

SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Regular Meeting – March 17, 2021

A Regular Meeting of the Wayland School Committee was held remotely on Wednesday, March 17, 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 (arrived at 5:36 p.m.)
Kathie Steinberg

Also participating remotely:

Arthur Unobskey
Superintendent

Parry Graham
Assistant Superintendent

Richard Whitehead
Director of Student Services

Susan Bottan
Director of Finance & Operations

Also:

Pat Keefe, WSCP Director

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	absent	
Kathie Steinberg	X	

1. Comments and Written Statements from the Public:

Alexia Obar, 18 Dean Road, thanked the School Committee for voting to bring the middle and high school students back to school all-in, but asked the Committee to bring the high school in even earlier than April 27, particularly the seniors and freshmen. Ms. Obar commented that the PTO has offered to help to make this possible.

Chris arrived at 5:36 p.m.

2. COVID-19 Response:

(a) Discussion with Director of Wayland School Community Programs (WSCP) regarding BASE Fees for Spring 2021 All-In Model and Possible Vote to Approve:

Pat Keefe, Director of WSCP, came before the School Committee to ask its support to continue with the higher tuition rates that the Committee approved in September 2020 and was based on a total of 60 students in both cohorts A and B. At that time, there was an average of 30 students per day resulting in staff layoffs. Since staffing the program is a challenge, the program will be limited to partial capacity of 60 students per day in the fall and the fee must support the program. Therefore, Pat recommends keeping the fees intact. The School Committee supports this recommendation.

(b) Discussion and Review of Planning for Remainder of School Year, including Synchronous Augmentation, Kindergarten All-In Update, and Grades K-12 All-In Planning Update:

Arthur expressed his excitement about the ongoing progress/planning by the principals, administrators, and staff to get the buildings ready for April 5 and 27. In response to Ms. Obar's public comment, it is preferred to do the

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necessary scheduling and operations setup to provide a solid clear pathway and effective experience for the students through the end of the school year and in the fall.

Synchronous augmentation:

The hiring for this process and the process itself will be discontinued, given that all students are coming back to school all-in during April. The staff that was hired will be used in those areas with the greatest need, such as in-person math intervention and continued support with Spanish Immersion. Parry explained the funding process.

Kindergarten update:

Having the kindergarten students back all-in, has been successful overall, but there are some challenges, such as time-consuming transitions, social distancing at recess, arrivals and dismissals, and the non-sharing of materials. Despite the challenges, it has been very beneficial for the students to be in-person with each other and their teachers.

Planning for All-In for K-5:

Progress is being made on the elementary schedules and will be followed with the specials schedules, special education schedules and individual classroom schedules. The logistics of the classrooms is being worked on and rooms will be arranged prior to April 5. Some students may move to WRAP and some students in WRAP may move to all-in from WRAP. The staffing will not be impacted and the district will continue to offer WRAP for the remainder of the school year.

In terms of operations, furniture, supplies, and PPE were ordered and want to be sure there is enough for everyone. Susan described the operations process taking place. The administrators are working together and with public safety to be sure that the traffic is managed safely at each school. Jeanne, Kathie and Susan, along with the COVID Learning and Safety Team, met in a Happy Hollow classroom in which they went through the process of planning for setting up the 20 desks. Susan thanked Ben Keefe, Pat Morris, and Joe Madden for their efforts in planning every classroom setup.

Middle School and High School Planning:

The middle school schedule was redone entirely from the schedule used during hybrid mode which maximized students' synchronous time. Arthur described the school scheduling goals and process. Progress is also being made at the high school for all-in and WRAP, and listening sessions are being held for students to gather input about the students' anticipation of coming back all-in. Susan described the operations process for the middle and high schools, including installation of tents and replacement of food service equipment.

Arthur and Jeanne attended the Board of Health meeting recently at which time safety protocols and the pooled testing program were discussed. The BOH asked questions regarding the implementation of the safety protocols, and the Board was supportive of bringing the K-12 students all-in during April.

(c) Special Education Update:

Richard commented that special education staff will begin scheduling after general education schedules are complete. His staff will also begin planning for summer programming.

(d) Transportation Update:

DESE has now removed the occupancy restrictions for transporting students on the school busses, which will open up approximately 120 seats on existing busses and on existing routes. A survey was sent to families inquiring about interest to enter into a bus lottery for available seats, carpooling, and participation in a "walking school bus", and responses are due this Friday. The goal is to reduce the car traffic at the schools. The bus lottery will be shared with families on Monday and routes will be posted by the end of next week. There will be assigned seating to support contact tracing, masks will be required, and windows will be open. In terms of the increased bus fee, a notice was sent to families via the all-school news and to each of the schools. The increased fee payment was extended through the end of April.

The high school parking fee will remain intact this year and then will increase in the fall to the amount pre-COVID. Susan described what the fees pay for on school grounds, and noted that the account currently is in a break-even capacity.

Arthur again explained by the middle and high school students are coming in on April 27 as opposed to April 5 when K-5 students will be all-in, adding that it is difficult to address the logistics and time-consuming scheduling and setups

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of the five buildings at the same time and the goal is to create a steady and beneficial transition.

- (e) Remote and Hybrid Learning Progress Committee (RHLPC) and COVID Learning and Safety Team Update (24:50):
RHLPC:

Arthur reported that the work of RHLPC is almost complete given the presentations by Parry. However, there is work to be done to address and support the social emotional needs of students and academic needs of the students in certain subgroups based on what was learned.

Kathie shared her experience today as a participant in a High School advisory group with sophomores, juniors, and seniors. The students were extremely articulate and honest about their mental health struggles and that of their peers and expressed their concerns and importance of making sure that the resources are available to address this issue and offered to be part of the budget process.

COVID Learning and Safety Team:

In addition to setting up a classroom at Happy Hollow, the team discussed ventilation, air exchanges, custodial needs going forward, the concern of bees while outside eating snacks and lunches, the testing program, and vaccinations.

- (f) Review of Travel Policy:

Arthur reviewed what is known about the travel policy, such as quarantining for a certain number of days is not required beyond Massachusetts' travel policy if the parties get a COVID test upon return to Massachusetts. Excused student absences will be noted according to School Committee policy, such as sickness or traveling, and K-8 students will not be allowed to participate in classroom remote learning. In addition, if any question(s) on the health attestation are answered "yes", students (and staff) must stay home, and there will not be any penalties for students. However, high school students can "zoom" into classes if they are home for COVID-related issues. Arthur explained the thought process and a discussion ensued in this regard.

Testing Update:

The testing program is progressing nicely, the issues have been worked out, and the system is working. Yesterday's test results produced 77 negative pools and testing will take place again on Friday. The State's testing program was extended to April 16, and the district is discussing the process beyond April 16. One positive case was identified last week. Arthur described the process when there is a positive test in a pool, adding that 65% of building staff and about 40% of students are participating.

- (g) Next Steps:

Next steps were addressed during the discussions.

3. Financial Matters:

- (a) Short-Term Space Warrant Article Update:

Upon approval by the School Committee, the Board of Selectmen will pull the warrant article for the schools' short-term space needs.

Upon a motion duly made by Kathie Steinberg, seconded by Ellen Grieco, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to withdraw the short-term space warrant article submitted for the 2021 Town Meeting. 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	

- (b) FY22 Operating Budget Update:

Jeanne reported that the Finance Committee voted the FY22 budget, including the school budget as submitted with the last adjustments. She added that the Finance Committee wants to look for efficiencies between the schools and town before the next budget cycle for the purposes of reducing the level services costs. Moving forward, there is a

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possibility to have a school budget primer/prep for the Finance Committee next summer regarding the school budget.

(c) Director of Finance and Operations Search Update:

The position is posted and Parry and Dr. Easy are working together to put a hiring committee together. Administrative Council will respond to a survey in terms of qualities necessary for the person hired from which a profile will be developed resulting in a list of questions. The first round of interviews will be after April vacation after which finalists will be selected toward the end of April. School Committee member Chris Ryan will also serve on the search committee.

4. **Policy Matters:**

(a) Review and Possible Vote to Approve Updates to

- KDD – News Media Relations/News Releases
- KE – Public Complaints
- KI – Visitors to the Schools
- LDA – Student Teaching and Internships

The four policies were slightly changed with one word or two by MASC, all of which are reflected in the policies for the School Committee's review. Kim reviewed these changes, most of which are okay with the Policy Subcommittee. A discussion followed regarding the changes, particularly Policy KE in terms of "anonymous complaints being investigated." The Policy Subcommittee will review Policy KE again.

Upon a motion duly made by Kathie Steinberg, seconded by Kim Reichelt, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to put Policies KE, KI, and LDA out for public comment. 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	

5. **Administrative Matters:**

(a) Review of Superintendent Transition Communication:

The School Committee reviewed the communication that will be sent to inform the public that as part of a leadership transition, Dr. Easy and Arthur will work together from late April to June 30. Dr. Easy's contact information may be included. A discussion followed.

(b) Discussion and Possible Vote to Approve Remote Day for Wayland Middle School on May 11, 2021:

Since the Middle School will be used for voting on May 11, Arthur informed the Committee about the challenges in the school particularly during COVID, although there were challenges pre-COVID. He suggested having remote instruction on that day. Arthur will consult with the Commissioner regarding instructional hours.

6. **Consent Agenda:**

(a) Approval of Minutes: March 3, 2021

Upon a motion duly made by Kim Reichelt, seconded by Kathie Steinberg, 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	

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

Kathie brought up the recent plowing of the high school turf field and the concern about the snow containing some of the crumb rubber and how this issue is related to the Order of Conditions. The School Committee is committed to seeing

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through the Order of Conditions. Jeanne reviewed the Athletic Director's process before having the turf field plowed that including calling the manufacturer for recommendations of certified plowers who use specialized pieces of equipment. There were concerns about the crumb rubber getting into the water shed.

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 7:19 p.m. for purposes of (a) discussing strategy with respect to collective bargaining with the Wayland Teachers Association (WTA), as permitted by M.G.L. c.30A, §21(a)(3) as discussion in open session may have a detrimental effect on the negotiating position of the School Committee; and (b) approval of the following executive session minutes, as permitted by M.G.L. c.30A, §22: February 24, 2021. 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	
Nate Buffum	X	
Kim Reichelt	X	
Kathie Steinberg	X	

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.

9. **Adjournment:**

Upon a motion duly made by Jeanne Downs, seconded by Kathie Steinberg, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to adjourn at 7:49 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. BASE Hybrid Tuition Rates
3. Policy KDD – News Media Relations/News Releases
4. Policy KE – Public Complaints
5. Policy KI – Visitors to the Schools
6. Policy LDA – Student Teaching and Internships
7. Minutes of March 3, 2021
8. Executive Session Motion