

SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
Regular Meeting – March 24, 2021

A Regular Meeting of the Wayland School Committee was held remotely on Wednesday, March 24, 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

*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 5:32 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. Comments and Written Statements from the Public:**

Alexia Obar, 18 Dean Road, asked the Committee to bring the high school freshmen and seniors in even earlier than April 27. She wanted to know how the date was chosen and why. Ms. Obar also noted her interest about WTA negotiations.

**2. COVID-19 Response:**

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

Arthur responded to the previous public comment and during the two-week gap from April 5 to April 27, there will be a staging process to better prepare the teachers and as recommended by the Commissioner. The Middle School schedule is a huge shift while the High School schedule will change slightly. School traffic is a concern during arrivals and dismissals and is currently being reviewed to streamline the traffic.

*Kindergarten:*

The return for kindergartners four days a week has been beneficial in terms of their social and emotional growth as reported by the principals and kindergarten teachers. Arthur described the students' social and emotional experiences during the day.

*K-5 All-In Update:*

Teachers, as master schedulers, are working on the classroom schedules and specials schedules and will be done by the end of this week. Richard described what his staff is doing pertaining to the K-5 all-in schedules, adding that the objective is to accomplish all of their goals by the end of the school year. Parry thanked Bernadette Vanaria, Beth Crozier, and Sara Sontag for their efforts as master schedulers.

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*Grades 6-12 All-In Update:*

The principals and planning teams are working on new schedules, including Wednesdays, and room setup. Arthur confirmed that the Wednesday schedule will be an early release day like pre-COVID. Arthur hopes to send a communication out by Friday of this week that will have a lot of information.

There was a lottery for elementary parents who were interested in joining an existing bus stop, and the needs of those families were met. This process was the result of the capacity threshold on busses being lifted by DESE. Arthur announced that there are more seats available and, if interested, families should contact Melissa Ricci. Two bus stops were added on the Happy Hollow route, and the routes are posted on the website.

Regarding school traffic flow, new signage was installed at Happy Hollow and lines were also painted at Claypit Hill and Happy Hollow. Arthur and the principals worked with Interim Police Chief Sean Gibbons and DPW Director Tom Holder in this regard. Jeanne suggested putting flashing signs notifying the community that school will be back in session on April 5.

There are about 20 open seats available on the middle school busses and it's possible that a lottery process will be put in place. However, the number of busses, routes, and stops will remain the same. There will not be nor has there been bus service to the high school this year because of the limit of 23 on busses and the vote by School Committee to only transport those who live more than two miles away from the schools for K-6 students due to the transportation mandate and financial constraints.

(c) Travel Policy:

Governor Baker shifted the travel order to a travel advisory on March 22. Arthur strongly recommended that Wayland families who travel out of state for longer than 24 hours should quarantine or get tested. The state's travel advisory indicates that if traveling out of state for less than 24 hours, families and children ten years or younger are exempt from quarantining. If fully vaccinated 14 or more days prior and there are no symptoms, adults are also exempt from the travel advisory in terms of testing, including children ten years or younger. Arthur suggested a Plan B working with the Health Department and Board of Health to insure families are following the district's strong recommendations and protocols. A discussion ensued in this regard.

The School Committee agreed to move forward and ask the Board of Health for its directive to mandate the travel policy for Wayland residents.

(d) Transportation Update:

The School Committee reviewed a communication in terms of content and the message going out to families regarding next year's transportation and the increased fee for 2021-2022. A discussion followed about distribution of the communication, including contact information.

(e) Special Education Update:

Richard gave an update earlier in the meeting.

(f) Remote and Hybrid Learning Progress Committee (RHLPC) and COVID Learning and Safety Team Update:

*RHLPC:*

Elementary math achievement spring data will be gathered very soon followed by an analysis by the committee.

*COVID Learning and Safety Team:*

No update.

(g) Surveillance Testing Update:

In lieu of Arthur's temporary absence, Susan reported that some will be participating in an upcoming DESE webinar about the opportunities for Wayland and other districts to remain with the State's vendor as well as the associated contracted costs.

Arthur added that due to one positive pool out of 80 pools last week, reflex testing is happening tonight. The district will continue the testing program after April vacation. Arthur described the process once a positive pool is identified, adding that the entire process is very time-consuming.

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- (h) Next Steps:  
Next steps were addressed during the discussions.

**3. Financial Matters:**

- (a) FY22 Operating Budget Update:  
Jeanne reported that the warrant articles will be finalized this week and go out to be printed.

Susan introduced the “P-Card” that could possibly replace the district’s credit card which was approved by the School Committee in 2016 to purchase technology services and supplies because vendors would not accept municipal purchase orders. Susan described the setup of the credit card which was put in Susan’s name and under her personal information in 2016. The P-Card is beneficial for the district and is a procurement card issued through NASBO that won’t require anyone’s personal information. Susan described the attributes of this card and recommends transitioning to the P-Card on July 1, 2021. Susan will inform Dr. Easy about this plan/transition and followed up by a contract review by town counsel.

The Finance Subcommittee recently reviewed an issue regarding the maintenance budget. Susan noted that the Town’s and School Committee’s policy includes encumbering funds through the process of approvals prior to incurring any obligations. This process is extremely important, especially this year, given the amount of unanticipated expenses to date, adding that it has been difficult to anticipate the needs through the end of the school year.

Recently, the School Department received about \$69,000 of invoices for services delivered to the five school buildings per the Facilities Department, all of which funds were not encumbered or there was an insufficient balance on the open purchase orders to pay the invoices. Susan voiced her concerns regarding the lack of adhering to school and town policies, how these unanticipated and unencumbered invoices will be paid, and the possibility of receiving more unanticipated invoices for services for which the district/town is obligated, adding that the school operating budget does not have the funds to pay the invoices. A discussion followed about the process that is typically followed but was not in this regard, all of which Susan explained. Arthur and Susan will report this issue to Louise Miller and Ben Keefe as recommended by the School Committee.

- (b) Director of Finance and Operations Search Update:  
Jeanne updated the School Committee about the makeup of the search committee for the next Director of Finance and Operations that will include among others a principal, a community member, Chris Ryan, Parry Graham, and Dr. Omar Easy. Jeanne recommended Barb Fletcher as the community member who has a financial background. The School Committee supported Jeanne’s recommendation. Five applications were received thus far for this position and the deadline is April 2.

**4. Policy Matters:**

- (a) Review and Possible Vote to Approve Updates to
- BDFA – School Councils

The Policy Subcommittee had discussions with the school principals to gather their feedback regarding Policy BDFA. Concerns/questions include the frequency of meetings, the timing of elections, such as fall vs. spring, the composition of the council itself, and the potential requirement for members to be Wayland residents. The Policy Subcommittee will revisit this policy.

**5. Administrative Matters:**

- (a) Discussion and Possible Vote to Approve Remote Day for Wayland Middle School on May 11, 2021:  
This agenda topic was passed over.

**6. Consent Agenda:**

- (a) Approval of Minutes: March 10, 2021  
(b) Approval and Designation of Technology Equipment as Surplus for Recycling:

Upon a motion duly made by Ellen Grieco, seconded by Chris Ryan, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to approve the consent agenda. A roll call vote was taken as follows:

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<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:**  
None.

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 7:20 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: March 10, 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 8:24 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. Policy BDFA – School Councils
3. Minutes of March 10, 2021
4. Executive Session Motion