

MINUTES – WAYLAND SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Special Meeting – August 12, 2020

A Special Meeting of the Wayland School Committee was held remotely on Wednesday, August 12, 2020, at 1:00 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:

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 1:06 p.m. The meeting was recorded by WayCAM and 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>Present</u>
Jeanne Downs, Chair	X
Ellen Grieco, Vice Chair	X
Kim Reichelt	X
Chris Ryan	X
Kathie Steinberg	X

Jeanne commented about events happening in Wayland during the summer. There are student led race forums organized by students and overseen by the Guidance Department held every two weeks. Implemented by Karyn Saxon and Becky Lepow, the literacy summer programs are in their second week and received praise from the participating families. Parry mentioned the Spanish Immersion program for some kids at the Middle School and Jay Chandler is providing some chemistry initiatives at the High School.

1. Comments and Written Statements from the Public:

Jeanne read a public comment from the Wayland Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC) Co-chairs Anne-Louise Klaus and Colleen Morneweck on behalf of SEPAC parents and guardians. Parents realize that remote learning is more than a challenge for many of the special education students, and they can have difficulty accessing the curriculum without in-person interactions, teaching, and support. This can have a long-term effect on the students' entire educational development academically and on a social emotional level. Because it is critical, SEPAC parents and guardians asked the Committee to make in-person services available to all special education students regardless of the level of need. While they have heard the educators' concerns and their confidence to deliver all services remotely, the parents and guardians acknowledge that there is a continuous gap developing between these students and their peers. It is their hope that School Committee and educators will work together in the best interest of their children.

Jeanne read a public comment submitted by Allyson Peller on behalf of a group of Wayland parents who feel that it is not safe to send their children back to school in October because many have a member of their immediate family with a high-risk health condition. In the all-remote alternative model, reading specialists and OT, PT or speech services will be necessary for some students who have an IEP or 504 plan. They asked the School Committee to allocate sufficient resources to provide a robust synchronous learning experience for their children who are in the all-remote alternative model to ensure equitable schooling for all Wayland children.

MINUTES – WAYLAND SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Special Meeting – August 12, 2020

Jeanne read a public comment from Maeghan and Corey Welford, White Road. The Welfords have two elementary school-aged foster children who are vulnerable and have experienced traumatic experiences that can produce stressors and challenges resulting in fundamental and non-productive learning challenges in remote settings. It is their understanding that the State has encouraged all districts to prioritize in-person learning for foster children, and that Wayland has no intent to provide in-school supports for these children. They urged the School Committee to reconsider this position and provide in-school time for a limited number of vulnerable foster kids giving them an equitable chance to develop and learn. They further asked that there is consideration for as much as in-person time for children with special needs.

Jeanne read a public comment from Shawn Fennelly, 9 Clarence Road, referred to a social media post in which a School Committee member, who advocates for an all-remote start to the school year, asked for assistance to move their college bound student to Boston. Mr. Fennelly asked the School Committee to share their children's plans for attending school in the fall as well as why they came to a decision with which they are comfortable, but yet are advocating for the Wayland schools to start remotely when most neighboring towns are starting in a hybrid model.

Jeanne read a public comment from Alexa Friedman-Cohen, 180 Oxbow Road, in which she urged the School Committee to carefully consider the consequences of requiring teachers to work from their school classrooms, as it implies a lack of confidence in the teachers to work as diligently from home as in the classroom. Their efforts in the spring to creatively engage students remotely were done under extraordinary limitations and should be applauded and rewarded, not diminished and dismissed. Ms. Friedman-Cohen added that our teachers are the foundation of Wayland's impressive educational system, and they should be given flexibility to decide for themselves whether to work from home or the school.

Kim Reichelt responded to Shawn Fennelly's public comment regarding about her children attending college in person.

Ellen Grieco also responded to Shawn Fennelly's public comment in the same manner as Kim.

Jeanne read a joint statement from her and Ellen to the staff and families of Wayland. To summarize, the Committee is extremely grateful for everything that the staff does in a tireless and creative way, particularly during these challenging times. The Committee is very appreciative of parents' input, thoughts and ideas to move forward when information changes daily. The decisions that the School Committee is making are complex and will affect everyone, especially the students who are forefront in the Committee members' minds. It is the School Committee's hope that the community can work together to support each other and the school administrators to move forward in a positive, compassionate and united way, as working in a positive, constructive way will make all the difference in achieving a robust, engaging and effective education environment for the students this year. The other School Committee members joined Jeanne and Ellen in this message.

2. Administrative/Procedural Matters:

- Update on Superintendent Search and Possible Vote to Approve Contract with Future Management Systems:

A remote meeting is scheduled with Lyle Kirtman on September 28 at 9:00 a.m. Jeanne will share the contract with the School Committee.

3. Consent Agenda:

- Approval of Minutes: July 15, 2020

Upon a motion duly made by Kathie Steinberg, seconded by Chris Ryan, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to approve the July 15, 2020 minutes. 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	

4. Matters not Reasonably Anticipated by the Chair:

Jeanne updated the School Committee about the ventilation work at the High School. The cost to this work is \$32,000 that will come from a grant. Since the outcome of the grant is unknown at this time, the funds will come from the remainder of the High School building account, which has a balance of \$49,000, for now until a reimbursement can be taken from the

MINUTES – WAYLAND SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Special Meeting – August 12, 2020

grant if approved.

Upon a motion duly made by Ellen Grieco, seconded by Kim Reichelt, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to authorize the use of the \$32,000 from the High School building account to begin the work on the high school ventilation system. 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. **COVID-19 Response:**

- Discussion of Reopening Plan for The Children’s Way and Financial Impact:
Arthur thanked Katy for her tireless efforts over the summer to work through financial and logistical challenges. Katy also thanked her staff for volunteering over the summer to plan for the fall, as well as the school and town administrators for their collaboration in navigating through TCW’s plans and health and safety protocols.

Katy updated the School Committee on The Children’s Way reopening plan on September 14 that includes constant monitoring of screening, cleaning, social distancing, handwashing, and mask wearing. In-person relationship building is key, thus, the focus is to support the children socially and emotionally, as well as developmentally, while balancing safety and play in an environment that is safe, responsive, and joyful. Katy noted that area preschools have had positive experiences with no illnesses. Daily communication with families will be enhanced given they cannot enter the Town Building.

Katy presented and described the schedule for a “Day in the Life of a TCW Preschooler.” The day will begin at 8:30 and end at 1:00, and includes inside and outside learning time, bathroom breaks, handwashing, mask breaks, lunch for some, and outside playtime. TCW staff will enforce social distancing outside as well. The Teaching and Learning models for TCW includes an all-in person model with planning for a remote model if COVID data mandates moving quickly into a remote setting. Katy described the logistics and capacity for students inside the building in small cohorts of 4-6 children with one teacher and a teaching assistant, as well as the outdoor classrooms and activities connecting to the indoor curriculum.

TCW Financial Update:

Katy updated the School Committee regarding the TCW structural deficit of about \$150,000. Some staff contracts were not renewed, expenses were cut back, and, as the Director, Katy cut her salary for this year by 20 percent. In addition, TCW decreased its enrollment by 14 spots across all classrooms due to the current situation of COVID-19, which is about \$160,000 in lost revenue. Katy reviewed the budget deficit and was able to make some adjustments, but is still with a deficit of about \$130,000. Further capacity logistics were identified, and it is possible to enroll seven more students according to guidelines and keeping 6 feet of distance inside the building, which would add another \$80,000 in revenue.

Susan confirmed that according to the architect, seven more students could be enrolled. There is a surplus in the WSCP enrichment account and it is possible to access these funds to support The Children’s Way. Susan explained this possible process according to school counsel. Going forward, Susan will present a comparative study of all of the town’s fee-based programs and what the fees cover, such as health care expenses, OPEB annual expenses, Medicare tax of 1.45% on salary, and a Middlesex County assessment which is 15% of TCW’s annual salaries. Susan noted that, if there is a change in TCW enrollment and expenditures, this needs to be monitored in an effort to avoid a deficit.

- Fall Reopening Updates, including Timeline:
The district will release the Comprehensive Plan tomorrow by noon. Arthur reported on the Wayland Remote Alternative Program (WRAP) that allows families to opt out of the Wayland Public Schools remote and in-person learning for one semester. Students will be in a separate remote program overseen by some existing Wayland staff and will require a fair amount of independence by children and parent oversight. This remote program will include math, science, English, social studies, and foreign language, including access to some performing arts classes. For special education students, the service delivery will be individualized, and Arthur encouraged parents

MINUTES – WAYLAND SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Special Meeting – August 12, 2020

to contact Richard Whitehead with their questions. If a family chooses WRAP, decisions are made on a case-by-case basis, as it will depend on the grade levels and the types of services required to be delivered; Richard explained. A survey will be sent out after the WRAP presentation that asks for a family commitment by Sunday evening. Thus far, of the families who chose to opt into WRAP, half are elementary and half are secondary students, which is about 10% of the student population.

Kim asked several questions about WRAP. The first, if the numbers were high enough, could we offer a Wayland regular program that was just an offline version of what is in the classroom and not based on an outside vendor and, if so, she recommended that the survey question is more specific. She asked about grades and transcripts, the possibility of students merging back in January to the Wayland curriculum, the possibility of families changing their minds in October, and the possibility of teaming up with another district to offer classes jointly.

Arthur responded that the program is still being developed for students, as well as finding the appropriate staff to assure the success of this alternative program. Arthur described the structure of this program based on information gathered from two family surveys. There will be a robust curriculum developed by a third party that teachers will oversee and check in with students. Students will be able to come back to the Wayland Public Schools in the second semester. Students will receive grades based on the work they do through WRAP, and it will be noted on the transcripts that they are students of the Wayland Public Schools, but course names will be different, and will affect the GPA. Arthur explained why families are being asked to make a semester commitment with the expectation that a different decision can be made for second semester. If a student merges back into Wayland High School after the first semester, math, English, social studies, and foreign language would be comparable classes, would be state and standard aligned curriculum, and at different level offerings.

Edgenuity is the learning platform being considered for Grades 6 to 12, and the Florida learning platform is for elementary students. Arthur elaborated on his research regarding Edgenuity, adding that Natick and Weston are going with Edgenuity.

Ellen noted that there are some areas in the Comprehensive Plan that will be updated with more detailed information, specifically about the remote portion of the hybrid model. Arthur described the remote structure starting on September 14 except for some special education students and The Children's Way. On October 19, all students will transition into the "AAXBB" hybrid model. School principals will present details of each model in School Committee meetings going forward. Susan confirmed that the district has rented 22 tents for use until the first snowfall.

Ventilation Update:

Arthur confirmed that the architects and engineers are working with Louise Miller and Ben Keefe. The firms prepared an evaluation, and a report will be ready on August 13, which will identify any necessary modifications and/or repairs in the buildings according to DESE occupancy guidelines. At this time, many rooms meet DESE guidelines and are ready for use by teachers. Those rooms that are undergoing work will be identified and an ongoing maintenance plan will be developed. From a facilities perspective, Parry commented that the summer program at the Middle School went very well.

Update regarding teachers in the classrooms during the remote staged learning model:

Arthur noted that with all the confidence in teachers' effectiveness working from home, there are advantages to being in the buildings, such as collaboration, a sense of community with colleagues, and better access to support by the principals. New teachers can also benefit from being in person with colleagues. Arthur proposed that teachers return on August 27 and after with a gradual increase of staff as time goes on. Their plan to return can be flexible in that they can choose how many days a week they would be in person until October 5, which the goal is to have all teachers and staff in the buildings to prepare for students' return on October 19. A discussion ensued regarding a possible testing program for teachers. Arthur confirmed that all safety protocols will be in place, and only rooms that align with DESE guidelines can be occupied.

The School Committee members expressed their views about Arthur's proposal in terms of the importance of having consistent experiences for the students at the different levels and the uncertainty of knowing which teachers are planning to return to the buildings by October 5 on a gradual basis. With the exception of Kim, the other School Committee members supported Arthur's proposal.

MINUTES – WAYLAND SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Special Meeting – August 12, 2020

MIAA Update:

A week ago, MIAA made with a statement regarding extracurricular activities and interscholastic athletics. Arthur read the statement, which says that MIAA currently has no current policy on sports participation based on school reopening plans. Kim noted that the Governor made an announcement regarding no more than 50 people at an outdoor gathering such as sporting events.

- Update on Various Working Groups, including Teaching and Learning and Operations:
Jeanne informed the Committee about the town working groups, such as a ventilation-working group, a potential testing group, a potential health and safety working group, and a potential group to develop public health metrics and/or criteria to guide the schools about reopening.

Kim announced that a mask policy is being developed for review and approval by the School Committee and gaiters, bandanas and scarves will not be allowed to be used as masks. The School Committee will review other policies related to the pandemic at its next meeting.

Special Education Services:

Given the difficulty in the spring during remote learning for the special education population, Richard noted that this school year is the most critical because the impact resulting from the school closures will not be known until students return in person. During the first five weeks of school in the remote model, there will be a few specialized in person classrooms across the district, including The Children’s Way. All other students will get the full service minutes remotely due to a full school day. Richard addressed the public comments from parents who are concerned about the majority of students who spend time in an organizational skills classroom in a remote setting for the next five weeks. In order to extend in person learning for more students, spaces must be safe and staff must be in the buildings. A discussion ensued about bringing all special education students into school now. Richard suggested starting with 20 to 25% of the special education student population and gradually moving as close to 100% at the start of the hybrid model. However, evaluations for all students will be in person. Testing, social distancing, and PPE were suggested for these teachers and students.

Upon a motion duly made by Ellen Grieco, seconded by Chris Ryan, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to clarify that special education services will be delivered at all levels in person beginning on September 14 with a schedule that the administration works out and with the appropriate safety measures fully met. 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	

- Discussion of Preliminary Report from Ventilation Review:
This was addressed in a previous discussion.
- Review of Upcoming Communications and Listening Sessions:
Jeanne noted the schedule for listening sessions: an opt-out session, a Kindergarten session and a SEPAC meeting.

Additional Information noted by Kim Reichelt:

In terms of the mask policy, Kim noted that masks with valves would not be appropriate. In addition, Governor Baker put out a new map with metrics, and she is hoping to learn more about the transmission of the virus as schools reopen. As suggested by Ellen, the BOH will be helpful in sorting through the metrics in an attempt to set reasonable boundaries. The BOH will be invited to a School Committee meeting. Kathie added that it is extremely important that everyone make a concerted effort to mitigate all the risks possible in order to reopen the schools.

- Next Steps:
This was addressed in a previous discussion.

MINUTES – WAYLAND SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Special Meeting – August 12, 2020

6. **Executive Session:**

Upon a motion duly made by Jeanne Downs, seconded by Kim Reichelt, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to enter Executive Session at 3:54 p.m. for the purpose of (a) discussing strategy with respect to collective bargaining with custodial union (MA Laborers' District Council/Local 1116), 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 Wayland Educational Secretaries Association (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; (c) 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 a discussion in open session may have a detrimental effect on the negotiating position of the School Committee; and (c) the School Committee will pass over approving the following executive session minutes, July 15, 2020, as there was not an Executive Session on that day.

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	

7. **Adjournment from Executive Session:**

Upon a motion duly made by Ellen Grieco, seconded by Kathie Steinberg, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to adjourn at 5:02 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