

SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Regular Meeting – April 27, 2022

A Regular Meeting of the Wayland School Committee was held on Wednesday, April 27, 2022, at 5:30 P.M. broadcast by WayCAM at Wayland High School.

Present:

Chris Ryan, Chair
Ellen Grieco, Vice Chair (arrived at 5:45 p.m.)
Jeanne Downs
Jessica Polizzotti
Kim Reichelt

Also present:

Dr. Omar Easy
Superintendent

Parry Graham
Assistant Superintendent

Ellen Whittemore
Director of Finance & Operations

Also:

Scott Parseghian, PE/Health/Wellness Department Head & Varsity Football Coach

1. Welcome & Call to Order:

Chair Chris Ryan convened the regular session at 5:35 p.m. and announced that the meeting was being recorded by WayCAM. Jeanne commented that she is impressed with the students' creative talent, as she has been perusing through artwork for the budget booklet. Kim noted that elementary students have won many state-wide artwork contests.

2. Public Comment:

Chris Ryan read a public comment from MaryAnn Wohlfarth, Woodland Road. In terms of the Superintendent's evaluation, she requested that all principals are anonymously interviewed, including parents with children in the schools. Ms. Wohlfarth noted that, according to the Boston Globe, Wayland High School ranks #30 in Massachusetts as reported in the U.S. News and World Report and she sees it as a decline in ranking. She asked about the payment status of the Director of Student Services who is out on administrative leave and the request for a new elementary school when enrollment is declining. Finally, Ms. Wohlfarth expressed her concern about a School Committee member posting on social media about a candidate running for School Committee.

Jess Polizzotti, 16 Indian Road, spoke as a resident of Wayland and for herself in response to comments by some regarding her posting on social media about a candidate running for School Committee. She researched candidates as a Wayland resident and voter and posted the information as such.

Kim Reichelt, Coolidge Road, addressed the comment about the high school ranking, as different rankers use different methodologies and none are perfect as they are also based on old data, adding that Boston Magazine's ranking had Wayland High School as #2. Kim commented that Jess Polizzotti reported factual information on social media that the public should know, and her actions were within her rights as an individual. Finally, Kim would like the School Committee to discuss anonymity as it relates to the Superintendent's evaluation.

Chris Ryan read a public comment from Meg Flatley, Rolling Lane, in which she expressed her gratitude, appreciation and support, including that of many others, for Dr. Easy and his hard work this year. She specifically referred to his WBUR interview and work around racism and social justice and his genuine passion for the kids.

Jeanne Downs, Concord Road, addressed the issue of the School Committee, as a public body, and its communications. When elected, new members attend a new member orientation with the Massachusetts Association of School Committees. The five members make decisions as a group and come to a consensus, all within the Open Meeting Law. The Chair will be the voice for the entire Committee when interacting with other Wayland groups and boards. Finally, when emails are received by all five members, only the Chair will respond.

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3. **Special Matter – School Budget Hearing:**

(a) Presentation of School Committee Recommended FY23 Budget:

Chris Ryan opened the FY23 Budget Hearing, recited the School Committee's mission and the district Mission Statement, as well as the School Committee's Budget Goal which is "to fully support the academic and social/emotional growth of our students while respecting the fiscal constraints facing Wayland residents and the needs of other Town departments."

The FY22 budget appropriation was \$45,223,290 and was a pivotal year that was impacted by COVID in terms of learning and formats, expenses, budgets/grants, missed learning and increased mental health issues. Chair Ryan reviewed the FY23 budget process that began with the Finance Committee's budget guidelines for a level funded, level services with some new initiatives budget. During the summer and fall of 2021, the Superintendent met with School Committee and district leadership to identify priority areas for district goals and areas of improvement. Over the next few months, the process continued and on December 15, 2021, the Superintendent presented his recommended budget to the School Committee. In January 2022, the budget was discussed by the School Committee and, in February, the Committee voted on the recommended budget of \$47,164,771, which included obligatory contractual and enrollment driven increases, such as increased staffing, transportation, special education, and athletics.

The program improvement needs in the recommended budget included increased .5 FTEs for assistant principals at Happy Hollow and Loker elementary schools, a .2 FTE increase for the psychologist/guidance positions at Happy Hollow and Loker elementary schools, and a 1.0 FTE additional math coach at the elementary level. These positions were funded in FY22 through grants and the budget.

The Finance Committee responded to the voted recommended budget by asking the School Committee to reduce the budget by \$875,000 in late January. However, the FinCom's request was reduced to \$150,000 due to additional state aid and other changes in projected expenses to which the School Committee voted in mid-February to reduce its recommended budget by \$158,321 for a total of \$47,164,771.

A historical and projected enrollment overview from 2011 to 2031 was presented for which there isn't a significant change. The enrollment is expected to increase in FY23 and again in FY24. Chris reviewed the budgeted and actual FTEs for FY22 and FY23. One benefit package could possibly be added in FY23 resulting in a net zero increase.

Also included in the presentation was the unmet needs status from FY20 to FY23. Many were deferred for FY23, such as a math curriculum review, systemic and structured phonics instruction, building based subs, Innovative Pathways professional development, Restorative Justice training, a technology upgrade for the high school and Happy Hollow, and a Director of Social and Emotional Learning. Also listed are the unmet needs that were deferred in FY22 and in FY21 and those that are no longer being considered or were already funded.

Finally, the total FY23 recommended capital budget of \$931,000 includes requests for district-wide security upgrades, district-wide fire alarm panel/smoke detector replacement, district-wide custodial equipment and storage, district-wide school facility study, middle school exterior walls and receiving dock repairs, district-wide flooring, high school communication controls/intercom system replacement, high school stage rigging replacement, and the resurfacing of the field house track.

A question was sent to Chris via email from Jonathan Smith in which he asked about the actual cost for the Director of Teaching, Learning, Assessment & EL and why the role is necessary. He would like to see a mental health professional hired instead. Ellen Whittemore responded to this question noting that the salaries for all non-union personnel are currently being negotiated. She explained the FY22 vs. the FY23 line item for the high school psychologist, adding that the FTE shifted from psychologist to guidance counselor because the staff member is a clinician. Dr. Easy explained the .3 EL FTE as well as the .7 FTE for the Director of Teaching, Learning, Assessment, and EL. The EL portion has been budgeted over the years. This position will streamline the curriculum across the district and the FTEs for the Central Office administration was actually reduced. Additional questions can be directed to Dr. Easy and Ellen Whittemore.

Chris Ryan closed the budget hearing at 6:20 p.m.

4. **Superintendent Update:**

(a) COVID-19 Update:

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Parry reported on the last three weeks of COVID positive cases resulting in about one case per day in each of the schools. During April 7-13 there were 34 cases, April 14-20 there were 21 cases, and April 21-27 there were 39 cases. Also provided was the breakdown of data for each school for the last three weeks. There were about 160 cases since going mask optional on March 7. However, Kim added that it is possible that all cases are not being reported/recorded, as about a third of Wayland students have tested positive. In her opinion, masks should be required for large events. The State will continue to provide bi-weekly at-home tests.

(b) Discussion and Possible Approval for the Summer Overnight Football Camp Caribou Trip:

Scott Parseghian came before the School Committee to request permission to return to Camp Caribou with the football team in August which has been a tradition in Wayland for 16 years, but was paused for two years due to COVID. The MIAA rules are followed and there will no restrictions. Scott described the activities other than football during the week of camp which provides a bonding experience for the team. The decision will be revisited if there is a resurgence of COVID cases.

Upon a motion duly made by Jeanne Downs, seconded by Jess Polizzotti, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to approve the overnight trip to Camp Caribou this summer.

5. Administrative Matters:

(a) School Choice Discussion, including Timing of Hearing:

Dr. Easy read the School Choice Ed Reform language of 1993:

...Effective September 1994, every city town, or regional school district is required to enroll non-resident students under the choice program, unless the school committee votes prior to June 1 not to participate. The section of the law states in part, "...this obligation to enroll non-resident students shall not apply to a district for a school year in which its school committee, prior to June 1, after a public hearing, adopts a resolution withdrawing from said obligation, for the school year beginning the following September. Any such resolution with said reasons shall be filed with the Department of Education, provided however, that said department shall have no Power to review any such decision by a school committee..."

The School Choice Hearing will be May 25, 2022.

(b) Continued Discussion of Superintendent Evaluation Process, including Feedback, Timing, and Additional Goals:

The School Committee discussed the evaluation process for the Superintendent, including means of gathering feedback, observations, and a timeline for the entire process. A possible survey was discussed in terms of it being a public document and who would be asked to participate in the survey, such as the Administrative Council. The survey is not considered a public document if not referred to in a meeting, as was also advised by school counsel. Each School Committee member provided input about whether the survey should be anonymous or not anonymous, including the rationale for each choice. It was agreed that the survey will be done and will not be anonymous.

In terms of interviews, principals and assistant principals, as well as a few staff from Special Education, The Children's Way, Central Office administrators (SLT), the school facilities manager, and the Interim Town Administrator will be interviewed. A summary of comments will be shared and will become a public document. The same language/questions will be used for all interviews. The subcommittee prepared and reviewed a list of interviewers and interviewees. The survey was revisited, and the School Committee agreed to eliminate the survey given that the interviews will be an extensive process.

(c) Review of Open Meeting Law Determinations:

This agenda item was passed over; however, Kim made a correction from her last report around revising agendas, as revisions should only be made if items are being eliminated.

6. Financial Matters:

(a) Preliminary Discussion of Q3 Results:

Ellen Whittemore reviewed the FY22 Q3 results which includes July 1, 2021 through March 1, 2022. The original appropriation for FY22 was \$45,223,390. To date, salaries and special education costs were expended and encumbered and a balance remains of \$16,103,731 to include salaries from April 1 to June 30, 2022. Ellen reported that 64.39% of the budget has been used to date. She continues to monitor special education expenses, and she is not anticipating a positive variant for the end of the year. Ellen added that the school budget continues to provide water for the elementary schools.

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(b) Loker Roof Update

All supplies have been ordered for the Loker roof project, and the summer schedule will be available soon from the contractor with the anticipation of starting construction the day after school ends. A discussion ensued in terms of access to the building in August to prepare for the start of school.

7. **Consent Agenda:**

(a) Accounts Payables Warrant:

- Wayland Public Schools Accounts Payables Warrant, dated April 27, 2022, in the amount of \$332,894.28.

(b) Approval of Minutes: March 30, 2022, April 6, 2022:

Ellen Grieco, seconded by Jess Polizzotti, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to approve the consent agenda.

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

Dr. Easy informed the School Committee that resident Josh Levine will volunteer to strip and pain the flag pole at Loker School.

Dr. Easy reported that gifts were received from Ingenuity, The Mathworks, as well as a cash sponsorship all received for the WHS Robotics program.

Upon a motion duly made by Jeanne Downs, seconded by Ellen Grieco, the School Committee voted (4-0) (Kim abstained) to approve that the Superintendent accept the three gifts to the district as described tonight.

8. **Executive Session:**

Upon a motion duly made by Chris Ryan, seconded by Jess Polizzotti, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to enter Executive Session at 7:48 p.m. for the 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 a discussion in open session may have a detrimental effect on the negotiating position of the School Committee; (b) discussing strategy related 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; and (c) discussing strategy related to negotiations with non-union personnel, as permitted by M.G.L. c.30A, §21(a)(2), as listed on the agenda as a discussion in open session may have a detrimental effect on the negotiating position of the School Committee; and (d) approving the following executive session minutes, as permitted by M.G.L. c.30A, §22: March 30, 2022. A roll call vote was taken as follows:

<u>Roll Call</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
Chris Ryan, Chair	X	
Ellen Grieco, Vice Chair	X	
Jeanne Downs	X	
Jess Polizzotti	X	
Kim Reichelt	X	

The School Committee will be joined by Dr. Omar Easy, 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.

9. **Adjournment:**

Upon a motion duly made by Ellen Grieco, seconded by Jeanne Downs, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to adjourn at 8:22 p.m. A roll call vote was taken as follows:

<u>Roll Call</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
Chris Ryan, Chair	X	
Ellen Grieco, Vice Chair	X	
Jeanne Downs	X	
Jess Polizzotti	X	
Kim Reichelt	X	

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Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Omar Easy, Clerk
Wayland School Committee

Observers:

Mary Ann Wohlfarth, 29 Woodland Road
Stan Wohlfarth, 29 Woodland Road
Keri Shouten, 188 Cochituate Road
Heather Gruber, 108 Sears Road

Corresponding Documentation:

1. Agenda
2. FY23 Budget Presentation
3. School Choice Ed Reform 1993
4. Camp Caribou Request
5. Rubric for Superintendent Evaluation
6. Timeline for Superintendent Evaluation
7. Evaluation Interview List
8. 2019 Leadership & Performance Assessment
9. Interview Language
10. Accounts Payables Warrant
11. Draft March 30, 2022 Minutes
12. Draft April 6, 2022 Minutes
13. Executive Session Motion