

SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Regular Meeting – February 10, 2021

A Regular Meeting of the Wayland School Committee was held remotely on Wednesday, February 10, 2021, at 5:30 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 (arrived at 5:41 p.m.)

Also participating remotely:

- Arthur Unobskey
Superintendent

- Parry Graham
Assistant Superintendent

Richard Whitehead
Director of Student Services

Susan Bottan
Director of Finance & Operations

Chair Jeanne Downs convened the open session at 5:33 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		absent

Jeanne reflected on her recent visit to the Middle School as the School Committee liaison. She visited classrooms, spoke to some of the staff, and learned much about the model put in place during the hybrid mode.

1. Comments and Written Statements from the Public:

Jeanne read a public comment from Middle School special education teacher, Jessica Villataro in which she referred to the School Committee discussion about bringing students in Grades 1 to12 back into the classroom all-in. She asked if teachers were consulted in regard to this possible plan, as she just recently heard about it. Discussing ideas and plans without necessary conversations could result in disappointment and frustration for families, students and teachers.

2. Financial Matters:

(a) Update on FY22 Operating Budget:

Jeanne updated the School Committee on the Finance Committee’s recent meeting at which she was in attendance to answer their questions. The topics that were addressed are the differences in the level services or level funded budgets, the maintenance program, SEL support, new initiatives, COVID expenses, and FTE staffing. Susan Bottan and Linda Lavenda will provide FTE information.

Kathie arrived at 5:41 p.m.

(b) Review of Prior Year Invoices to be Included in Town Meeting Warrant and Possible Vote to Approve:

Susan updated the School Committee on three categories of late invoices received at the end of the fiscal year which requires a Town Meeting vote to be paid through the current year appropriation of school department funds. The categories are facilities (1 invoice) and special education (2 invoices). The town’s Finance Director also has copies of the invoices, and he will record the School Committee’s vote.

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Upon a motion duly made by Kim Reichelt, seconded by Kathie Steinberg, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to pay the invoices as listed as outstanding – Metropolitan Pipe for \$1,037.06, ATMA Children’s Transitional Services Division for \$4,875, and Parent Reimbursement of \$3,498.69 and put it on the Town Meeting warrant to be paid. 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	

(c) Discussion of Capital Stabilization Fund and Possible Vote to Support:
Kathie drafted a memo that the School Committee reviewed in support of the town’s proposal to establish a Capital Stabilization Fund that provides a means to access funds in case of failed equipment and eliminates the possibility of putting off repair and/or replacement of the equipment. All School Committee members support this effort.

(d) Review of Budget Calendar:
The Budget Hearing will be scheduled moving forward. Kathie asked if the School Committee would revisit its vote on the FY22 budget dependent on the Finance Committee’s decisions regarding the school’s operating budget. This would be open for discussion.

3. Superintendent Update:

(a) Hybrid Mode Update:
Arthur acknowledged the teachers’ exceptional efforts with our students. He read an example of the work being done as written by student Cora McNeely in Ms. Knox’s Happy Hollow second grade classroom. Cora’s writing refers to the inequity of the playgrounds relative to the apparatus being used by students.

4. COVID-19 Response:

(a) Discussion and Review of Planning for Remainder of School Year, including Synchronous Augmentation, Kindergarten All-In Planning and Grades 1-12 All-In Planning:
Arthur confirmed that kindergartners will come all-in on Thursday, February 25, and acknowledged the teachers’ efforts to make this happen. Arthur notified the families of the planning days and that the first three days of that week would be remote for the kindergartners. The activities are almost complete for the students’ remote days; Parry described.

Brian Jones did hire two individuals to work on the math synchronous augmentation in the classrooms as well as the 1st and 2nd grade Spanish Immersion classes. Tricia O’Reilly and Christie Harvey are still in the process of interviewing candidates.

Planning for Grades 1 to 12 All-In:
Tonight’s discussion is the first and the start of the conversation. There will not be a decision this evening, but Arthur recommended a possible decision on March 10 to allow time for extended planning with a possible goal of bringing students after April break.

If the district moves forward with an all-in plan, it is important to know how the needs of the students can be best served for the remainder of this school year, the health and safety considerations for students, staff, and families if the social distancing threshold is lessened, the impact of 5 days a week of in-person learning on students’ learning and well-being, the financial costs, and if the funds could be allocated in other ways as well.

The remote program has been highly successful, particularly noted by WRAP families, but in terms of a positive impact of being in school 5 days per week, the students can socialize with their peers and teachers, students’ well-being would improve by being in the classroom, and it would allow students to get used to being in school, as “it takes 27 days to form a habit”, and would prepare them for the 2021-22 school year.

The challenges facing the district are lessening physical distances, space required for mask breaks, snack, and lunch, the loss of small classes, significant challenges of time and effort in schedules, disruption in schedules for students, families, childcare and staff, uncertainty about curriculum gains, and budget expenditures. In addition, could certain

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age groups benefit most of being in-person and is this plan financially manageable?

Arthur presented two possible options – Option 1 and Option 2. Option 1 brings students in 5 days a week beginning April 26 and includes serving lunch. The costs are broken down for Grades 1-5 (\$193,291), Grades 6-8 (\$122,800), and Grades 9-12 (\$87,800). The costs include transportation, furniture, storage/moving, custodial, and PPE.

Option 2 would be a half day from 8:00 to noon with no lunch served and synchronous learning taking place at home for the last hour. Non-Wayland resident students would remain in school for the afternoon class. Costs for this option are for Grades 1-5 (\$109,291), Grades 6-8 (\$88,000), and Grades 9-12 (\$33,800). The pros for Option 2 includes less expense and more elementary planning throughout the week. The cons include a different approach in the last part of the year, less learning time, an impact on parent/guardian schedules, and the need for supervision for Boston students during in-school synchronous learning. Parry added that there would be an enormous amount of work to develop new schedules, particularly for K-8 in Option 2. Richard addressed the special education schedules, adding that planning time could take away from compliance for delivery of services.

Kim addressed the timeline of this decision, planning also for the secondary levels, the possible impact to all of the safety procedures in place, and the anxiety levels created for many. A discussion ensued in this regard.

Susan addressed other possible allocations for funding in the budget status and summary report that she provided. The district is expecting two new grants, the ESSER Grant (\$192,425) and a COVID Prevention Relief Fund Grant (\$79,245). In addition to these two grants, savings in the amount of \$153,000 were generated this year after all of the anticipated and projected expenses were paid, leaving a need for an additional \$38,000 for Grades 1 to 5. An additional \$210,000 is needed for Grades 6 to 12. Susan cited other possible funding sources, but noted that these funds are not guaranteed.

Summer Programming for K-12 Students:

One plan is to have a possible extended school year (ESY) program for special education students for five weeks, Monday to Thursday, 9:00 to 11:30 that focuses on math and reading. This program will provide a “summer boost” into the 2020-21 school year. Specialized programs will run on the same five week schedule but from 9:00 to 1:00. The IEP teams will consult with families to determine participation. Richard elaborated on the program noting that this summer program will be funded by the special education budget.

Other possible summer programming would target K-5 general education students who underperformed in math and reading and for those students who are at the higher level but want more programming. This program would run for two weeks in August for about 100 students. Parry expanded on the goals and the purpose of the program which is run by Karyn Saxon and Becky Lepow. The programming would also address social and emotional needs as well preparing students for the fall. The list could be increased for older students and the offerings could be expanded.

Susan addressed the use of tents from April 26 through June. Twenty-two tents were leased and will be set up at the schools in early March. The costs will be charged to the COVID ESSER Two Grant.

The next steps in this process will be to gather input from staff and families, watch the Kindergarten model, develop and implement a town vaccination plan, continue auditing health and safety protocols, monitor COVID rates in the district and work with BOH on safe distancing, consider funding for summer programming, and reach a decision for the all-in mode by March 10.

A discussion ensued about the costs and benefits to bring in students for 37 days of school especially for K-5, the use of the ESSER funds, peer towns’ planning for spring in terms of secondary level students, staff vaccinations, the continuation of a fully remote program in the fall, and the state’s planning expectations for a normal school year in the fall. Kim noted concerns about students infecting other family members, particularly the younger students. Kathie suggested offering spring programming similar to the summer programming, however, the summer programming is very targeted to certain groups of students and it would be difficult to staff. Monitoring the Kindergarten model could provide important data in terms of moving forward with other grade levels.

Additional concerns include scheduling, creating another model when hybrid works, lessening social distancing, the collective ability to pivot again, the pending state’s vaccination process for teachers, the bandwidth and emotional toll on staff, and using the financial resources in the fall instead of the remainder of 37 days. Arthur will gather input from parents and staff and will have an update about what other districts are doing at the next meeting. The School

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Committee will revisit this discussion on February 24.

(b) Surveillance Testing Program Update:

Quick start testing began with 22 pools on February 8, and the pools were all negative eliminating the need for reflex testing tonight. The testing rollout is scheduled to begin on February 23. Arthur encouraged more sign-ups, as they are needed in order to have an effective pool and make the schools as safe as possible. Re-registration is necessary for the state testing program, as explained in Arthur's communications. The School Committee and Arthur thanked all those staff and community members who worked tirelessly in this endeavor.

(c) Special Education Update:

No update.

(d) Ongoing Review Groups: Remote and Hybrid Learning Progress Committee and COVID Learning and Safety Committee:

RHLCP:

The Committee is gathering survey data from families, students, and staff for middle school and high school students.

COVID Learning and Safety Committee:

At its recent meeting, the committee discussed ventilation, including the ventilation in the Claypit Hill cafeteria, and the vaccination process for teachers.

(e) Transportation Update:

No update.

(f) Ventilation Update:

Ventilation was discussed earlier in the meeting.

(g) Next Steps:

Arthur addressed traveling during February vacation and asked families and staff to think about the safety of everyone in the schools because there will be some situations that can't be controlled. He asked families and staff to use their judgment about five days of quarantine after returning, take a test, and allow the incubation period to take place.

5. **Consent Agenda:**

(a) Approval of Minutes: January 20, 2021 and February 1, 2021

The February 1, 2021 were passed over.

Upon a motion duly made by Kathie Steinberg, seconded by Kim Reichelt, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to approve the minutes of January 20, 2021 as part of 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	

6. **Administrative/Procedural Matters:**

(a) Discussion of The Education Cooperative (TEC) Legislative Breakfast:

Jeanne attended the annual TEC Legislative Breakfast at which state legislators, superintendents, and school committee members meet. The panel discussion included how districts, such as Medfield, Medway, and Framingham, are dealing with having kids in school keeping in mind that all three districts are in a different model. Every town has different issues, such as space constraints, financial constraints, and different union agreements. Many superintendents acknowledged that their job this year has been a "lonely job."

(b) Discussion and Possible Vote to Approve Veritas Christian Academy as a "private organized education system", Alternative to Public School, pursuant to M.G.L. c.76 for Purposes of Adding Pre-School:

Veritas Christian Academy is a private pre-K through 8 school. They are adding a pre-school to its structure, and the School Committee must reaffirm that they are a private organized educational system, as was done in 2010. The pre-school and the transitional kindergarten program will be located temporarily at the Trinitarian Church on

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Cochituate Road. Jeanne read the law, M.G.L. Chapter 76 pertaining to this request. A discussion ensued and the School Committee have asked for Veritas’s accreditation reports. Richard confirmed that he visits Veritas each year. He explained the funding process for special education enrollment since they are a school in the Wayland district. This discussion will be revisited at the next meeting.

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

The School Committee will begin the process to hire a new Business Administrator at the next meeting.

8. **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 8:03 p.m. for the purposes of (a) 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; (b) discussing strategy related to negotiations with non-union personnel, the Superintendent, as permitted by M.G.L. c.30A, §21(a)(2), as a discussion in open session may have a detrimental effect on the negotiating position of the School Committee; and (c) the approval of the following executive session minutes, as permitted by M.G.L. c.30A, §22: January 20, 2021.

The School Committee will be joined by Arthur Unobskey, Superintendent, 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	

9. **Adjournment:**

Upon a motion duly made by Jeanne Downs, seconded by Chris Ryan, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to adjourn at 9:05 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 Comment
3. Draft Memo to FinCom
4. FY22 Incremental Increases over FY21 Budget
5. Draft FY21 Budget Summary and Status
6. Fee History Spreadsheet
7. FY22 Recommended Budgets for Special Revenue Funds
8. The Children’s Way Tuition Schedule for 2020-21
9. Cost Implications for Increased In-School Instruction
10. Minutes of January 13, 2021
11. Executive Session Motion