

MINUTES – WAYLAND SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Regular Session – February 10, 2014

A Regular Session of the Wayland School Committee was held on Monday, February 10, 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

Also:

Paul Stein
Superintendent of Schools

Marlene Dodyk
Director of Student Services

Geoff MacDonald
Business Administrator

Also:

Scott McIntyre, Melanson & Heath
Paul Brennan, Audit Committee

Beth Butler left prior to the meeting at 7:06 p.m. to attend the Finance Committee Public Hearing.

Barb Fletcher convened the Regular Session at 7:07 p.m. and announced that the meeting is being taped by WayCAM.

1. **Comments & Written Statements from the Public:**

Concerned about the impending vote by the School Committee, Jodi Chase noted her choice for the K-1 option. She stated that the K-5 cost option is high and asked the Committee to consider a long-term capital project. In her opinion, the 2-3-4 option does not have flexibility, full-day kindergarten can't exist at Loker, depending on the numbers, and there is an inequity in terms of socialization and education. Jodi commented that Loker is an amazing place, but feels that the K-1 model would be a better solution.

Ed Notargiacomo supports the K-5 proposal. He also commented that Loker is a wonderful place and that would not be lost if the K-5 option was implemented, as it is important to have continuity, regardless of the extra cost. Ed also asked about the full day kindergarten program.

Having experienced Loker School closing twice, Liza Knapp feels that keeping the 5th graders in their school is not cost effective in terms of transportation. She also noted her choice of the 2-3-4 option.

Tom Sciacca commented about the size of Claypit Hill and the need to hire an assistant principal. In his opinion, one manager can't manage much more than 15 subordinates. He stated that the Committee should plan to hire an assistant principal and include the cost in the K-5 option.

2. **Special Matter:**

(a) Discussion with Scott McIntyre from Melanson & Heath re: FY13 Management Letter:
Geoff distributed a document regarding the 3 findings by Melanson & Heath, as well as the status of the 34 recommendations in the Powers & Sullivan Report.

Scott McIntyre commented that the 2013 town audit was completed, inclusive of the School Department, and last fall into early December, he met with the Audit Committee to discuss some issues in the Management Letter that are related to the School Department. He gave a quick overview of the three findings as follows:

1. The first title bar recommendation is to segregate and monitor school billing procedures for METCO, BASE, Pegasus, and The Children's Way in order to achieve good internal controls. This would entail an adequate

MINUTES – WAYLAND SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Regular Session – February 10, 2014

segregation of duties for both the design and the actual application in accounts receivable and accounts payable functions. After recommending this in the 2012 Management Letter, there has been a significant improvement.

2. Scott noted that in the summer of 2013, the School Department hired another CPA firm to do another analysis of bank accounts from prior years. Scott did review the report and acknowledges that the report contains some good recommendations. In Scott's opinion, the recommendations can't all be addressed immediately, thus, he recommended that they be prioritized and put into categories that address a timetable, such as immediate, within 6 months, or over the course of a year.
3. The last finding pertains to improving controls over school disbursements for which Scott did a sample of disbursements within the audit for the town as a whole. Scott elaborated on three examples of purchases made with or without purchase orders and recommended ways to improve internal controls and the purchase order process.

Geoff's responses to the findings are as follows:

Finding #1: The segregation of duties in the BASE program has been addressed; the hours have been reduced from a prior proposal and the new position should meet the requirements and job responsibilities.

Finding #4: The checking accounts have been closed for two years, the audit is complete, and the process continues.

Finding #6: Based on the auditor's sample testing of purchase orders, a failure rate of 25% (3 out of 12) was discovered. There is also a good system in place for conference approval; however, some improvement is still needed.

Geoff responded to these findings and noted that the process has been updated since these findings were discovered. Upon testing the warrant for January 6, 2014, Geoff confirmed that the compliance rate has improved over time from 20% to 92%. Geoff confirmed that a reminder of the process has been sent to staff. Scott recommended annual reminders of the process be sent to staff in September and again at year end.

Geoff updated the Committee on the status of recommendations made in the Powers & Sullivan Report. Paul Brennan of the Audit Committee assisted Geoff with the chart. Geoff described the annual process in place regarding the student activity accounts, which is to bring the procedures current and make any necessary improvements. In regard to the revolving accounts, Geoff noted that many recommendations are completed.

Barb confirmed that the findings from Melanson & Heath will be completed by the end of FY14 and, by the end of the first quarter (Q1) of FY15, all of the recommendations of Powers & Sullivan will be implemented.

Scott answered Donna's questions regarding the findings in terms of a formal risk assessment process, the recommendation of a policy regarding funding sources and account balances, the review of high school gate receipts and purchase order testing, charges made to the high school capital project fund from December 2012 to June 2013, and finally, did Scott have any other recommendations based on the Powers and Sullivan Report. Scott indicated that he agreed with the lion share of the Powers and Sullivan recommendations and that the necessary corrective actions should be put in place but no further action by Melanson & Heath is necessary.

Paul B. indicated that best practices related to a formal risk assessment process will be shared with the schools. He will also follow up with the Town Department to understand the action steps for the finding related to funding sources and account balances and how it may impact the schools.

Scott also noted that the student activity accounts audit will be completed soon. Paul publicly thanked Paul Brennan for his assistance with the audit.

MINUTES – WAYLAND SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Regular Session – February 10, 2014

3. **Educational Matters:**

(a) Hear Superintendent's Report:

Paul informed the School Committee that he has appointed Allyson Mizoguchi, a uniquely qualified candidate, as the new principal of Wayland High School as of July 1, 2014. Paul commented that the Search Advisory Committee (SAC) was comprised of staff, teachers, students, parents, and administrators. The process was well vetted and the search was narrowed down to three finalists.

Beth returned to the meeting at 8:09 p.m.

4. **Financial Matters:**

(a) Continued Discussion and Vote of Elementary School Reconfiguration Option:

Paul addressed the buffer zone map in terms of the number of students in each zone. Paul noted that a new map is being developed. The School Committee discussed the enrollment of Claypit Hill in comparison to peer towns. Of those peer towns, elementary schools over 500 students have an assistant principal, with the exception of two schools in Concord. Beth also confirmed this as a result of her research, and it was noted that Claypit's projected enrollment could be as high as 544, which could result in a Committee discussion in terms of adding an assistant principal.

Also discussed were the proposed reconfiguration models and the projected class sizes for the different models. Paul noted that many factors are taken into consideration, such as the number of rooms in each building, population density in terms of where the buildings are located, and geographic location. Paul is concerned that more space may be needed on the south side of town given the biggest turnover rate; thus, the 3-3-3 option would not be a viable option.

Upon a motion duly made by Malcolm Astley, seconded by Beth Butler, the School Committee voted (2-3) (Barb, Ellen and Donna voted no) to adopt the K-1, 2-5 model.

Malcolm stated that this model addresses full day kindergarten, class size and staffing flexibility, makes Claypit smaller in numbers, opening times can be staggered to address families' time constraints, there would be more involvement by families, the potential of an early childhood program is created and, finally, it saves the district about \$100,000 per year and a million in ten years.

Beth praised the administrators for their efforts and great work on the elementary reconfiguration. She noted that the letters and comments from residents and parents have been very helpful during this process. She also praised the efforts and work of the Task Force and the administrators. Beth commented that with either choice, the students will get a high-quality education from the teachers, staff and administrators in Wayland.

Donna noted her preference of the K-5 and 3-3-3 option. She commented that regardless of the school attended, Wayland's teachers are exceptional. Donna commented on the many variables remaining and thanked Dr. Stein and the many parents who shared their thoughts with the Committee, as there was much community support for the K-5 model. She stated that the expense of the reconfiguration needs to be further mitigated on behalf of the taxpayers.

Barb agreed with and supported the previous comments regarding the work done on behalf of the Task Force and the administrators. After weighing the strengths and challenges of the reconfiguration, Barb supports the K-5 (2-3-4) model because it presents the least number of transitions for students and creates more family involvement. She noted that more discussions are needed about full day kindergarten, as well as equal access to after-school programs. Barb recognized other issues, including putting off the hiring of an assistant principal at Claypit Hill and the expense of the K-5 model.

Beth noted her preference of the K-1 (3-3-3) model.

As a member of the Task Force, Ellen supports Dr. Stein's recommendation of the K-5 (2-3-4) model, also because of the transition issue.

Upon a motion duly made by Ellen Grieco, seconded by Malcolm Astley, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to adopt the Superintendent's recommendation – K-5 (2-3-4) model.

MINUTES – WAYLAND SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Regular Session – February 10, 2014

The Committee reviewed some of the issues still pending for the model just voted and they will discuss them at future meetings. The issues are transition, full day kindergarten, a policy around the buffer zones, the addition of two crossing guards and a nurse, and whether the incoming 5th grade class should remain at their current schools.

- (b) Continued Discussion regarding Upcoming OPEB Warrant Article and its Impact on School Funds:
This agenda item was tabled and will be discussed at the February 24th meeting. Paul will be meeting with Cliff Lewis and David Gutschenritter before February 24th.
- (c) Continued Discussion re: FY15 Budget, including Budget Message:
Barb informed the School Committee that the FinCom will fund all of the school capital requests in the FY15 budget. However, two capital requests will only go forward with the passing of the reconfiguration. The nurse's office, on the other hand, will move forward regardless.

If the reconfiguration moves forward, Paul noted that two additional crossing guards and a .35 nurse will be hired. Paul will provide the exact amount of money needed for these positions to allow the School Committee to request the money from the FinCom.

The School Committee reviewed the WTA Q & A document and changes were made. Since Wayland teachers' salaries are somewhat below peer towns and have continued downward over the past few years, Malcolm suggested that the Committee be cognizant and aware of that fact. Gini Tate also reviewed and made changes to the Q & A. After Matt Daniels' review of the Q & A, it will be sent out to the community via the typical distribution list.

The School Committee reviewed the Budget Message and changes were made in the document. In response to a question about SPED mandated costs, Beth updated the Committee on the FinCom's meeting. She noted that the FinCom had a conversation about the mandated costs, and they were not part of their guidelines. However, it will be discussed to include federal and state mandates going forward for future budgets.

The School Committee discussed the budget further. Specifically, the after-school math Preview Program was discussed in terms of the benefits of the program and its impact on the budget. Donna will send her specific/factual budget questions to Paul in preparation for another discussion at a future meeting.

- (d) Discussion re: Proposal to Combine School and Town Warrants:
The Committee discussed the pros and cons of combining the school and town warrants. Paul noted that the pros are as follows: 1) the flow of work is smoother, as batches are smaller and fits better with the work process of the Town Finance Department; 2) the bills are paid much quicker; and 3) there will be a consistency of the warrants. The cons are: 1) the School Committee does not meet every week in order to obtain signatures; and 2) the expenditures could go through the process without the approval of the School Committee. As noted by Geoff, the Committee is governed by a statute that requires three signatures. He also commented that this process would not be in sync with his department and would prefer to follow the current process of following the School Committee meeting calendar, as it would provide predictability and a set schedule.

5. **Consent Agenda:**

- (a) Approval of Minutes:
 - Regular Session of February 6, 2014

Upon a motion duly made by Ellen Grieco, seconded by Beth Butler, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to approve the Regular Session minutes of February 6, 2014, as amended.

6. **Comments from the Public:**

Maryann Borkowski commented on the Powers & Sullivan Report. She stated that things could go wrong even though a process and procedures are in place. Because teachers are passionate about their profession, Maryann is concerned that they might miss an opportunity to purchase something for their classroom because a purchase order is required prior. Maryann asked the School Committee to take a step back and review how goals work in a school system.

MINUTES – WAYLAND SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Regular Session – February 10, 2014

As lead petitioner, Annette Lewis commented on the warrant article per M.G.L. 71, §37M regarding statutory requirements of a consolidation of certain administrative functions, specifically town and school financial functions. Annette commented that this is an enabling statute, not a mandatory statute. In order to assure that consolidated functions that are already in place, such as facilities and IT, are not being done inappropriately, this statute needs to be adopted. She asked the School Committee for their input regarding this proposed article.

Tom Sciacca challenged the statement made during this meeting that the Wayland teachers are underpaid. In Tom's opinion, this is not true, as he heard that the average teachers' salary in Wayland will exceed \$90,000. Tom also commented on college costs as being "through the roof," which has caused a big problem for a lot of graduates in terms of college debt. Though not a teacher issue, but more of putting a limit in some areas, this problem is being addressed by people who are choosing not to attend college as a result of the high costs.

7. **Executive Session:**

Upon a motion duly made by Beth Butler, seconded by Ellen Grieco, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to convene in Executive Session at 9:51 P.M. as permitted by M.G.L. 30A §21(a)(2) to conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with non-union personnel, as well as M.G.L. 30A §21(a)(5) to investigate charges of criminal misconduct. The Committee will reconvene in open session for adjournment purposes only. The Chair invited the Superintendent to attend the Executive Session. 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 Ellen Grieco, seconded by Donna Bouchard, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to adjourn the Regular Session at 10:42 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Paul Stein, Clerk
Wayland School Committee

Observers:
See attached.

Corresponding Documentation:

1. Draft of Budget Message
2. WTA Q & A
3. Melanson & Heath Management Letter
4. Document outlining recommendations in terms of the Melanson & Heath and Powers & Sullivan audits.
5. Regular Minutes of February 6, 2014