

SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Regular Meeting – January 20, 2021

A Regular Meeting of the Wayland School Committee was held remotely on Wednesday, January 20, 2021, 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
Kim Reichelt
Chris Ryan
Kathie Steinberg

Also participating remotely:

Parry Graham
Assistant Superintendent

Richard Whitehead
Director of Student Services

Susan Bottan
Director of Finance & Operations

Chair Jeanne Downs convened the open session at 5:02 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	X	
Kim Reichelt	X	
Chris Ryan	X	
Kathie Steinberg	X	

1. Superintendent Search:

(a) Update on Process and Finalist Visit Logistics:

The third and last finalist, Dr. Omar Easy, is scheduled to come to Wayland on Thursday. The School Committee discussed the possibility of arranging another twenty-minute virtual meeting with each candidate, given that some staff feel that they did not have ample opportunity to meet the candidates. A communication will be sent to staff to inquire about interest. Ellen will consult with FMS in this regard.

The School Committee will schedule a meeting on Friday, January 29, to discuss references, feedback, and make a decision as to who will be the next superintendent. A communication will be sent out that will include public comment regarding the process and candidates as well as the deadline on January 27 to submit feedback forms. Topics for a writing sample were discussed.

2. Consent Agenda (out of order):

(a) Approval of Minutes: January 2, 2021, January 4, 2021, January 6, 2021, January 15, 2021:

Upon a motion duly made by Kathie Steinberg, seconded by Chris Ryan, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) 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	X	
Kim Reichelt	X	
Chris Ryan	X	
Kathie Steinberg	X	

Susan updated the School Committee on the public budget presentation of the FY22 recommended budget, the public's attendance, and the questions asked about the budget. Kathie recommended the virtual format in future years.

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

Jeanne read a public comment from Jayme Nowland who is a mental health provider and a Wayland parent of three children in preschool, third grade, and fifth grade. She supports bringing elementary students into school four days a week because she feels hybrid remote learning is not only affecting their academics, but it is affecting self-esteem, social skills, and is causing a decline in motivation, particularly for students in K to 3. Specializing in anxiety and depression, Ms. Nowland noted that people and the kids are struggling. If in school, the kids would get the support they critically need from the school professionals.

4. **Financial Matters:**

(a) Continued Review of Capital Requests and Five-Year Capital Plan:

In its January 13 meeting, the School Committee discussed a warrant article for short-term elementary space needs and a memo to the Finance Committee regarding purchasing or leasing and installation of modular units. Jeanne explained why the amount requested was revised to \$350,000, which covers leasing of the units based on TBA's estimates.

Kathie updated the Committee on the current year transfer noting that since the Board of Selectmen put forth a warrant article for a current year transfer, the School Committee does not have to submit a separate article. It can make a formal request to be included in the BOS's warrant article, but was asked to reduce the amount of the request and identify the immediate needs. The town must identify the source of funding for the original request of \$800,000.

Kathie spoke about the difficulties in the capital planning process and suggested putting a method in place to make the process easier. The School Committee will discuss this matter at its next meeting.

Susan reviewed the capital items that were approved by the Finance Committee, such as the short-term elementary project of \$350,000, approved \$75,000 for the replacement, study and design of the Happy Hollow chair lift, approved the swap from the voice lifts to the elementary school storage units, and reduced the \$900,000 that was slated for the middle school lockers and tile replacement to \$650,000 for FY22 and the balance of \$250,000 being allocated to FY23. In addition, the request for custodial equipment and storage was not considered for FY22 due to insufficient information but was postponed to FY23.

There are no existing capital funds for custodial equipment, as the School Committee voted to close this account after funds were spent. However, the refrigeration units for the middle school and Happy Hollow will be replaced this year. COVID has caused the need for more equipment in order to keep the buildings very clean; however, there isn't storage space available for the equipment. Finally, Susan reported that the Town Administrator confirmed that there is no need to make additional HVAC capital purchases.

(b) Discussion of FY22 Recommended Budget: Elementary Schools:

The elementary principals, Christie Harvey, Tricia O'Reilly, and Brian Jones spoke about the elementary budget priorities and their proposed budgets for FY22. Given the budgetary constraints, any additional positions, particularly guidance, are considered essential to address the social, emotional and mental health of students. The assistant principal position that would be shared between Loker and Happy Hollow would free up more time for Brian and Tricia. Christie described some of the things she can now do while having Rachel Scott, the Claypit Hill assistant principal, in the building. Some areas in which an assistant principal would help with is teacher evaluations, behavioral issues, and arrivals and dismissals. Christie described the district's evaluation process as implemented by the State in 2015 and how an assistant principal can assist in the process.

The principals addressed the priorities in terms of the tiered categories. The assistant principal was more of a priority over the guidance counselors, as the assistant principal could, in some ways, act as a guidance counselor and would allow the principals more flexibility. The principals described how a guidance counselor's caseload is built and what his/her role is for those students. The role of the guidance counselor/school psychologist is to develop guidance lessons for the classrooms, support the teachers, perform testing, communication with families regarding services, and offer resources for families when there is a need.

The principals addressed the smaller class sizes during COVID, the potential of larger classes either in the spring or in the fall around academics and social emotional development of the students and what the needs and available support will look like in terms of staffing. The hybrid model, while in school at least, has allowed the staff to address the needs of all students. There will be many adjustments for students when classes are full again, particularly reminding students of safety protocols. Susan explained the elementary student growth moving forward and referred

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to the McKibben Report forecasts for Kindergarten and first grade, including those students currently in WRAP. There could be a possible increase of 60 students in the elementary schools next year.

Facilities Budget:

Susan reviewed the three components in drafting the facilities budget noting that it has been underfunded for the past three years. She reviewed the day-to-day operational facilities budget and evaluated the rate of spending in each account from FY18 to FY21, compiled a list of maintenance projects that should be earmarked for FY22, and she identified some operations issues that need to be addressed. Other discussions for the town's or schools' facilities budget is focused on HVAC and project management. The School Committee reviewed the spreadsheet Susan prepared regarding the facilities budget and what funds are needed to level fund this budget. Susan added that she does not anticipate a shortfall in the electricity budget; thus, the savings will offset the facilities budget increase in the amount of \$30,000 for a total in the facilities budget of \$231,000.

Susan addressed the maintenance budget in the amount of \$247,000 covering contracted services and filter replacements next year in four-month increments. This budget also includes a new position of a part-time project manager. A discussion ensued about the impact to the FY22 recommended budget and the potential control of this budget, which will be determined by the Town Administrator. Susan recommended hiring an HVAC technician; she explained the cost effectiveness.

There will be additional COVID funding for Wayland through the ESSER Grant of about \$200,000. More information will be provided in the next two weeks. Finally, Susan will provide the Finance Committee more information related to fees and the revolving funds.

- (c) Possible Vote on FY22 Recommended Budget:
The School Committee will vote on January 27.
- (d) Review of Budget Calendar.
This was discussed earlier in the meeting.

5. Superintendent Update:

- (a) Hybrid Mode Update:
Passed over.
- (b) Discussion of and Possible Vote to Approve Student Opportunity Act Plan:
Parry addressed the requirement of the Student Opportunity Act Plan based on legislation passed by the Massachusetts legislature in 2019 addressing Chapter 70 increases for school districts. Twenty thousand dollars was already received in FY20 for FY21. Parry explained how the funds were spent. The length of the Student Opportunity Act Plan depends on the amount of the district's Chapter 70 funding and are three-year evidence-based plans that address achievement gaps for students of color. Parry noted that this plan reflects strategic plans that have already been created in Wayland.

Upon a motion duly made by Ellen Grieco, seconded by Kathie Steinberg, the School Committee voted unanimously to approve the Student Opportunity Act Plan presented by Parry. 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	

6. COVID-19 Response:

- (a) Discussion and Review of Planning for Remainder of School Year, including Synchronous Augmentation, Kindergarten and Possible Vote to Approve Kindergarten Fee:
Progress is being made in preparing to bring Kindergartners all-in four days a week after February vacation. Building space is being reviewed as well as daily schedules, specialists' schedules, and movement of furniture and materials. Parry proposed that the Kindergarten begin to set up the classroom floor plans on the Wednesday prior to February vacation, so that the rooms can be permanently set up during vacation. In addition, Parry proposed in Arthur's

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absence that February 22 and 23 are planning days for teachers and remote days for Cohorts A and B with the Kindergartners coming all-in on February 25 and 26. The following week would be a full week for Kindergartners.

Kim commented that the new variant to the virus and the possible surge of the virus will occur at the same time that Kindergartners are scheduled to come back. The School Committee will revisit this decision on February 3. A discussion ensued regarding the teachers' feedback about the proposed schedule and the length to which the Kindergarten teachers will be involved in the planning process. Parry will consult with teachers in terms of their preference for the two planning days.

Families have asked about the kindergarten fees when students shift to full day when returning to all-in four days a week. Again, on behalf of Arthur, Parry proposed a fee of \$1,350 for families who will make the switch between now and February 22. The fee next year starting in September would be \$2,700. Further discussion is needed for those families who may not switch to full day or if the February 25th plan does not happen due to COVID. Parents will be asked to make a commitment to full day or traditional Kindergarten in order to realize the impact to the special revenue funds for full day kindergarten.

Principals are reviewing resumes for the synchronous support positions for first and second grades. Parry described the ongoing discussions regarding the approach and utilization of these positions, such as in math and/or science. Focusing on math is preferred vs. other subjects and will be reposted. The first and second grade Spanish Immersion classes at Loker have more synchronous support on the remote days.

Parry addressed the possibility of bringing more kids to school for both indoor and outdoor activities under the existing structure. Scheduling and logistics can be challenging to do so, particularly indoors.

(b) Discussion of Remote Snow Days:
Passed over.

(c) Surveillance Testing Program Update and Possible Vote to Approve Fee:
Ellen updated the School Committee on the status of testing. The district will move forward with the State's six-week testing program and will await more information. The district's RFP process is complete for the non-state subsidized testing program and a decision in terms of the vendor is forthcoming. Ellen described the staffing for the state program that includes an administrative coordinator and medically trained technicians to administer the testing to the students. Kim noted that the students grades two and up could self-administer the test. Donations received for Wayland's testing program is about \$50,000. Fees can be collected for the state program to cover overhead.

(d) Special Education Update:
In regard to the Kindergarten plan, Richard noted that the special education staff's scheduling is very complicated and would need as much notice and planning time as possible. Plans for the extended school year are underway as well to address reading and math concerns. During the week of February 8, DESE is conducting their tiered focus monitoring review. Parents and guardians of SPED students will receive a survey from DESE, and Richard asked families to respond.

(e) Ongoing Review Groups: Remote and Hybrid Learning Progress Committee and COVID Learning and Safety Committee:
RHLCP:
A high school student survey was finalized, and Parry addressed the timeline for the parent feedback forms for student academic progress and social emotional progress.

COVID Learning and Safety Committee:

An updated communication plan will be sent to staff this week. COVID specific questions are addressed by the COVID town hotline and questions and notifications about staff travel should be directed to Parry. There is a lot of interest in testing and vaccine plans. The Committee also received updates about ventilation and the custodians.

(f) Transportation Update:
No update.

(g) Ventilation Update:
No update.

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- (h) Next Steps:
Next steps were addressed earlier in the meeting.

7. Administrative/Procedural Matters:

- (a) Discussion of Upcoming Meeting Schedule:
The schedule was discussed during the superintendent search update.

8. Matters not Reasonably Anticipated by the Chair:

None.

9. 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 8:09 p.m. for the purposes of (a) discussing strategy with respect to collective bargaining with WESA, Custodial, and Food Services, 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 (b) the approval of the following executive session minutes, as permitted by M.G.L. c.30A, §22: January 6, 2021.

The School Committee will be joined by 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	

Ellen left the meeting at 8:09 p.m.

10. Adjournment:

Upon a motion duly made by Jeanne Downs, seconded by Kathie Steinberg, the School Committee voted unanimously (4-0) to adjourn at 8:51 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	absent	
Kim Reichelt	X	
Chris Ryan	X	
Kathie Steinberg	X	

Respectfully submitted,

Arthur Unobskey, Clerk
Wayland School Committee

Corresponding Documentation:

1. Agenda
2. Public Comment
3. FY22 Recommended Budget Q & A
4. Student Opportunity Plan
5. Minutes of January 2, 2021 (Joint Meeting with BOS and BOH)
6. Minutes of January 4, 2021
7. Minutes of January 6, 2021
8. Minutes of January 15, 2021
9. Executive Session Motion