

MINUTES – WAYLAND SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
Regular Session – February 3, 2014

A Regular Session of the Wayland School Committee was held on Monday, February 3, 2014, at 6:30 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 6:58 p.m.)

Also:

Paul Stein  
Superintendent of Schools

Brad Crozier  
Assistant Superintendent

Marlene Dodyk  
Director of Student Services

Geoff MacDonald  
Business Administrator

Sarah Maietta  
WHS Student Representative

Also:

Cliff Lewis, OPEB Committee  
John Senchyshyn, Asst. Town Administrator & HR Director

Barb Fletcher convened the Regular Session at 6:47 p.m. and announced that WayCAM is taping the meeting.

1. **Executive Session #1:**

Upon a motion duly made by Beth Butler, seconded by Ellen Grieco, the School Committee voted unanimously (4-0) to enter into Executive Session at 6:48 p.m. per M.G.L. 30A §21(a)(3) to discuss negotiating strategy with respect to Collective Bargaining with WESA, as such a discussion in open session may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the School Committee and an Executive Session is necessary to protect the bargaining position of the School Committee. The School Committee will reconvene in Open Session to discuss regular matters. The Chair invited John Senshyshyn to attend the Executive Session.

The School Committee reconvened in Open Session at 6:56 p.m.

2. **Special Matter:**

(a) Vote to Approve 2013-2014 MOA with WESA:

Upon a motion duly made by Beth Butler, seconded by Malcolm Astley, the School Committee, including John Senchyshyn, voted unanimously (4-0) to approve the 2013-2014 Memorandum of Understanding with WESA.

*Donna arrived at the meeting at 6:58 p.m.*

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

A parent asked how the elementary reconfiguration will affect Full Day Kindergarten and if children who are not enrolled in FDK will have an educational disadvantage.

George Harris commented on the METCO accounts and the School Committee's fiduciary responsibility to resolve this matter since it came to light in December 2011. He asked the School Committee to turn this matter over to the proper authorities to expedite the process, since the records have not been produced.

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Malcolm Astley responded to Mr. Harris saying that he appreciates his comments and the Committee is working on this matter.

As the parent of three children in the Loker area, Amy Silbergan noted her concerns of a 2-3-4 model as it relates to the Full Day Kindergarten program. She asked the School Committee to consider the 3-3-3 model which, in her opinion, would present a more equitable distribution of kindergartners and would increase the flexibility of FDK in the Loker area.

Tom Sciacca followed up on a comment he made last June regarding the teachers' contract. His concern relates to the longevity payments.

#### 4. **Educational Matters:**

##### (a) Hear Superintendent's Report:

Paul updated the School Committee on the High School principal search. After spending a great deal of time perusing resumes and interviewing candidates, the Search Advisory Committee decided on three finalists, all of whom spend a full day at the High School meeting with parents, faculty, and some Central Office administrators. Paul commented that he hopes to announce his choice by next week.

Paul noted that the recent Chinese New Year celebration at the High School was an extraordinary community effort and was well attended. The Chinese Folk Art Group also put on a wonderful performance. The celebration was organized by Nan Li with the help of the PTO, the 375<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration Committee, and some local businesses.

Paul informed the School Committee of a recent business meeting between the Town and the School Department regarding the possibility of combining accounts payables and payroll warrants on a weekly basis beginning March 3<sup>rd</sup>. Paul further commented that there could be a timing issue, as checks would be issued without School Committee approval.

A discussion followed regarding the process of combining and approving school and town warrants. The approval of the payroll warrants can be designated by the School Committee under Chapter 71 §37. Donna will ask Brian Keveny what is expected in this process.

In response to Donna's question, Paul also updated the School Committee on the status of IRS withholding payments. Paul spoke to the Town Treasurer and Mr. Keating will be sending a letter to the IRS. Paul commented that, with an attorney's help, the schools' responsibilities were identified and the addendum to the 941X form was drafted. Paul will confirm that the letter has been sent by the Town Treasurer to the IRS.

##### (b) Hear Student's Report:

Sarah commented that the students are recovering from mid-terms and that Winter Week was a great time. She said they are all looking forward to the rest of the school year.

#### 5. **Financial Matters:**

##### (a) Discussion regarding Upcoming OPEB Warrant Article and its Impact on School Program Funds:

Based on a Power Point presentation to the School Committee on December 16 and a one-page summary prepared by Cliff Lewis, Chair of the OPEB Committee, the School Committee discussed its concerns regarding the following: 1) fairness with regard to charging OPEB expenses for prior years to the revolving accounts, and (2) the appropriateness in charging these funds to the revolving accounts. Jim Toomey was contacted by Paul regarding the second concern, but had not responded. Paul hopes to have a response by the next meeting on February 6.

Cliff Lewis commented that John Senchyshyn prepared the school contributions from the fee-based revolving accounts according to other programs in the town. Barb will ask John if he sought legal counsel. According to Cliff, the money in question is controlled by a vote at Town Meeting, thus, it is not an option for the School Committee. He further stated that there is a "pay as you go" amount and then there is money set aside for future obligations. In other words, a fund will be set up for money that will satisfy today's obligations, but will be paid in the future. Money was never put aside from the school revolving accounts and put into this particular investment account.

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A discussion ensued regarding the actuarial evaluation in terms of contributions to make up for past years. It was noted that actuarial calculations are based on a headcount basis per group for very large groups. As a comparison, Cliff commented that there are three groups in town – Fire Department, Police Department, and all other town employees, for which the actuaries have enough data to segregate the police and fire. Thus, he further said that there is not nearly enough data for the fee-based employees. Barb commented that she wants to be sure that the calculations are being done appropriately and that the fee-based revolving accounts are being charged legitimately.

Paul noted that there is currently only one retiree from The Children's Way, BASE, Pegasus, and Full Day Kindergarten and questioned having the same assumption from 1968 to now since some programs did not even exist at the time; however, based on the current assumptions, they should move forward from this point in time. Cliff stated that \$130,000 is needed for each employee who retires, and the obligation is based on the 75 people who are likely to retire. With the exception of the food services program, he said that the money is available in the other accounts.

The Committee would still like Jim Toomey's written legal opinion, as he is familiar with the statutes in relation to this matter.

*Sarah left the meeting at 8:00 p.m.*

(b) Continued Discussion of Elementary School Reconfiguration Options, including Impact on Full Day Kindergarten:

The School Committee reviewed the potential operating costs for the K-1 lower model, as well as buffer zones guidelines from other districts. Paul commented on Full Day Kindergarten and the risk in terms of slots at each school, regardless of how many classes per school. The maximum number on a waiting list per school would be nineteen students. In Paul's opinion, the 3-3-3 model wouldn't change this by much in terms of the number of families not having the full day option. However, the K-1 model would dramatically decrease the number of families that would not be considered for full day kindergarten.

Paul also addressed some parents' concerns about the difference in the quality of education in the full day vs. the traditional kindergarten program. He stated that the two programs are set up to be educationally the same and were designed with the same curriculum and content in place, but taught at a different pace. Paul told the Committee that if FDK is their most important issue in determining which model would be best, then they should vote for the K-1 model. However, the 3-3-3 scenario does not solve this issue. The Committee discussed models for kindergarten in other towns and if they would have full day kindergarten studies available.

Paul addressed the operating costs in terms of the library expenses for the K-1 model vs. the K-5 model. Paul also differentiated other expenses in Special Education that would occur in the K-1 model.

In terms of the buffer zones, Paul noted that they are still working on the data to create the buffer zones. The School Committee discussed and asked questions about issues pertaining to the two models – K-5 (2-3-4) or K-1 (3-3-3). Each member noted his/her reasons for leaning toward one model over the other.

Malcolm recommended that going forward a committee be formed to study the size of the schools and enrollment projections to address the possibility of putting additions on the schools in the future. The full day kindergarten discussion continued regarding other possible options and the equity issue for the students.

Donna made a motion to move ahead with the K-5 model, with either the 2-3-4 or 3-3-3 options and eliminate the K-1 option. There was no second.

Upon a motion duly made by Ellen Grieco, seconded by Beth Butler, the School Committee voted (4-1) (Malcolm opposed) to eliminate the 3-3-3 option.

Malcolm further noted that to eliminate the 3-3-3 option would be a disservice to Claypit Hill because of its size. However, an assistant principal would help the situation somewhat. A discussion ensued regarding bussing in terms of the buffer zones, the cost to add an assistant principal to the budget and what this position would support and what it would add to Claypit Hill.

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In terms of information wanted for the next meeting on February 10, Donna will ask Wellesley for their study of full day kindergarten. If there is new information regarding the buffer zones, the Committee would like an update. Paul will also provide Wayland's past FDK survey.

(c) Review of FY14 Q2 Financial Report:

Geoff MacDonald reviewed the FY14 Q2 Financial Report with the School Committee. Geoff noted that a number of assumptions are built into this quarterly report, including the SPED prepay for tuitions. However, there are a number of assumptions not built into the second quarter. Geoff projects a favorable bottom line variance of \$87,398. The FY14 0.5% COLA increase (\$135,000) for all employees has been assumed in the payroll forecast resulting in a net payroll favorable variance of \$333,671.

Geoff also reported that the expense account projections have resulted in an unfavorable variance, and he recommended using the Foundation Reserve Grant in the amount of \$60,000 to offset private tuition costs this year. Geoff noted additional costs for which funding was committed, but not yet received, in areas such as computer lab assistants, the Claypit Hill PA system, the forensic audit, a 0.2 music teacher, and the 1.0 high school student supervisor.

Based on a conversation with the FinCom, Barb reported that if funds could not be found in the school budget for the Public Address system, the FinCom would use money from reserve funds to get the work done. Briefly discussed was the additional money that was needed for the forensic audit. Barb will speak to the Chair of the Finance Committee regarding contractual obligations.

The Committee discussed the possibility of a budget freeze or to revisit the cut list to reduce the budget before Town Meeting. It was noted that to implement some or all of the options on the cut list would have a big impact on the educational programs. Donna recommended staff positions or programs that could be eliminated.

Geoff further commented on grants, in which there is a negative current balance caused by encumbrances and funding requests from the State. Geoff also reviewed the METCO grant and stated that encumbrance of transportation has caused the grant to show a large negative. Geoff noted that the capital projects have a current balance of \$38,000, and expects to return the balance of about \$30,000 to the town, and the Circuit Breaker account will have a balance of \$491,000, which will be available to use in FY15.

6. **Administrative/Procedural Matters:**

(a) Discussion of School Committee's Appointment to Town Administrator Selection Committee and related Crier Article:

As Beth's appointment to the Town Administrator Selection Committee was questioned at the last School Committee meeting because her husband had signed a letter published in the Town Crier in September 2013, Beth explained that since Malcolm and Ellen were not present at the last meeting, and since this matter was a complete surprise at the last meeting, she requested that it be addressed at this meeting. Beth read a statement in which she confirmed that she was not aware of any offensive letter from her husband, and noted that he signed a guest editorial with other concerned residents about the firing of the Town Administrator. Among other comments, Beth stated that she remains impartial as a matter of training and practice. Beth also noted that her appointment to the Town Administrator Selection Committee was unanimously approved by the Board of Selectmen.

In an effort to move on and continue to discuss other important issues, Ellen commented that the matter was inappropriate and was not time well spent by the Committee. Donna explained why she brought this matter to the Committee.

7. **Consent Agenda:**

(a) Wayland Public Schools Accounts Payables Warrant:

- Wayland Public Schools Accounts Payables warrant, dated February 3, 2014, in the amount of \$428,451.49

(b) Approval of Minutes:

- Regular Session of December 16, 2013
- Regular Session of January 6, 2014 (excluded)

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(c) Acceptance of Gifts:

- A grant in the amount of \$5,611.54 from the Musicians Performance Trust Fund for the Loker School “Tune into Reading” Program
- A mini-grant in the amount of \$500.00 from Harvard Pilgrim for the Middle School 7<sup>th</sup> Grade ImPACT baseline concussion testing
- An educational grant in the amount of \$500.00 from ExxonMobil

Upon a motion duly made by Beth Butler, seconded by Ellen Grieco, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to approve the Consent Agenda, excluding the January 6, 2014 Regular Session minutes.

8. **Comments from the Public:**

Stephanie Leong asked the School Committee not to optimize the elementary reconfiguration plan based on Full Day Kindergarten. She commented that the reconfiguration is a decision that will be made for the long term and FDK should be addressed in the short run. Stephanie recommended that a data analyst be hired to study the benefits of FDK, as currently it is a program for those who choose to pay for full-day.

Tom Sciacca referred to a Times article regarding PreK and Kindergarten and the developing national consensus with overwhelming evidence that early learning and development in math and science will have an educational benefit. Tom’s assumption is that Full Day Kindergarten is inevitably going forward.

9. **Executive Session #2:**

Upon a motion duly made by Malcolm Astley, seconded by Ellen Grieco, the Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to enter Executive Session at 9:54 p.m., as permitted under M.G.L. Chapter 30A, §21(a)(5) to investigate charges of criminal misconduct and to continue to discuss next steps regarding the METCO account, and per M.G.L. 30A §21(a)(1) to discuss the Open Meeting Law complaint filed by George Harris on January 8, 2014 regarding Executive Session minutes, and per M.G.L. 30A §21(a)(3) with regard to negotiating strategy with all school unions (WTA, WESA, Custodians and Food Service workers). The Committee will pass over the public records request. Also per M.G.L. 30A Chapter 22 to approve Executive Session minutes of December 16 and the first session of Executive Session minutes for January 6, 2014. 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	
Malcolm Astley	X	
Ellen Grieco	X	
Donna Bouchard	X	

The School Committee reconvened in Open Session at 11:07 p.m.

10. **Statement regarding Release of Executive Session Minutes for 2008 and 2009:**

Barb confirmed that the School Committee has released all Executive Session minutes for 2008 and 2009 with redactions to meet the exemptions to the Open Meeting Law.

11. **Adjournment:**

Upon a motion duly made by Ellen Grieco, seconded by Beth Butler, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to adjourn the Regular Session at 11:08 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Paul Stein, Clerk  
Wayland School Committee

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Observers:

Tom Sciacca, WVN  
Stephanie Leong, Wayland  
Amy Simmons, Wayland  
Jodi Chase, Wayland  
Maryann Borkowski, Wayland  
And others

Corresponding Documentation:

1. One-Year WESA Memorandum of Understanding
2. OPEB Report to BOS
3. Operating Costs for Lower Elementary Option
4. Buffer Zone Information
5. Memo and Q2 Financial Report
6. Regular Session Minutes of December 16, 2014
7. Regular Session Minutes of January 6, 2014
8. Loker “Tune into Reading” Grant
9. Harvard Pilgrim Mini-Grant to Middle School
10. ExxonMobil’s Educational Grant
11. Beth Butler’s Statement