

MINUTES – WAYLAND SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Budget Work Session/Regular Meeting – January 5, 2017

A Budget Work Session/Regular Meeting of the Wayland School Committee was held on Thursday, January 5, 2017, at 7:00 P.M. in the School Committee Room of the Wayland Town Building.

Present were:

Ellen Grieco, Chair (arrived at 8:26 p.m.)
Barb Fletcher, Vice Chair
Jeanne Downs
Kim Reichelt
Kathie Steinberg

Also:

Paul Stein
Superintendent

Brad Crozier
Assistant Superintendent

Marlene Dodyk
Director of Student Services

Susan Bottan
Business Administrator

Also:

Tammy Barrera, Assistant Director of Student Services
Gretchen Lutz, Early Childhood Coordinator
Ben Keefe, Public Buildings Director

Vice Chair Barb Fletcher convened the budget work session/regular session at 7:02 P.M.; the meeting is being recorded by WayCAM.

1. Comments & Written Statements from the Public:

Tom Sciacca referred to the budget discussion at a recent School Committee meeting at which the subject of individual course offerings, particularly personal finances, came up. Tom tied this discussion to a recent conversation he had with his son regarding finances and funding his daughter's college education. In Tom's opinion, the schools should be offering the tools needed on a fundamental basis to get through life. What is offered in school could have implications long into the future.

2. Special Matters:

(a) Budget Work Session – Review of Budget for Special Education, Facilities, and Central Office:

The School Committee asked questions of the central office administrators.

Special Education:

In reviewing the budget at a recent Finance Subcommittee meeting, specifically staffing needs and class size guidelines, the Finance Committee asked if the severity and spectrum of needs for special education students could be categorized given the increase in teacher assistants when the number of students has not increased.

Marlene commented that the complexity of students' needs have increased. If needs cannot be serviced within the district, those students are placed out of district. Marlene explained the process that is taken in exploring certain models and putting certain cohorts of students together depending on grade levels, student needs, student chemistry, and the number of students in each school. Classroom placement will determine the level of staffing needed. They are exploring changing the model from TAs to team teaching with Special Education teachers. Since Wayland is smaller in comparison to other districts, finding the perfect model can be challenging. Marlene added that students on the autism spectrum and those with social and emotional needs have expanded immensely. As an example and given the size of Newton, Paul described how the Newton schools work with this issue.

Marlene cited statistics in terms of referrals as being parent-driven, kid-driven and/or based on professional recommendations. She commented on the evaluation process in terms of the law and the results of last year's evaluations – 66% were placed on an IEP, 14% weren't eligible, and 20% were put on a 504 plan.

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Regarding the possible need for building increased capacity in the district, Marlene commented that the need for a social worker at the elementary level is increasing, given the increased level of referrals from the pre-school level. Thus, guidance support is needed at the pre-school level for early intervention. Marlene recommended a language based, self-contained classroom at the elementary level for students with more significant needs. Also, The Children's Way is operating at capacity; going forward space and staffing may become a serious consideration. A conversation ensued about the program itself. Marlene and Gretchen addressed why special needs are becoming more prevalent at a younger age, including the epidemic of autism diagnoses and anxiety issues.

Marlene commented on the use of technology by special need students and described the types of technology available for students who need it, depending on the grade levels and the students' needs. Marlene described the Circuit Breaker and how the state formula works in terms of funding. A discussion ensued regarding district funding. Susan noted that Marlene attained Medicaid funding in 2015 for \$44,323 and this year will receive \$86,666. Finally, Marlene described the valuable addition of Tammy Barrera, the Assistant Director of Student Services, as well as the part-time ELL coordinator position.

Facilities:

Ben Keefe addressed several topics in terms of the facilities budget. He stressed the importance and benefits of hiring a night supervisor as recommended by the Edvocate Study. Ben commented on the Middle School original HVAC system – its capabilities, its challenges, and the process to maintain the equipment. Ben added that Loker also has its original boiler. Ben explained the contractual work funded in the budget and that which is not in the budget for classroom units. An outside contractor will maintain the rooftop units and in-house staff will maintain classroom units. The cost to hire a licensed HVAC technician to work exclusively for the district is exorbitant, thus it is more efficient to hire an outside contractor.

In terms of maintenance deficiencies as compared to two years ago, Ben commented that the cleanliness of the buildings has improved. He is moving toward funding more maintenance items with this year's budget, and will continue to fund more going forward. Regarding the sports complex at the High School, the track and bleachers are currently inadequate, and the bleachers are not ADA compliant. The lights all need to be replaced as well. A study is currently being done for this complex and should be completed in enough time to draft a Town Meeting article.

Ben addressed the district's utilities and indicated that the prices are locked in at historic lows for the next three years. He informed the School Committee that there is a good possibility that the gas prices will increase as much as 80% in one year. Ben described ways in which to ease into the increase, and he is working with the Direct Energy Consortium to find energy savings. Other than the recent installation of solar canopies, there are no projects planned to save energy.

Central Office:

Barb confirmed with Susan that there are funds for legal expenses for negotiations in the FY17 budget. However, legal for FY18 has been kept level funded. The largest expense is bussing. The school district is obligated to bus K-6 grade students who live more than two miles from school and that number represents 272 students. Susan explained her process in researching firms who can work with the schools regarding the bus routes and how the routes are developed. She inquired on the town side about a possible traffic/vehicle study that might have been done in the past. Susan noted that she believes that securing a parking area for the school buses is a priority, and she suggested that The Engineering Corporation might be a place to start in terms of recommendations.

- (b) Continued Discussion of Budget Drivers, Assumptions, Fees and Funding Sources, and Requests for Information:
The School Committee discussed its budget deliberations process and timeline; it could be similar to last year's deliberations.

Ellen arrived at 8:26 p.m.

Barb will provide a draft of the chart similar to what was used last year for the Committee's budget deliberations at the January 9th meeting.

3. Educational Matters:

- (a) Superintendent's Report, including Curriculum Spotlight:
There was no report.
Curriculum Spotlight #6 – Grade 8 Dystopia Unit

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This unit is taught in the ELA classes. The definition of utopia is an ideal society where people are prospering and everyone gets along and where there is social, emotional, spiritual and political harmony. Dystopia comes from Ancient Greek and means “bad place.” Dystopia could be a utopia with at least one fatal flaw – something gone wrong in a utopian society. One person’s utopia could be another’s dystopia, as dystopian societies present themselves as utopian, but this is really an illusion. Paul gave examples as shown in some movies.

Within this unit, the students are asked to evaluate how societies balance competing values. Paul described how the students work through this process. The unit consists of 18-22 lessons and begins with the first chapter of the Hunger Games. The students choose a novel from 11 novel choices, form literature circles, write a literary essay, and a fictional piece. Five controversial statements are drawn from dystopia novels that are themes chosen for middle school age students. In addition, there are seven elements recognized by students in dystopian literature – control, a backstory, dystopian protagonist, propaganda, conformity, importance of setting, and rebellion. Paul described the activities within a literature circle and the ways in which the teacher might illustrate conformity. Paul reviewed the types of writing assignments that the students undertake, i.e. a creative writing piece.

The English Language Arts goals for learning include goals that help students notice details, patterns and symbolism, to think deeply about the reading, to develop a thesis and support their ideas with evidence from the text in a final writing piece, to develop their ability to engage in productive dialog about the text, and to be fully vested in the story to better understand it by using Growing Talk and Signposts.

4. Financial Matters:

(a) Discuss and Review Status of FY18 Capital Requests:

The School Committee reviewed the status of FY18 capital requests. The following capital projects are in the FY18 capital budget: middle school tile replacement, food service equipment, Claypit Hill phones, and custodial equipment. Happy Hollow and Loker tile replacements and AV equipment have been pushed out a year to the FY19 budget. The middle school furniture is in FY19 or beyond. Barb explained the status of the high school stadium repairs, tennis courts and bus parking, as they are the remaining capital projects.

The capital budget will be finalized and voted on January 23rd by the Finance Committee and its budget hearing will be on February 6th.

(b) Finance Subcommittee Update:

Barb noted that the Finance Subcommittee met with the majority of the Finance Committee members, as well as Kathie, Susan and Paul, in an attempt to clarify information and to help gain a better understanding of the School Committee’s budget. Susan also provided an update regarding bus parking, which will be on the School Committee’s agenda on January 9th.

Susan will provide samples of a document titled Frequently Asked Questions at the next meeting for the School Committee’s review.

5. Administrative/Procedural Matters:

(a) Continued Discussion regarding Superintendent Search Process and Timing, including Selection of Screening Committee and Communications:

Jeanne commented that the focus groups have begun. Reminders for the remaining focus groups went out, as well as reminders for potential applicants for the screening committee. Jeanne will have more information regarding the screening committee at the next meeting.

(b) Discussion regarding ClearGov, including Adding Links/Banner to Webpage and Inclusion of Peer Groups List:

Kim shared ClearGov’s website and the inclusion of Wayland’s information, including a peer town list. A discussion ensued regarding adding a custom banner and links to certain pages.

(c) Discussion and Possible Vote regarding the School Committee’s Position, if any, related to a Town Meeting Article on Marijuana Dispensaries in the Town of Wayland:

Ellen noted that Town Counsel recommends that the town wait until the next special or annual Town Meeting after the April Town Meeting while the state is working on a decision to delay the openings of dispensaries. There will be another discussion at a future meeting.

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6. **Consent Agenda:**

(a) Approval of Accounts Payables & Payroll Warrants:

- Wayland Public Schools Accounts Payables Student Activities warrant, dated January 5, 2017, in the amount of \$47,602.25
- Wayland Public Schools Payroll warrant, dated January 5, 2017, in the amount of \$1,350,472.83

(b) Approval of Minutes:

- Special Session of November 16, 2016
- Regular Session of November 28, 2016

Upon a motion duly made by Kathie Steinberg, seconded by Ellen Grieco, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to approve the consent agenda.

7. **Matters not Reasonably Anticipated by the Chair:**

None.

8. **Adjournment:**

Upon a motion duly made by Barb Fletcher, seconded by Ellen Grieco, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to adjourn at 9:08 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Paul Stein, Clerk
Wayland School Committee

Observers:

Tom Sciacca, WVN, BUZZ

Corresponding Documentation:

1. Agenda & Backup Information
2. Budget Questions regarding Special Education, Facilities, and Central Office
3. FY18 Budget Projections for Various Accounts
4. Historical Budget Actuals Comparison Report
5. Circuit Breaker Recap as of December 2016
6. FY17 Fees & Tuitions
7. Massachusetts Public Schools Survey of Fees as of 6/23/15
8. Accounts Payables & Payroll Warrant
9. Special Session Minutes of November 16, 2016
10. Regular Session Minutes of November 28, 2016