

MINUTES – WAYLAND SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
Regular Session/Budget Work Session – January 13, 2014

A Regular Session/Budget Work Session of the Wayland School Committee was held on Monday, January 13, 2014, at 6:30 P.M. in the School Committee Room of the Wayland Town Building.

Present:

Barb Fletcher, Chair  
Beth Butler, Vice Chair  
Malcolm Astley  
Ellen Grieco  
Donna Bouchard

Also:

Paul Stein  
Superintendent of Schools

Brad Crozier  
Assistant Superintendent

Marlene Dodyk  
Director of Student Services

Geoff MacDonald  
Business Administrator

Also:

Sarah Maietta, WHS Student Representative  
John Ritchie, Interim WHS Principal  
Allyson Mizoguchi, WHS Asst. Principal  
Betsy Gavron, WMS Principal  
Leisha Simon, Director of Technology & Accountability  
Bethann Monahan, K-12 Technology Dept. Head  
Cheryl Judd, Food Services Director  
John Senchyshyn, Town HR Director & Asst. Town Administrator

Barb Fletcher convened the Regular Session at 6:37 p.m. and announced that WayCAM is taping the meeting.

1. **Executive Session #1:**

Upon a motion duly made by Beth Butler, seconded by Ellen Grieco, the School Committee voted (5-0) to enter into Executive Session at 6:38 p.m. per M.G.L. 30A, §21(a)(1) to discuss charges and/or possible discipline against a public employee. The Committee will reconvene in Open Session to discuss regular matters. The Chair invited Attorney Mark Lanza, Ms. Mabel Reid-Wallace and Mr. Gary Wallace to attend the meeting. A roll call vote was taken as follows:

<u>Roll Call</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
Barb Fletcher, Chair	X	
Beth Butler, Vice Chair	X	
Malcolm Astley	X	
Ellen Grieco	X	
Donna Bouchard	X	

The School Committee reconvened in Open Session at 7:16 p.m.

2. **Comments from the Public:**

Kent George commented that, in his opinion, the METCO issue should be handed over to another authority. He also believes that the elementary Building Use Task Force should have considered the possibility of two schools, which in his opinion would reduce the overhead by a third. He asked the School Committee to put this recommendation forward and consider putting it on the town warrant.

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As a member of the Elementary Building Use Task Force, Pam Cerne read her statement. Although her children will be affected, she supports Dr. Stein's recommendation. She trusts Dr. Stein and his commitment to the process and his ability to put together a team at Happy Hollow. Pam commented on the enrollment in the elementary schools, as well as the space issues at Happy Hollow. Pam noted that most people in town agree that the time is now to fix the elementary schools, as they believe the basic needs of the elementary students have not been addressed. She also compared the MCAS scores of some Natick schools to Happy Hollow. Pam invited the School Committee to spend time at Happy Hollow if it would help with their decision.

Stephanie Leong also read a statement and stated that it was important to revisit how the elementary schools reached this point in time. She referred to the space issues and described the steps taken starting with TBArchitects leading to the formation of the Elementary Building Use Task Force. Also as a member of the Task Force, Stephanie has complete trust in Dr. Stein's recommendation. She highlighted some reasons to move forward with the K-5 model, especially for Happy Hollow, as there are certain classes in unusual spaces, there is a lack of programs, and there are safety issues inside and outside of the school. Stephanie believes that students are in an inequitable educational environment.

John Flaherty supported the comments of the last two speakers. He also supports spending money on the reconfiguration only.

A parent also supports the previous comments made, and he, too, trusts Dr. Stein's and the Task Force's work leading to the K-5 recommendation.

Tom Sciacca agreed that the elementary schools do need attention and also believes that Dr. Stein can be trusted. However, he raised the issue of the scope of the Task Force work that's already been done. He believes that it is possible to integrate the lower elementary grades in terms of the reconfiguration and noted that the administrators should have the freedom and direction to move forward with the decisions that need to be made.

3. **Educational Matters:**

(a) Hear Superintendent's Report:

Paul announced that the Chinese New Year celebration, sponsored by PTO, will be held on January 25<sup>th</sup> at Wayland High School. Connected to the 375<sup>th</sup> anniversary programs of Wayland, there will be some folk art and folk dances related to the Chinese language and culture.

Paul also reported that the STEM initiative was put into the FY15 budget, in which the connection is being made with [code.org](http://code.org). This is an organization that is working to increase computer programming and computer literacy in the country by adding more curriculum and requirements in that area. The High School is currently negotiating a sub-contract with them for the use of the curriculum. Courses from their curriculum will be taught in the classroom and, in turn, they will provide free professional development for the faculty over the summer. Mark Lanza will review the contract prior to Paul signing it.

(b) Hear Students Report:

There was no report given.

4. **Financial Matters:**

(a) Budget Work Session:

The School Committee asked John Ritchie, Allyson Mizoguchi, and Betsy Gavron questions regarding their FY15 budgets.

**High School:**

As it relates to course offerings and classes/sections, Barb asked what the impact of adding a .4 FTE to the Chinese program and a .4 FTE for the STEM initiative might be. Allyson commented that the impact will not be known until mid-March because of the time frame around course enrollment and the decisions that will have to be made. Every effort is being made to fill these positions internally and finding efficiencies in the current existing sections. John noted that there could be a reduction in the number of sections that would result in an increase in class size, while still staying within class guidelines. John explained the process that they would follow, but also noted that they are not anticipating dropping any other course offerings.

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Donna asked why there is an increase in stipends for club advisors and if enrollment in clubs is monitored in an effort to make decisions to keep or eliminate clubs. John commented that the clubs are looked at from year to year in terms of participation. Allyson noted that the level of involvement within a club and whether the club is in keeping with its mission, as well as remaining equitable, are all taken into consideration. For some clubs, such as Model UN and Climate Committee, there will be years that are funded and some years that are not funded, and, at year-end, a report is submitted to the Assistant Superintendent's office. Barb noted that information regarding the clubs is contained in the personnel section of the budget book. She also commented that many years ago there was a fee charged for participation in clubs, but it did not sustain itself.

Betsy Gavron added that at the middle school, the advantage of having many clubs and not charging a fee is that the students can try out several clubs at their own comfort level.

Questions were asked regarding stipends for high school department heads and the salaries of the librarian, the indoor student supervisor and other high school staff. A discussion ensued, especially related to the librarian's salary for which Allyson provided an explanation for the increase. Paul added that a librarian's position is very difficult to fill, as there aren't many training programs for librarians and is an issue in some school districts. John supported Paul's comments, adding that a librarian's job description is quite different today than what was expected many years ago.

Malcolm asked about the ratio of guidance counselors to students compared to professional standards. It was noted that the average caseload per WHS counselor is about 170 students, which is lower in comparison to other districts. In terms of the counselors' capacity to meet the academic and social and emotional needs of the students, Allyson commented that the high school works with other agencies, such as Human Relations Services (HRS) and the Town of Wayland's youth services. Marlene added that HRS consults once a month at the High School. Administrators are always looking for ways to improve these areas.

*Sarah left the meeting at 8:05 p.m.*

Having eliminated one of the two administrative assistants a few years, Allyson and John described the routines of the guidance office, the challenges that the office faces, and the ways in which the office meets its deadlines.

Barb asked what the impact will be for the students and the technology department, given that the Apple funded position for this year will be eliminated next year. John responded that the loss of this position will have a significant impact next year given in that there will be one person to whom the teachers can rely on for help. Paul added that there was an effort not to add positions in the FY15 budget. However, to address the needs for the 1:1 initiative, some funds in terms of hours have been reallocated.

The importance of having additional technology support was discussed in terms of what can be done in order to continue to fund this technology position. Paul repeated that the district is not in a place where positions can be added to the budget.

#### **Middle School:**

In response to how FTEs flow through the 6<sup>th</sup> grade cluster, Betsy gave a history of the cluster model up to the present, stating that after one year of going from three to two clusters, the clusters have been reconfigured to two "lopsided" clusters, whereby teachers were teaching 2 subjects each in both clusters. It was decided to have a smaller cluster with 4 sections of a subject and then another cluster of 6 sections, which includes a full-time teacher and a half-time teacher. Betsy commented that due to the increase of students in the clusters, it has been more difficult for the teachers to meet twice a week and to schedule meetings with families and some specialists regarding concerns for some students. However, the new budget would move some teachers into full time status for one subject only, while allowing the hiring of new teachers for the alternate subjects. Betsy added that the stipend for a house leader will come from the co-curricular stipends budget.

Given the increase in enrollment and the current 6<sup>th</sup> grade class moving into 7<sup>th</sup> grade, the decision to move from 2 clusters to 3 in the 7<sup>th</sup> grade is a hopeful consideration. Betsy explained further and commented that she is concerned with the increase in teachers' caseloads. A discussion ensued about providing more resources at the middle school level to return to the 3 cluster model, to alleviate the caseload increase for teachers, and to meet the needs of all students.

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Also addressed was the need for a math boost coach. Betsy replied that the math boost coach is half-time, primarily for 7<sup>th</sup> grade, which also includes half-time teaching for the same math teacher. Paul added that the .5 math coach was added in response to some of the MCAS scores at the middle school level.

#### **Technology:**

Leisha Simon updated the School Committee on the status of the 1:1 initiative at the Middle School. The lease is over at the end of this year, which is \$100,000. Twelve carts of computers will be returned with most coming from the Middle School and one from the High School. Leisha stated that there has been a lot of assessment by the Technology Committee with the middle school teachers and administration, and the teachers and principals in the elementary schools in terms of what type of device to bring into the schools. Taking last year's budget reductions, this year's software increases, and licensing and support increases, the money in the operating budget allocated for computers for teachers has been depleted. Thus, some of money allocated for the 1:1 will be shifted to cover the cost of replacement computers for teachers, including replacements at the elementary schools. Even with all of these variables, Leisha said that the 1:1 initiative at the Middle School can still be accomplished if it is decided to move in that direction. Chrome books are being considered, but the teachers and staff are working together in moving towards a decision, which must be made by June of this year. Eight carts were purchased, with 25 Mac Books on each, for the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> graders.

Bethann Monahan updated the status of the research being done to introduce the iPad and/or Chrome Books to the Middle School. Bethann commented that Chrome Books are more compatible with the current curriculum and are more fiscally prudent. There would be a 3-year lease, which would allow more time to explore and incorporate the middle school 1:1. The computer "take home" initiative would begin in 8<sup>th</sup> grade.

Betsy added that the curriculum leaders and teachers are communicating with each other in terms of when and how much time the students are using computers. Betsy described the tasks and assignments being accomplished via technology, keeping in mind that it's also important to balance available resources.

The costs associated with a 3-year lease using Chrome Books were discussed, keeping in line with similar costs of the high school 1:1 initiative. The Chrome Book costs about a third of the Mac Book. Also discussed was the importance of regular communication and coordination with parents in terms of which device is purchased for the 1:1 and if a purchasing/leasing effort can be combined between parents and the schools.

Leisha explained the computer equipment repairs budget, which has a transfer of funds from the high school into the district operating budget for the lease – a consolidation of funds. Leisha also responded to a question regarding the contracted services budget, which takes care of services and support contracts on the hardware. The 3-year support contract will come due in 2014. Increases in the budget are also due to escalating costs regarding the data center hardware and software applications, which is affecting the ability to replace computers.

Leisha also addressed the issue of staff technical support. She stated that some technology positions will be redefined, and she will utilize the skills of the library media specialist; however, professional development in this area is needed for the teachers. Paul added that in the area of instructional leadership, the principals are now in the position to assist and answer questions regarding technology.

#### **Food Services Program:**

The School Committee reviewed the history of food services to the present, including projections, for revenue raised and expenditures. Geoff praised Cheryl's efforts in raising revenue without increasing lunch prices since FY10 and through FY14. However, Geoff noted that they are hoping for a 20-25% increase in FY15. Cheryl commented that she is staying within the guidelines to encourage students to purchase lunch.

The cost of lunch for students at the elementary schools is \$2.75, and Middle School and High School students pay \$3.00. The cost of lunch for adults is \$4.00 district wide. Cheryl commented that some school districts charge more than Wayland. In determining the increase, Cheryl noted that it depends on the status of Loker School and a shared Nutri-Kids Program at Happy Hollow. She is recommending a 50-cent increase if Loker reopens as a K-5 school. She also stated that benefits and OPEB costs are accounted for, and as of December, the allocated amount of \$210,000 was almost raised.

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**Follow-up Items:**

The School Committee discussed the topics for its next meeting on January 16<sup>th</sup>. Given the impact on the budget in terms of the elementary reconfiguration, the Committee discussed ways in which to lower the recommended budget vs. the proposed cut list, keeping in mind the areas that would have the least impact to the students. Malcolm suggested working with specific proposals, as there is a limited amount of time left in the budget process prior to the School Committee vote. Also discussed was the timing of presenting the School Committee budget to the Finance Committee on January 21<sup>st</sup>. Barb updated her conversations with the FinCom liaisons in terms of the FinCom's process and noted that the School Committee must have a decision regarding the elementary reconfiguration by February break.

For the next meeting, the Committee members will review the list of suggested reductions and may bring specific proposals for consideration in lowering the budget. Also suggested for discussion are the larger funded areas in the budget, such as Special Education, ELL, the elementary reconfiguration, fees and salaries, as well as the topic of adding a support position to the business office.

In an effort to move forward with some recommendations of the Abrahams Group and Powers & Sullivan, Barb and John Senchyshyn had a prior discussion regarding consolidating town and school services in the finance and business offices. John confirmed that the finance office cannot add any additional work to their work schedules. A discussion ensued regarding workloads and the differences between town and school functions.

5. **Consent Agenda:**

(a) Approval of Payroll Warrant:

- Wayland Public Schools Payroll warrant, dated January 9, 2014, in the amount of \$1,180,534.75

Upon a motion duly made by Donna Bouchard, seconded by Malcolm Astley, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to approve the payroll warrant as included on the agenda.

6. **Comments from the Public:**

Tom Sciacca commented on School Committee views and perspectives vs. the administrators' views and perspectives, as the administrators are on the ground working within the schools every day and related this analogy to the budget and the spending over time. He referred to individual expenditures not being an issue in the budget, but, in his opinion, the issues lie with larger trends of spending in areas of personnel and technology. He commented that this may require fundamental changes in the system and efficiencies over time, such as raising the student to teacher ratio resulting in a whole reinvented educational process.

7. **Executive Session #2:**

Upon a motion duly made by Ellen Grieco, seconded by Malcolm Astley, the Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to enter Executive Session at 10:25 p.m., as permitted under M.G.L. Chapter 30A, §21(a)(2) to discuss negotiating strategy with respect to the Superintendent's contract, and, as permitted under M.G.L. Chapter 30A, §21(a)(3) to discuss strategy with respect to Collective Bargaining for all school unions (WTA, WESA, Custodial and Food Services), as such a discussion in open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the School Committee and Executive Session is necessary to protect the bargaining position of the School Committee. They will reconvene in Regular Session for adjournment purposes only. A roll call vote was taken as follows:

<u>Roll Call</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
Barb Fletcher, Chair	X	
Beth Butler, Vice Chair	X	
Malcolm Astley	X	
Ellen Grieco	X	
Donna Bouchard	X	

8. **Adjournment:**

Upon a motion duly made by Ellen Grieco, seconded by Donna Bouchard, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to adjourn the Regular Session at 10:55 p.m.

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Respectfully submitted,

Paul Stein, Clerk  
Wayland School Committee

Observers:

Stephanie Leong, Wayland  
Tom Sciacca, WVN  
Amy Simmons, Wayland  
Pam Cerne, Wayland  
Kent George, OPEB Committee  
Andrew Segel, Wayland  
Louis Jurist, Wayland

Corresponding Documentation:

1. FY15 Food Service Projections
2. Memo re: FY15 Lunch Price Increase
3. Payroll Warrant & Summary