

MINUTES – WAYLAND SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Special Meeting – September 23, 2020

A Special Meeting of the Wayland School Committee was held remotely on Wednesday, September 23, 2020, 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:

Arthur Unobskey
Superintendent

Parry Graham
Assistant Superintendent

Richard Whitehead
Director of Student Services

Susan Bottan
Director of Finance & Operations

Also:

Heath Rollins, Athletic Director

Chair Jeanne Downs convened the open session at 5:01 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. Executive Session:

Upon a motion duly made by Jeanne Downs, seconded by Ellen Grieco, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to enter Executive Session at 5:03 p.m. for the purposes of (a) discussing strategy with respect to collective bargaining with the 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; and (b) approving the following executive session minutes, as permitted by M.G.L. c.30A, §22: August 12, 2020 .

The School Committee will be joined by Arthur Unobskey, Superintendent of Schools and Diane Marobella, recording secretary.

The School Committee will adjourn in Executive Session and reconvene in open session to discuss matters as listed on the 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	

Ellen left the meeting at 5:25 p.m.

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2. Comments and Written Statements from the Public:

Abby Haber, 74 Moore Road, called to express her concern about the kindergarten program and praised teachers Lauren Kelly and Emily Mullen. She asked the School Committee to discuss and explore all its options to keep students and teachers together and to not make decisions that will affect staffing. Children need consistency, there should be flexibility for families to switch programs from full day to traditional, and the School Committee should utilize the general operating budget to subsidize the program shortfall during this unprecedented school year.

Jeanne read a public comment from Lauren and Mike Grant, 50 York Road, in which they expressed their support and appreciation for the School Committee members' service and dedication to their family and all the families in Wayland as they navigate through countless and difficult decisions.

Martin Glynn, 56 Moore Road, noted that his kindergartner, third grader, and sixth grader are doing incredibly well during the remote period and expressed his appreciation for the teachers. Mr. Glynn asked the School Committee to maintain the current classroom and cohort assignments to maintain the teacher/student relationships and routines and to keep teachers employed on their current schedules. He also asked that a hybrid model is developed that considers opportunities for synchronous learning when possible vs. more asynchronous learning and provide kindergarten families to move between full day and traditional programs. Finally, he asked that kindergartners remain as remote learners until October 19 because of safety so that disruption is minimized.

Jeanne read a public comment from David Howe, 35 Peck Avenue, regarding questions around a well-defined set of triggers, responsibilities and communication as a path to initiate an emergency review of the COVID-19 metrics to assess the need to change quickly from the hybrid mode to remote instruction mode. It is Mr. Howe's opinion that this emergency review process cannot be vague, as there must be well-defined responsibilities, timing requirements, and a communication chain.

Jeanne read a public comment from Brienne Lemire, 19 Parkland Drive, in which she urged the School Committee to find a way to bring kindergarten students back to school full time in the buildings as soon as possible, as her child has not adjusted well to remote learning.

Jeanne read a public comment from Kara Rice, a kindergarten parent who expressed her concerns about the kindergarten program. It is not a poor reflection of the amazing teachers' abilities, but the reality is that this group of students cannot focus past 11:00 a.m. Ms. Rice is concerned about discussions regarding teacher cuts and reassignments, despite parents' feedback over the summer. She asked the School Committee to discuss further the alternate proposal developed by Kindergarten families for which over 100 families signed a document in support of this proposal. Finally, Ms. Rice says that it is important to figure out how to make remote learning work for the kindergarten students because an early start date may or may not happen for them.

Jeanne read a public comment from Kaelyn Phillips, 8 Wayside Road, in which she stated that kindergarten children have adjusted to their new remote structure and have built a rapport with their teachers, although families are struggling to manage many emotional, social and practical challenges they face daily. Ms. Phillips asked the School Committee to commit to allowing all assigned teachers, classes, and cohorts to stand, to keep kindergarten remote until all children go back in person, and to allow fluctuation between traditional and full-day kindergarten.

3. COVID-19 Response (taken out of order):

- Discussion of Kindergarten Model, including Commitment Form Results and Possible Vote to Approve Full-Day Kindergarten Revised Hybrid Opening Date:

The School Committee discussed a possible start date before October 19, possibly October 5, for the kindergarten students to re-enter the schools based on current data, metrics and safety protocols in place, as there are concerns about the success of remote learning for kindergartners and in person learning is more beneficial. It is clear that the district is not sacrificing health and safety in order to move forward with this proposal. Kim noted her concerns about this proposal, adding that she would like to hear from other districts in this regard before bringing in kindergartners in before October 19.

Upon a motion duly made by Kathie Steinberg, second by Chris Ryan, the School Committee voted (3-1) that if the health and safety measures allow, the Kindergarten hybrid model could start on October 5. 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	absent	
Kim Reichelt		X
Chris Ryan	X	
Kathie Steinberg	X	

Although the School Committee voted, Jeanne noted that because some logistics need to be worked out by October 5, the date is not guaranteed. Arthur will communicate with the kindergarten families when there is certainty.

Arthur presented full-day kindergarten options for 2020-2021. There was a FDK survey and based on 95% of the responses, 125 out of 202 families chose full day kindergarten, which is 48 students at Claypit Hill, 41 at Happy Hollow (including 1 section of WRAP), and 36 at Loker. Currently, there is a deficit of \$148,900 between revenue vs. expenses and that is assuming 11 fully staffed sections as budgeted. Arthur presented and explained program options, including the challenges, to cover the deficit. They include the following options: (1) decrease the number of sections and maximize the sections but could affect staffing; (2A) keep the full day structure as it is; (2B) create traditional classrooms and largely full day classrooms and redeploy teachers (and TAs) and maintain full-time FTEs. Arthur and Susan explained option 2B further regarding the challenges and the shortfall. A discussion ensued in terms of clarification of traditional and full-day sections and staffing, including Spanish Immersion, at the elementary schools.

Arthur proposed ways in which the district would cover the shortfall, such as reducing transportation costs, including a reduction of one METCO bus, and an anticipation of surplus in the degree-change budget line resulting in an estimated savings of \$197,000.

The School Committee members voiced their preference in terms of the options, as well as reasons for their choice. Jeanne prefers option 2B, Chris and Kim prefer 2A, Kathie is leaning towards 2B.

Ellen rejoined the meeting at 6:35 p.m.

The School Committee brought Ellen up to speed with the discussion. Kim suggested another option in terms of consolidating two small classes. Ellen may prefer option 2A. Arthur added that his preference is 2A, which offers stability for the students. Susan address the full-day kindergarten payment schedule. After much discussion about the program deficit, the Committee will take more time to contemplate their decision until September 30.

Upon a motion duly made by Kim Reichelt, seconded by Chris Ryan, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to take Option 1 off the table. 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. Superintendent Update:

- Goal Setting Dates for School Improvement Plans and District Improvement Plans:
 The Administrative Council is working on the district goals for this COVID year. Arthur proposed a presentation of the School Improvement Plans for November 4.
- Continued Planning for Implementation of Staged Hybrid:
 Arthur reported that The Children’s Way has been in session for over a week and it has been very successful and beneficial for the students, including the special education students.
- Special Education Update:
 Richard added that The Children’s Way and special education staff are going above and beyond during this time. Students are in the buildings for in-person services and some students are participating remotely from the classrooms as a way to observe these remote students in terms of assessing the need for effective support and resources.

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Arthur left the meeting at 7:27 p.m.

Ellen left the meeting at 7:28 p.m.

5. Financial Matters (taken out of order):

- Discuss and Possible Vote to Approve 2020-2021 Fees for Athletics and WHS Parking:
Heath Rollins submitted a proposal for an adaptive sports season for boys' and girls' soccer, cross country, field hockey, and golf. The season is restricted in terms of varsity competitions and is created in cohort models; Heath explained. A typical season has over 400 participants, but is now about 200. Expenses are less; thus, Heath proposed reducing the athletic fee from \$300 to \$200 for the fall season. Coaches' salaries will be paid for their involvement in a sport. The second fall season will include football and volleyball. The winter and spring sports athletic fees are yet to be determined.

Upon a motion duly made by Kathie Steinberg, seconded by Kim Reichelt, the School Committee voted unanimously (4-0) to approve the reduction in the fee for the fall season. 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	

WHS Parking:

Susan reviewed the parking budget for Wayland High School and noted that the reduction in parking fees is based on the cost per day that students pay to park. The fee was \$220 last year for 180 school days. Students are in the buildings 85 days during the hybrid mode, and she is proposing a yearly parking fee of \$100. However, if the district remained in the remote mode, students will receive a reimbursement. A discussion ensued about covering expenses for student parking, such as the student supervisor and/or maintenance costs. DPW costs and preparing the grounds for graduation were not incurred last year resulting in a surplus.

Upon a motion duly made by Kim Reichelt, seconded by Chris Ryan, the School Committee voted unanimously (4-0) to reduce the parking fee as presented. 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	

Ellen rejoined the meeting at 7:43 p.m.

6. Consent Agenda:

- Approval of Minutes: August 12, 2020, September 9, 2020, and September 11, 2020.

Upon a motion duly made by Kim Reichelt, seconded by Chris Ryan, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to approve the consent agenda excluding the September 9 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	

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7. **COVID-19 Response (continued):**

- Discussion of Super Wednesdays:
Parry recommended that one Super Wednesday, September 30, be eliminated from the calendar, as there are fewer instructional days, teachers had ten days up front to plan, and teachers need additional time to collaborate with each other regarding instruction and students. Super Wednesdays November 18, January 6 and February 10 would remain on the calendar.

Upon a motion duly made by Chris Ryan, seconded by Kim Reichelt, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to eliminate September 30 as a Super Wednesday per Parry's recommendation. 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	

- Special Education Update:
This update was given earlier in the meeting.
- Update on Elementary Class Size and Technology Support:
Mary Barber has been instrumental in organizing students in providing technology support and helping families through the Help ticket process.
- Review of Reopening/Closing Criteria:
Jeanne provided a document prepared by the Board of Health regarding reopening/closing criteria. Another meeting is scheduled to finalize the closing criteria. Kim noted her concern about the process, including guidelines, if one or more people test positive, particularly if there are cases in the same family. A discussion ensued about the process and the difference between town-wide cases and school-wide cases as well as the impact to the schools.
- Ongoing Review Groups: Curriculum Progress Committee and COVID Learning and Safety Committee:
The first Curriculum Progress Committee (renamed the Remote and Hybrid Learning Progress Committee) meeting will focus on the types of questions to ask. Ellen noted that the COVID Learning and Safety Committee is specific to the WTA and the schools. There was no update.
- Review of Upcoming Communications and Listening Sessions:
There will be a welcome back letter to parents regarding health, safety, and ZOOM meeting protocols for students. Curriculum nights are also scheduled.
- Updates: Ventilation, Testing, Health and Safety:
Ventilation:
Jeanne updated the School Committee regarding the ventilation and cleaning schedules memo from Louise Miller. The schedules are on target for the October 19 start of hybrid mode. In terms of a formal process to address questions, Ellen suggested that the COVID Learning and Safety Committee serve as an outlet for questions regarding ventilation. Ellen will work on this process.
Testing:
Kim noted that the low cost rapid test is not available until the start of next year, adding that the cost of testing is very expensive. All other research in this regard is still in process.
Health and Safety:
No update at this time.
- Next Steps:
This agenda item was covered in previous discussions.

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8. **Financial Matters (continued):**

- Discussion and Review of COVID Related Finances:
Susan reported that the district is receiving PPE supplies daily. DESE had questions about the COVID funding and they will instruct districts how to access the first phase of funding for items already purchased.

9. **Administrative and Procedural Matters:**

- Discussion and Possible Vote to Approve School Physician:
This agenda item was passed over.
- School Council Discussion:
Kim and Ellen will discuss the policy related to school councils.
- Discussion and Possible Vote to Approve Annual Report:
The School Committee reviewed the draft of the Annual Report prepared by Jeanne. The deadline to submit the report is September 30.
- School Committee Meeting Schedule:
The School Committee will meet weekly through October 21 and will possibly resume a bi-weekly schedule on November 4, which is a virtual meeting with Boston parents. Arthur will present the budget on December 14, and the budget calendar will be adjusted when the budget schedule is released. The meeting schedule is tentative and may be adjusted as needed. All meetings are on Wednesdays at 5:00 p.m.

Parry, Richard, and Susan left the meeting at 8:20 p.m.

10. **Superintendent Search:**

- Discussion of Focus Groups, Community Survey, Search Committee and Leadership Profile:
Advertisements are posted online in Top School (online version of Education Week) because of the cost to advertise in a periodical, including School Spring and Indeed.com. Six focus groups are scheduled on October 5, 6, and 7, with the exception of the students, the Town, and the community. The survey is out to all groups.

Jeanne will follow through with the focus groups and Ellen will coordinate the Search Committee. A discussion ensued about School Committee members serving on the Search Committee.

11. **Adjournment:**

Upon a motion duly made by Jeanne Downs, seconded by Ellen Grieco, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to adjourn at 8:31 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
3. FDK Tuition FY20-21
4. Revised FY2021 Athletics Budget

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5. Revised WHS Parking Budget
6. Ventilation and School Cleaning Update Spreadsheet
7. School Committee Meeting Schedule
8. Executive Session Motion