

# MINUTES – WAYLAND SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Regular Session – March 3, 2014

A Regular Session of the Wayland School Committee was held on Monday, March 3, 2014, at 8:00 P.M. in the School Committee Room of the Wayland Town Building.

Present:

Barb Fletcher, Chair  
Beth Butler, Vice Chair (by remote)  
Malcolm Astley  
Ellen Grieco (by remote)  
Donna Bouchard

Also:

Paul Stein  
Superintendent of Schools

Geoff MacDonald

Business Administrator

Also:

Cliff Lewis, Chair of OPEB Committee  
Annette Lewis, Warrant Petitioner

Barb Fletcher convened the Regular Session at 8:05 p.m. and announced that the meeting is being taped by WAYCam. Barb also noted that Beth Butler is participating remotely due to geographic reasons and she did provide the remote participation form.

## 1. **Comments from the Public:**

Barb received 24 similar emails addressed to members of the School Committee and FinCom, one of which Barb read regarding The Children's Way contributions to OPEB.

Mara Feldman, Co-Chair of The Children's Way Parent Organization, commented that many discussions regarding OPEB took place since the emails were sent. She appreciates the proposed long-term payment plan, as she and others are concerned about keeping a reserve fund balance of at least \$50,000. Mara also noted that if the 5% increase goes into effect, The Children's Way will price itself out.

Jennifer Perlman commented on space issues at The Children's Way and the issue of having to keep the enrollment the same from year to year for 90 families, which limits the increase of funds unless the tuition is raised. Raising the tuition could affect the competitiveness with other preschools in the area. Jennifer also noted that there must be one teacher per five children, which increases the budget considerably. Therefore, she asked that The Children's Way have some time to fulfill their obligation to OPEB.

Malcolm asked about the comment that an increase prices The Children's Way out of the preschool market. Jennifer and Mara responded to the question noting that since The Children's Way is affiliated with the school system, the benefits of the teachers are determined by the town. The Children's Way tuition is on the scale from medium to the higher end and a 5% increase next year would be the first in three years. Another parent commented that in some ways The Children's Way functions as a private entity, since some capital projects have been funded by The Children's Way.

## 2. **Financial Matters:**

(a) Continued Discussion and Possible Vote of Support regarding Upcoming OPEB Warrant article and its Impact on School Funds:

The School Committee reviewed an analysis prepared by Geoff MacDonald. Geoff noted that he, Barb, a FinCom member, Brian Keveny, and two members of the OPEB Committee met earlier that night regarding this matter. He referred to the funds that will be available at Town Meeting on April 3<sup>rd</sup>, and due to payrolls in March and April, the funds available were on the conservative side. Geoff provided a more detailed explanation regarding The Children's Way and Food Service revenue compared with the amount that OPEB is proposing. Geoff commented that the payment plan for both The Children's Way and Food Service would extend over an eleven-year period.

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

The School Committee also reviewed the FY15 fringe benefits for both The Children's Way and Food Service, as well as the OPEB annual payment and the catch-up payments. Geoff noted that in FY16 The Children's Way will go below the \$50,000 reserve (-\$26,000 deficit). Therefore, to maintain the \$50,000 reserve and to increase revenue, there is a possibility of a tuition increase every year.

A discussion ensued about the deficit the Food Service program will encounter as a result of the fringe benefits catch up payments. However, it was agreed that fringe payments must be paid for the current year and then a decision can be made for future OPEB catch up payments. Paul noted that the issue is due to a change in accounting practices in terms of when the money will become available. It was confirmed that the money for FY14 must be available by April 1<sup>st</sup>. Geoff explained how the program could satisfy the payments for FY14 and FY15; however, a potential lunch increase could occur almost annually going forward. Geoff noted that in other towns, the lunch programs are subsidized for health benefits.

If an agreement is reached regarding these payments, the School Committee would like to review the cost structures further for The Children's Way and Food Service, including the capital costs for The Children's Way.

As a former Children's Way parent, Donna shared her fundraising experiences for the Space Launch Foundation to cover capital costs as a possible way to raise funds. She also suggested a five-year capital plan for potential obligations. Barb raised the question of whether the school department should take responsibility of some of the capital costs for The Children's Way and Food Service; the discussion will be on a future agenda.

Cliff Lewis of the OPEB Committee made some comments regarding the "big picture" of the OPEB payments, the Town Meeting Article, and what the OPEB Committee has done to reduce the annual cost of OPEB. He commented that based on the analysis that Geoff provided, the OPEB Committee has revised the OPEB Article as follows:

- Full Day Kindergarten and the BASE programs would support the numbers exactly in Sections A and B of the article;
- Agree to fund the operating section of the Article's Section B for all revolving accounts;
- Item 3A (\$130,000 catch-up money for TCW) of the Article would be reduced to \$25,000 and the balance would be spread over 11 years;
- Descriptions of the catch-up money will be revised in the Article and will coincide with the analysis.

**Items A & B:**

Food Service - \$25,000  
BASE – \$282,437  
TCW - \$25,000  
FDK - \$45,308  
Water - \$141,183  
Transfer - \$15,181  
Recreation - \$60,724

Cliff also discussed the OPEB cost reductions for The Children's Way only based on the GASB 45 funding of \$75,000 per person. The amount is decreased to \$30,598 based on the work done by the OPEB Committee. Thus, there is a 70% reduction in the OPEB liability resulting in \$22,902.88 per person, which is based on when the money becomes available. Cliff noted his appreciation that the schools and the OPEB Committee were able to work together to reach an agreement. He asked the School Committee to support the Article.

A discussion ensued regarding the sustainability of the programs and the work that has been done by the OPEB Committee to reduce the obligations. Another concern was the timing issue in terms of paying the FY14 fringe benefits and still having enough money in the account by April 3<sup>rd</sup> for the FY15 fringe payment. According to Geoff, this is no longer a concern since the timing issue was corrected.

Upon a motion duly made by Donna Bouchard, seconded by Malcolm Astley, the School Committee voted unanimously (4-0) to support the intent of the Warrant Article related to OPEB funding and to support for

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

the Food Service program under A-1 (\$25,000), A-2 for BASE (\$282,437), A-3 for The Children’s Way (\$25,000), A-4 for Full Day Kindergarten (\$45,308), and B-1 for Food Service (\$8,947.54), A-2 for BASE (\$9,059.56), B-3 for The Children’s Way (\$8,859.86), and B-4 for Full Day Kindergarten (\$2,498.69). 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 (by remote)	X	
Malcolm Astley	X	
Ellen Grieco	absent	
Donna Bouchard	X	

Paul confirmed that a larger discussion is necessary in terms of payments, as he does not want The Children’s Way to become an entity actively separate from the School Department. The preschool is very valuable to the Wayland Public Schools. Also important is to have a broader discussion regarding the Food Service program.

- (b) Continued Discussion and Possible Vote of Support re: Petitioners’ Warrant Article to Enable Consolidation of Town and School Functions:

*Barb noted that Ellen Grieco also submitted a remote participation form and is unable to attend the meeting due to geographic reasons. Ellen could not be reached.*

Annette Lewis handed out a revised warrant article that addressed the School Committee’s concerns. Gini Tate has also reviewed the revised article and, according to Ellen, Gini did not recommend the use of language that started with “authorized consolidation”, but recommended the language that starts solely with the statute. Barb read the statute.

Annette updated the School Committee on the timeline of her conversations with Ellen Grieco. In an effort to obtain the signatures from the petitioners, the article was revised in hopes that it would be acceptable by the School Committee; however, the Article could be changed at Town Meeting, if necessary. Annette read the language change and made a full presentation. She also read the statute in its entirety. Annette commented that if the Article was revoked at Town Meeting, it could then be brought to a Special Meeting, or if the School Committee revoked the Article, it could again be voted on at one of its meetings. She mentioned that Lexington and Milton have adopted this statute and have achieved greater efficiencies. Annette reiterated a portion of the statute that read, “Such consolidation may occur only upon the majority of both the School Committee and Town Meeting.”

The School Committee discussed the pros and cons of voting for the statute as read, keeping in mind that Gini Tate and Mark Lanza both advised that the School Committee does not have to vote to support the Article. Beth advised not to take a position at this time. The definition of what “consolidation” means within the statute was also discussed. Annette noted that the town is sharing technology and facilities departments/functions and Town Meeting doesn’t know it. Further, the statute refers only to administrative functions.

Upon a motion duly made by Barb Fletcher, seconded by Donna Bouchard, the School Committee voted (2-2) to support the language in the Article that reads “to determine whether the Town will vote to accept the provisions of M.G.L. 71 §37M, so that they may consolidate town and school administrative functions.” 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 (by remote)		X
Malcolm Astley		X
Ellen Grieco	absent	
Donna Bouchard	X	

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

Annette encouraged the Committee to ask Labor Counsel for an understanding of her recommendation.

Based on past experience in other school districts, Malcolm cited reasons for his non-support of the Article, as he leans toward separation of departments and their functions, but could support specific consolidation steps.

Donna supports the Article for what she considers non-educational functions, which result in a savings for the taxpayers.

(c) Update regarding the FY15 Budget Book:

The School Committee reviewed the FY15 Budget Book and changes were suggested by Donna regarding the language used in terms of the Committee's vote and support of the budget. Barb noted that it will be changed to "the majority of the School Committee supports the budget or ...advocates the budget." Beth offered recommendations to the language as well in terms of the number of members who voted to support the budget. Barb will talk to Ellen regarding the correct language, as the book can be amended after the official vote.

*Beth left the meeting remotely at 9:42 p.m.*

4. **Consent Agenda:**

(a) Approval of Accounts Payables and Payroll Warrants:

- Wayland Public Schools Accounts Payables warrant, dated March 3, 2014, in the amount of \$377,459.27
- Wayland Public Schools Accounts Payables warrant (School Buildings), dated March 3, 2014, in the amount of \$2,120.50

(b) Approval of Minutes:

- Regular Session of February 24, 2014

Geoff commented that Town Counsel advised that the weekly warrants be explored further. Unless the School Committee delegates the review and signing of the warrant to the Superintendent, the School Committee must vote and approve before bills are paid and sent out.

Donna will ask other towns how this situation is addressed, given that the statute states that no bills can be paid unless reviewed by the School Committee.

Upon a motion duly made by Malcolm Astley, seconded by Donna Bouchard, the School Committee voted unanimously (3-0) to approve the Consent Agenda, including the Regular Session minutes of February 24, 2014 as amended.

5. **Comments from the Public:**

There was no public comment.

In regards to the warrant process, Geoff commented that the Finance Office has limited the Business Office from 75 to 50 transactions per batch.

6. **Adjournment:**

Upon a motion duly made by Donna Bouchard, seconded by Malcolm Astley, the School Committee voted unanimously (3-0) to adjourn the Regular Session at 10:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Paul Stein, Clerk  
Wayland School Committee

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

Observers:

Mauria Feldman, TCW  
Jennifer Perlman, TCW

Corresponding Documentation:

1. Agenda & Backup Information
2. FY15 Budget Hearing & Information Notice
3. Accounts Payables Warrants
4. OPEB Analysis
5. Revised Language for Warrant Article
6. Regular Session Minutes of February 24, 2014