

SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Regular Meeting – November 4, 2020

A Regular Meeting of the Wayland School Committee was held remotely on Wednesday, November 4, 2020, at 5:00 P.M. broadcast by WayCAM in the Wayland Town Building.

Present and participating remotely were:

Jeanne Downs, Chair
Ellen Grieco, Vice Chair (arrived at 5:22 p.m.)
Kim Reichelt
Chris Ryan
Kathie Steinberg

Also participating remotely:

Arthur Unobskey
Superintendent

Parry Graham
Assistant Superintendent

Richard Whitehead
Director of Student Services

Also:

Tony Laing, METCO Director
Caroline Han, Equity and Diversity Coordinator
Mark Lidell, WHS METCO Coordinator
JaNae Hood, WMS METCO Coordinator
Latoya Downs, Claypit Hill METCO Coordinator
DeVaughn Cooper, HH and Loker METCO Coordinator
Allyson Mizoguchi, WHS Principal
Betsy Gavron, WMS Principal
Christie Harvey, Claypit Hill Principal
Tricia O'Reilly, Happy Hollow Principal
Brian Jones, Loker Principal
Becky Lepow, K-5 Math & Science Curriculum Director
Boston Parents
Wayland Parents

Chair Jeanne Downs convened the open session at 5:04 p.m. WayCAM recorded the meeting and it was livestreamed via ZOOM. The meeting was conducted remotely due to the COVID-19 health pandemic and according to the revised open meeting law that allows remote participation. A roll call was taken:

| <u>Roll Call</u> | <u>Yes</u> | <u>No</u> |
|--------------------------|------------|-----------|
| Jeanne Downs, Chair | X | |
| Ellen Grieco, Vice Chair | absent | |
| Kim Reichelt | X | |
| Chris Ryan | X | |
| Kathie Steinberg | X | |

1. Superintendent Search:

- Review of Search Committee:
About twenty-two applications have been received to date for the superintendent position. The Search Committee members were selected and will begin meeting next week. Jeanne noted that WESA members did not apply to be on the Search Committee. When Ellen joined the meeting, she provided more information about the Search Committee.
- Review of Leadership Profile:
The School Committee reviewed the leadership profile and made some changes to include mentoring, delegating effectively and aligning with the district's historic philosophy, a clear and articulate vision of long-term planning, and an emphasis on academic excellence/improvement/growth.

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2. Consent Agenda (out of order):

- Approval of Minutes: September 30, 2020, October 7, 2020, October 14, 2020, October 30, 2020
- Approval of Accounts Payables and Payroll Warrants:
 - Wayland Public Schools Accounts Payables Warrant dated November 4, 2020, in the amount of \$720,521.49.

Upon a motion duly made by Kathie Steinberg, seconded by Kim Reichelt, the School Committee voted unanimously to approve the consent agenda. A roll call vote was taken as follows:

| <u>Roll Call</u> | <u>Yes</u> | <u>No</u> |
|--------------------------|------------|-----------|
| Jeanne Downs, Chair | X | |
| Ellen Grieco, Vice Chair | absent | |
| Kim Reichelt | X | |
| Chris Ryan | X | |
| Kathie Steinberg | X | |

3. Administrative Matters (out of order):

- Review and Possible Approval of Joint Response Letter with Board of Selectmen to High School Students:
The School Committee reviewed a joint letter to high school students drafted by Dave Watkins from the Board of Selectmen and the School Committee. The purpose of the letter is to encourage students to become involved in more civic/town issues. A discussion ensued and some members noted that since they responded to emails in late September regarding this matter, the letter should be more current.

Ellen arrived at 5:22 p.m.

Arthur arrived at 5:25 p.m.; Parry, Richard and Susan joined the meeting at 5:30 p.m.

4. Matters not Reasonably Anticipated by the Chair (out of order):

The Town formed a Route 20 South Landfill Visioning Committee on which there are eight voting members. The Committee is asking a School Committee representative to join. Kathie Steinberg volunteered to represent the School Committee.

5. Comments and Written Statements from the Public:

There were no comments and written statements from the public.

6. Superintendent's Update:

- Hybrid Mode Update:
Arthur visited classrooms over the last two weeks in hybrid mode and he shared his experiences with the students.
- Snow Day Update:
For the 2020-2021 school year only, the Commissioner of Education provided an update regarding snow days. To comply with the 170-day year and to avoid extending the year several days past June 16, the Commissioner has recommended that "snow" days become remote learning days. Arthur noted there will be three options: 1) If it is snowing and there is snow on the ground making it unsafe to drive or walk to school, this day would be virtual; 2) If it is snowing, the roads are not passable, and there are large scale electrical outages in Wayland, the day would be made up; and 3) school is remote due to the snow but roads are passable and there are some scattered power outages in town, other locations could open up for students without power at home. A discussion ensued about the different options, including taking "mental health" snow days. The School Committee accepted the three options given by Arthur.

7. COVID-19 Response (out of order):

- Positive COVID Case Response and Communication:
Arthur updated the School Committee regarding the communication process followed because of positive COVID cases in the High School (3) and Middle School (1). Once the Health Department is notified so contact tracing can begin, Arthur notifies school building families where the positive case is identified, as well as staff and students in the classroom. Timing is very important; thus, if close contacts cannot be identified before the start of school the next morning, school and town officials, including the School Committee Chair, Board of Selectmen Chair and Board of Health Chair, make a decision to go into remote mode for that day. Upon completion of contact tracing, Arthur sends another email to the school community.

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A discussion ensued about the process and the procedures/metrics, including the possibility of calling an emergency meeting with the School Committee and/or the Board of Health/Health Department. It was suggested that the School Committee is consulted when there are multiple (more than one) virtual learning days because of positive cases and the contact tracing timeline.

This discussion resumed after the Boston meeting that included the reasons to call an emergency meeting, the confidentiality issue, and holding meetings in compliance with the Open Meeting Law. There will be a pilot/trial for this process.

8. **Boston Parent Meeting:**

Jeanne and Arthur welcomed the Boston parents and staff to the meeting. The theme of this meeting was “Building and Maintaining Community and Belonging during a Pandemic.”

Caroline Han, Equity and Diversity Coordinator and the METCO Academic Dean, presented “Community and Belonging during COVID-19.” Caroline will introduce diversity and equity initiatives within the schools, adding that the whole community needs to build anti-racist schools given the inequity whereby people of color are more likely to contract COVID, the nation-wide racial incidents, and the ongoing election that has divided the country. Caroline acknowledged the acquisition of our land by indigenous people.

Caroline facilitated two exercises before her presentation. She asked for one-word responses to describe how the attendees are currently feeling at this moment, adding that children will flourish when they have permission to feel all emotions and the skills to navigate them wisely as quoted in the book “Permission to Feel.” Some of the responses included tearful, grateful, overwhelmed, anxious, hopeful, worried, excited, exhausted and stressed. Caroline also asked the attendees what comes to mind when they think of community, and the responses included unity, support, connection, cooperation, friendship, common ground, caring, together, have each other’s backs, looking out for each other, love and extended family. As one district, our priority is that regardless of zip code students and families should receive what they need. Students can’t achieve because they don’t feel a sense of belonging, but when they feel they belong, the student has the psychological safety to set them up to be in a better position to succeed.

Shavon Drayton described the objectives of the Wayland Public Schools IDEAS Parents Group. It is a diverse group that includes both Boston and Wayland parents and some school staff. The group promotes diversity, equity and inclusion in the Wayland Public Schools. They meet monthly to discuss societal injustices and how they can filter into the schools, and they strive to find ways to better facilitate conversations and interactions with staff and families. The group is also planning some fun activities, such as a game night and a movie night in December and January, to address some of the inequities due to remote learning.

Caroline described the district’s effort to hire more staff of color and to create an environment where those hired will want to work and stay for a long time to come. One way is to have an Affinity Group of Color. Caroline also offers a professional development class “Culturally Responsive Teaching and The Brain” for Wayland staff. An open discussion followed that included topics about COVID protocols and potential cases, the Superintendent search, technical support, and the WRAP program.

9. **COVID-19 Response:**

- Positive COVID Case Response and Communication:
Addressed earlier in the meeting.
- Update on Elementary In-Person Learning:
Parry acknowledged the tireless efforts of the Kindergarten teachers, TA’s, elementary principals, and the Kindergarten WRAP staff during these challenging times. It has been challenging for the K-2 students who are in the hybrid model and those in WRAP given the limited amount of synchronous learning due to limits of individual and organizational capacities, as well as the various levels of home support. The principals are working with the Kindergarten staff around options that includes reading interventionists and teacher assistants providing synchronous support and the possibility of moving to an all-in model four days a week as requested by some parents.

Currently, there are ten in-person Kindergarten classes ranging from 14 to 21 students with social distancing of 6 feet. The challenges to move to an all-in Kindergarten model include maintaining 6 feet of social distancing, the communication and feedback steps in terms of the WTA MOA, school operations, and logistics around adding

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furniture, room rearranging, and transportation. Arthur added that WRAP students could enter into the hybrid mode after the first semester.

Parry identified the next steps in this process, including collecting feedback from the families and providing more support on the remote days. A discussion ensued including providing more information to the School Committee about the financial and logistical impact to WRAP, staff, social distancing, and long-term efforts.

- Update on Staff and Student Health Attestation:

Arthur updated the School Committee regarding the status of the health attestation compliance. As of Tuesday, elementary schools were about 99% compliant; however, the middle school and high school compliance could be better. Families should complete the health attestation when students are absent from school, as well as notifying the school of the absenteeism. Arthur described the process if a family answers “yes” on the form.

- Health Data Collection Letter:

Kim commented that the State is providing metrics with no context and some districts would like to make a joint formal request asking the State to provide more useful data about transmission in schools. The Committee will discuss on November 18.

- Special Education Update:

Richard updated the Committee regarding the special education program. There is continuous planning given DESE guideline updates, but at the same time, the staff wants to remain consistent and adhere to a schedule.

- Ongoing Review Groups: Remote and Hybrid Curriculum Progress Committee and COVID Learning and Safety Committee:

RHLPC: At its recent meeting, the RHLPC finalized a data collection plan that will gather different types of data from all grade levels, such as achievement-based data, parent and student data, and possibly from teachers. This information will inform the administrators about which student groups need additional support, as well as data that could drive the budget process.

COVID Learning and Safety Team: The Committee drafted a communication plan for staff in terms of the communication channels if COVID issues arise. A resource link was provided for teachers on the website. Kathie reminded students’ families and staff to dress warmly given that fresh air is brought into classrooms in order to operate the ventilation systems.

- Transportation Update:

For families who requested transportation since October 19, Susan noted that about 25 more students in grades K-6 were provided seats on the buses without having to add another bus. A lottery system may be developed for access to open seats. Susan will review the route times in an effort to find a way to consolidate the buses even more in terms of further savings.

- Ventilation Update:

Ben Keefe and the engineer worked together to learn that the dampers can be closed 50% even during the cold weather. However, MERV 13 filters could be replaced with a lower filter to close the dampers further since the higher number can decrease the airflow.

- Testing Update:

Ellen updated the School Committee on the process undertaken by Kim Reichelt, Susan Garfield, Sejal Srinivisan and Ellen to make this voluntary COVID-19 pooled surveillance testing available for asymptomatic school staff and students. It is periodic, but frequent testing. The potential goals of pooled surveillance testing are to increase safety but more importantly, reduce the spread of COVID in the district. Testing will improve the confidence and comfortability of students and staff in the schools while reminding everyone that this is not the time to let down their guard. Some districts have established this testing, such as Revere, Chelsea, Somerville, Wellesley, Watertown and Brookline and others, such as Newton, Medway, Westwood, Weston, Belmont, Southborough, and Northborough are still researching this possibility.

The group identified two testing options thus far for Wayland. Ellen described the two options, the challenges, and the costs related to both the Mirimus test (\$1.4M) and the CIC/Broad Institute test (\$1M). Ellen noted the next steps moving forward that includes a survey for families and possibly staff, exploring funding sources including fundraising

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by the WPSF, PTO, Boosters. The School Committee supports this ongoing effort. A discussion ensued in terms of timing, funding, and the possibility of students going all-remote for a period after Thanksgiving. The Committee will resume this discussion on November 18.

- Next Steps:
This agenda item was addressed in previous discussions.

10. Financial Matters:

- Discussion and Review of COVID Related Finances:
The district received \$598,000 in COVID funding. There are no changes regarding COVID related finances since the last meeting. Susan will file the first reimbursement request by November 13.
- FY22 Operating Budget and Capital Plan Guidelines and Timeline:
The capital budget for the School Department is currently in process. A draft of the five-year capital plan was due today and includes the FY21 five-year capital projected voted last year by the School Committee as well as the technology shifts through FY22. Susan noted that additional projects were added to the capital plan. Susan shared the capital plan with administrators as well as school and town officials in an effort to gather more feedback. A bus may need to be replaced moving forward. Susan will provide a final draft of the capital plan that will include CIP's on November 18.
- Review and Possible Vote of School Capital Accounts to be Closed:
The School Committee reviewed the eight school capital accounts that do not have a balance and/or are completed. Susan explained the two projects listed that have negative balances as reported in MUNIS, such as the Claypit Hill windows and doors project.

Upon a motion duly made by Kathie Steinberg, seconded by Chris Ryan, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to close the school capital accounts listed on the document presented tonight that include the Happy Hollow Phone FY17, Happy Hollow Furniture FY17, Custodial Equipment FY17, Claypit Hill Phone Upgrade FY18, Happy Hollow Window Replacement FY08, and Happy Hollow Building Repairs FY08. A roll call vote was taken as follows:

| <u>Roll Call</u> | <u>Yes</u> | <u>No</u> |
|--------------------------|------------|-----------|
| Jeanne Downs, Chair | X | |
| Ellen Grieco, Vice Chair | X | |
| Kim Reichelt | X | |
| Chris Ryan | X | |
| Kathie Steinberg | X | |

Upon a motion duly made by Kathie Steinberg, seconded by Kim Reichelt, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to close the following accounts as listed on the capital project funds on the document presented tonight: FY2014 Claypit Hill Windows and Doors, FY2014 Middle School Art Room Air Handling Unit, FY2015 Claypit Hill Doors and Windows, FY2016 Loker Door and Window Replacement, FY2017 District Custodial Equipment, FY2018 Middle School Custodial Equipment, FY2018 Middle School Phone Replacement, and FY2019 Loker/Middle School Gym Floor Replacement. A roll call vote was taken as follows:

| <u>Roll Call</u> | <u>Yes</u> | <u>No</u> |
|--------------------------|------------|-----------|
| Jeanne Downs, Chair | X | |
| Ellen Grieco, Vice Chair | X | |
| Kim Reichelt | X | |
| Chris Ryan | X | |
| Kathie Steinberg | X | |

- Review of Enrollment Report:
Susan reviewed the Enrollment and Class Size Report for 2020-2021 that includes actual and projected enrollment. As of October 1, 2020, 2,705 students were enrolled which is four less than last year and 28 fewer than projected. There are 181 WRAP students, and the largest grade levels are 8th, 3rd, and 12th while the smallest are 2nd, 5th, 10th, and 11th. Enrollment is tracked because the State uses this information to calculate Chapter 70 funding. The FY22 budget will be built around enrollment projections as well. Susan reviewed the McKibben's Report in terms of

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enrollment projections for Wayland. The district keeps private school data and Susan will inform the School Committee when this number is determined for this year.

• Review of FY20 EOY Report:

Susan reported that the FY20 budget appropriation was \$41,919,750 and all but \$113,000 was spent. When the schools shut down in March and shifted to remote learning, there were identified savings in utilities, transportation, supplies and materials. Susan described how the \$113,000 was maximized this year, as it was turned back to the Town.

11. **Executive Session:**

Upon a motion duly made by Jeanne Downs, seconded by Kathie Steinberg, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to enter Executive Session at 8:50 p.m. for the purposes of (a) discussing regarding strategy related to collective bargaining with custodial union, as permitted by M.G.L. c.30A, §21(a)(3), as a discussion in open session may have a detrimental effect on the negotiating position of the School Committee; (b) discussing strategy with respect to collective bargaining with WESA, as permitted by M.G.L. c.30A, §21(a)(3), as a discussion in open session may have a detrimental effect on the negotiating position of the School Committee; and (c) approving the following executive session minutes, as permitted by M.G.L. c.30A, §22: September 30, 2020, October 7, 2020, and October 14, 2020.

The School Committee will be joined by Arthur Unobskey, Superintendent of Schools, Parry Graham, Assistant Superintendent, and Diane Marobella, recording secretary.

The School Committee will adjourn in Executive Session and will not reconvene in open session. A roll call vote was taken as follows:

| <u>Roll Call</u> | <u>Yes</u> | <u>No</u> |
|--------------------------|------------|-----------|
| Jeanne Downs, Chair | X | |
| Ellen Grieco, Vice Chair | X | |
| Kim Reichelt | X | |
| Chris Ryan | X | |
| Kathie Steinberg | X | |

12. **Adjournment:**

Upon a motion duly made by Jeanne Downs, seconded by Kim Reichelt, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to adjourn at 8:58 p.m. A roll call vote was taken as follows:

| <u>Roll Call</u> | <u>Yes</u> | <u>No</u> |
|--------------------------|------------|-----------|
| Jeanne Downs, Chair | X | |
| Ellen Grieco, Vice Chair | X | |
| Kim Reichelt | X | |
| Chris Ryan | X | |
| Kathie Steinberg | X | |

Respectfully submitted,

Arthur Unobskey, Clerk
Wayland School Committee

Corresponding Documentation:

1. Agenda
2. Public Comments
3. Draft Letter to WHS Students
4. Screening Committee Members List
5. Wayland Focus Group Summary
6. Wayland Superintendent Leadership Profile
7. Accounts Payables Warrants
8. Minutes of September 23, 2020, October 8, 2020 October 15, 2020

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9. Decision Criteria for Opening or Closing Schools
10. Capital Account Financial Summary & Projects to Close
11. Enrollment Class Size Report FY21 and FY22
12. Final Five-Year Capital Plan FY21
13. FY22 Budget Schedule Revised
14. FY22-26 Five Year Draft
15. FY22 Departmental Capital Project Instructions
16. FY22 Operating and Capital Budgets Guideline
17. FY20 EOY Financial Report Highlights
18. FY20 EOY Financial Report
19. FY22 Budget Calendar Draft
20. FY22 CIP Form
21. School Capital Accounts to Close
22. Executive Session Motion