the OPEB Committee, asked to schedule a meeting that fits with the warrant article schedule with all or some of the members of the School Committee regarding the schools' OPEB contributions.

MINUTES – WAYLAND SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Regular Session – January 27, 2014

Tom Sciacca commented on the elementary reconfiguration in terms of transition. He spoke about his personal experience as a student and stated that, by third grade, he was transitioned five times and, in his opinion, it had a negative impact on him. However, Tom went on to say that the transitions proposed in Wayland seem minor in comparison. Tom referred to management literature that says it is a valuable use of time when professionals come together for casual communication, which can enhance creativity and produce synergy, all leading to good teaching. Finally, as a Wayland Voters Network member, Tom referred to a quote by Paul Stein in regard to exceeding the budget guideline. In terms of community reaction to comments made at the School Committee meetings, it is Tom's opinion that two-thirds of the Wayland community does not pay attention to budget issues until they have to pay their tax bills. Tom also believes that those in the community who attend meetings and voice their opinions on different issues have very special interests.

Barb read a public comment from Shawn Kinney, although no longer a resident but still a taxpayer. He provided a copy of the Lenox School Committee's meeting agenda showing its use of subcommittees. As a past member of the Wayland School Committee, he feels that much more could be accomplished if subcommittees were formed. He also recommended that email lists be developed for those community members who would like to receive agendas, minutes, and reports of the meetings. In his opinion, this would increase transparency and community involvement.

Beth commented on Shawn's attendance record while he was a member of the School Committee from May 2009 to April 2013, and she noted that he missed many key presentations, most of which she listed. With that said, Beth commented that much was accomplished by the School Committee during the time Shawn served on the Committee, some of which she mentioned.

Donna thanked Shawn Kinney for his public comments. She also noted her dissatisfaction during the budget process in terms of the lack of will in finding more ways to reduce the budget in order to decrease the burden to taxpayers. Donna compared Wayland's budget increase of over 12% to Weston's of 1.7% and commented on her earlier request of appointing a Budget Advisory Committee. She thanked Shawn Kinney for his interest and commented on Beth's previous comments.

3. **Consent Agenda:**

(a) Wayland Public Schools Payroll Warrant

- Wayland Public Schools Payroll warrant, dated January 23, 2014, in the amount of \$1,192,679.76

Upon a motion duly made by Donna Bouchard, seconded by Beth Butler, the School Committee voted unanimously (3-0) to approve the Consent Agenda as noted.

4. **Agenda Item not Reasonably Anticipated:**

Donna commented that several Wayland residents contacted her with complaints of a letter signed by Beth Butler's husband regarding the Board of Selectmen's abuse of power. The residents asked that Beth publicly express that her views are separate from her husband's and that she remains impartial. Given that this request by Donna was a complete surprise to the other Committee members, and given that Malcolm and Ellen were not present, this matter will be put on the agenda for the next meeting.

5. **Executive Session:**

Upon a motion duly made by Beth Butler, seconded by Donna Bouchard, the Committee voted unanimously (3-0) to enter Executive Session at 7:35 p.m., as permitted under M.G.L. Chapter 30A, §21(a)(7) to comply with the provisions of Chapter 214 §1B, the right to privacy because of confidential information received from our auditors and to discuss which authorities to resolve the METCO account matter. The School Committee will reconvene in Open Session for adjournment purposes only, unless there is something that was not reasonably anticipated by the Chair. 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 | |
| Donna Bouchard | X | |

MINUTES – WAYLAND SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Regular Session – January 27, 2014

6. **Adjournment:**

Upon a motion duly made by Beth Butler, seconded by Donna Bouchard, the School Committee voted unanimously (3-0) to adjourn the Regular Session at 7:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Paul Stein, Clerk
Wayland School Committee

Observers:

Tom Sciacca, WVN
Molly Upton, Wayland
Cliff Lewis, OPEB Committee

Corresponding Documentation:

1. Payroll Warrant dated 1/23/14
2. Written Statement from Shawn Kinney
3. Written Statement from Wayland Residents
4. Power Point Presentation re: Budget