

MINUTES – WAYLAND SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Regular Meeting – January 17, 2019

A Regular Meeting of the Wayland School Committee was held on Monday, January 17, 2019, at 7:00 P.M. in the School Committee Room of the Wayland Town Building.

Present were:

Jeanne Downs, Chair
Ellen Grieco, Vice Chair
Nate Buffum
Kim Reichelt
Kathie Steinberg

Also:

Arthur Unobskey
Superintendent

Richard Whitehead
Director of Student Services

Susan Bottan
Director of Finance & Operations

Also:

Patricia Keefe, WSCP Director

Chair Jeanne Downs convened the regular session at 7:01 p.m.; the meeting was recorded by WayCAM.

1. **Comments & Written Statements from the Public:**

Melissa Spilman, 102 Concord Road, voiced her strong opposition, and for other 4th Grade parents, to the decision to have 3 sections for 5th grade at Claypit Hill next year. She noted that this would increase the class size by 37%. She cited some class size statistics and, in her opinion, larger class sizes will cause social and emotional issues for the students, as the fifth graders will be preparing for a successful transition to the Middle School, not to mention adapting to the change in school start times. In her opinion, the needs of the students are not being taken into consideration.

Chris Cullen, 7 Coolidge Road, expressed his disapproval of moving the Spanish Immersion Program to Loker School next year and noted that his views are those of many parents whose children are in the program. When signing up their children to participate in the Spanish Immersion Program, it was their understanding that the program would remain at Claypit Hill, as it has become a safe and secure environment for the children. Personally, this move will affect the logistics of his family, and they may have to pull his daughter out of the program. In his opinion, he feels that this decision lacked transparency, as the parents don't understand the reasons for this decision.

Emily Rentz, 57 Three Ponds Road, expressed the same concerns as the previous speaker regarding the Spanish Immersion Program. She will have three children in three different schools next year, and this may not work out logistically for her family. Ms. Rentz has experienced a breach of trust given the lack of transparency and the way in which they were notified.

Kate Anderson, 65 Glezen Lane, has a daughter in the Spanish Immersion Program and a daughter entering 5th Grade next year. She believes that the decision to move the Spanish Immersion Program to Loker was not handled very well and she no longer has confidence in the administration and in the program going forward.

Cliff Lewis, Claypit Hill Road, commented on the OPEB discussions and decisions, adding that a compromise was reached by all parties involved at that time. In his opinion, he does not believe that the School Committee should reopen this issue.

Many Wayland residents, Boston parents and students, and METCO alumni attended the meeting to express their disappointment that Mabel Reid-Wallace has suddenly decided to leave the Wayland Public Schools at the end of June 2019. All spoke very highly of Ms. Reid-Wallace and were surprised by her decision, given that she has worked tirelessly for the Boston children and families for the past 19 years. Most expressed their concerns because they do not understand why or how this happened. They feel that Ms. Reid-Wallace is irreplaceable and some are concerned about the many changes that have happened to the METCO Program over the past year or so, given that the METCO

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administrative assistant's contract was not renewed at the end of June 2018. Wayland METCO is one of the strongest programs in the State and the credit goes to Ms. Reid-Wallace. She developed invaluable programs for the Boston students, so they could have some of the same opportunities as Wayland residents. Some parents spoke from personal experience with Ms. Reid-Wallace and added that she is available day or night for them and their children.

Arthur added that the school district is deeply committed to the children and families of Boston and Wayland.

2. **Special Matters:**

(a) Discussion regarding the METCO Program:

The School Committee members wanted to assure the audience that they are committed to the METCO Program, and the Committee is respecting Ms. Reid-Wallace's privacy at her request. The School Committee cannot discuss personnel issues in open session, nor are personnel decisions within the School Committee's realm of responsibilities. Each member expressed their appreciation for the many comments regarding the success of the METCO Program because of Ms. Reid-Wallace during the past 19 years. They each heard how highly Ms. Reid-Wallace is thought of and each member truly appreciates her commitment to building a successful community within the METCO Program.

Many asked how the School Committee or Arthur would handle this situation if Ms. Reid-Wallace rescinded her letter of resignation. Arthur understands Ms. Reid-Wallace's connection to the parents and how valuable she is to the program, but feels everyone should respect her privacy. The hiring process will move forward, and he is thankful that there is time to find a replacement.

(b) Continued Discussion of the FY2020 Recommended Budget, Budget Drivers, Assumptions, Fees and Funding Sources and Requests for Information:

The School Committee questioned the monitoring cost for the Order of Conditions for the High School athletic project. Jeanne commented that based on what is written in the Order of Conditions currently and determined by a licensed professional, the cost would be \$48,850 for the first year. There is also a cost for custodial services, bringing the total to about \$53,000 which would potentially come out of the operating budget midway through FY20 on a prorated basis. The School Committee briefly discussed potential next steps in this process.

Parents' concern regarding 5th Grade at Claypit Hill in September 2019 was discussed. The concern is that there could potentially be 3 sections of 25, 26, and 26 students in each classroom. Arthur commented that this issue requires further study and the approval of the budget before any decisions can be made. A discussion ensued in terms of the current 4th Grade at Claypit Hill, general class size, and what has been done in the past, particularly at Happy Hollow School. In response to correspondence received from parents, Jeanne noted that there are neighborhood elementary schools in Wayland and the class size in all grades will not be the same across the three schools. The School Committee would like to hear about the decision. Arthur confirmed that the decision will be made before February break.

The School Committee discussed potential budget implications in moving the Spanish Immersion Program from Claypit Hill to Loker School and if the move is necessary. Arthur commented that there have been unanticipated and continual increases at Claypit Hill for EL students and this requires additional space for mandated instruction. New staff will be hired for FY2020 to address the needs of the EL students. Arthur explained the reasons for moving to Loker School primarily because Loker has more space and will take this program into the future. Most, if not all, families were contacted by phone and a meeting is scheduled with them. Meetings were held with Loker and Claypit faculty as well.

Susan reported on an Errata decision to accommodate the increase in the number of students who signed up for the Middle School band. Supplies will be pre-purchased in June with end-of-year funds of \$10,700 to cover the errata item in FY20.

The following additional budget items were discussed, as well as those that may be anticipated, but may not be included in the budget.

- School start time items
- Project rental cost of fields
- Upkeep of the fields paid by the turf fund
- The use of Booster buses

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- Transportation for Spanish Immersion children from Claypit Hill to Loker School
- The increase of one classroom section per grade at Loker School and those at Claypit Hill, as well as a possibility of a shift in demographics

A discussion ensued in terms of the Finance Committee's position on the School Department's FY2020 Recommended Budget. Kathie commented on some items in the budget that are being considered unmet needs, but they are getting done by committed people in the district who are not getting paid for their services. One budgetary concern is that Full Day Kindergarten should be included in the budget during the next budget process.

Upon a motion duly made by Jeanne Downs, seconded by Ellen Grieco, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to approve the Superintendent's Recommended FY2020 Budget of \$41,919,750.

3. Financial Matters (taken out of order):

(a) Discussion and Possible Vote to Approve Longevity Adjustment for BASE Staff:

The School Committee reviewed longevity comparisons/proposals as prepared by Pat Keefe. Pat provided some background on established longevity for the BASE staff for those who work 20 or more hours per week. She explained the current longevity payout cycle after the first five years and then annually. Currently, BASE employees who work less than 20 hours per week make up for about 50% of the staff, and many of them have been employed for ten years or more and have not received longevity. In an effort to keep quality staff and high morale, Pat would like to offer longevity to these employees and described her formula and annual payment process that she has built into her budget beginning this year. The possibility of proposing a similar plan for TCW employees was discussed.

Upon a motion duly made by Ellen Grieco, seconded by Kim Reichelt, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to approve the longevity proposal for BASE.

4. Educational Matters:

(a) Hear Superintendent's Report:

- School Visits

Arthur described the personalized learning workshop he attended which was led by Leisha Simon. Several staff are working with coaches from the Highlander Institute. He cited examples of this collaboration. Arthur also attended Mr. O'Hara's public speaking class which is mostly made up of 9th Graders and noted how this skill could benefit the students in their everyday experiences.

Arthur praised the teachers as they work on their rotating schedules to accommodate students during the school day, given the upcoming start times in September.

Upcoming School Events:

January 25 – MLK Dinner

January 26 – Loker World's Fair

February 2 – Chinese Lunar New Year

(b) School Start Times Update:

Parry is working with staff and administrators on morning arrivals and drop-offs of students to avoid traffic bottlenecks at the schools.

The School Committee discussed its FAQ's that are posted online, specifically referencing question #32 regarding alternatives to final exams when the school times change. Alternative language was suggested by a staff member and agreed upon by the School Committee.

5. Financial Matters (continued):

(a) Discussion and Possible Vote to Approve the FY2020 Full Day Kindergarten Tuition Fee:

Full Day Kindergarten is projected to cost about \$520,000 for FY20. Susan proposed an adjustment to the FDK tuition fee to \$2,700 which would generate enough revenue to cover the entire cost of the program. Some costs will be reallocated, such as utilities, student transportation, and the principal's fee.

Upon a motion duly made by Ellen Grieco, seconded by Nate Buffum, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to approve the revised tuition fee for Full Day Kindergarten.

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- (b) Discussion and Possible Vote to Approve the FY2019 Full Day Kindergarten Tuition Fee Adjustment:
Susan Bottan's recommendation to adjust this year's tuition for FDK reimbursement will be discussed at a future meeting.

- (c) Discussion of Capital Budget and Finance Committee Vote:
As noted on the list of capital items, several items were approved and some were not approved, such as the High School project. The registered voters will approve/disapprove of the debt exclusion for the project at Town Meeting. Given that there are some residual funds available from the tile capital account, four or five classrooms will be tiled at Loker School. Ben Keefe is moving forward to submit a Statement of Interest with the MSBA for the replacement of the Loker roof, and will present it to the School Committee on January 28 or February 11 for the Committee's approval. Susan described the process and timeline. Susan recommended presenting the design request for the Loker roof at 2019 fall town meeting in the amount of \$312,000.

Susan updated the School Committee regarding bus parking. MASS DOT has agreed to work with the town and should be able to provide temporary parking for up to two years at a site on Boston Post Road in Sudbury before the property is possibly developed for its sale. The details are still being worked out.

- (d) Discussion and Possible Vote to Close Completed Capital Projects:
Susan recommended that the School Committee take a vote to close the following three projects:
- Claypit Hill phone project (\$211 balance)
 - Middle School phone replacement (\$0 balance)
 - Middle School air conditioning project (\$27,058 balance)

The total residual balance of \$27,269 will be turned back to the town.

Upon a motion duly made by Ellen Grieco, seconded by Kim Reichelt, the School Committee voted to close the capital projects as recommended by Susan Bottan and as noted on the list.

- (e) OPEB Status Update:
Susan updated the School Committee regarding a meeting with Arthur, Louise Miller, and Brian Keveney at which they discussed the feedback received from the Department of Revenue regarding the payback of OPEB Parity. Louise and Brian will follow up with town counsel and resident Cliff Lewis who served on the OPEB Committee a few years ago. Although Susan has a better understanding of how the dollars were originally allocated, she commented that the DOR's concerns are still not addressed. Susan recommended postponing the vote to allocate \$25,000 from The Children's Way and Food Service budgets until more clarity is received regarding the methodology used or lack thereof. A discussion ensued in this regard in terms of moving forward.

- (f) Discussion and Possible Vote to Approve FY2020 OPEB Annual Transfer to OPEB Trust:
Susan noted that the OPEB annual transfer to the OPEB Trust is \$39,738 based on \$812.00 per FTE which is slightly lower than 2019.

Upon a motion duly made by Ellen Grieco, seconded by Kathie Steinberg, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to approve the annual transfer of the amount stated by Susan to the OPEB Trust and that the School Committee approve postponement of the FY2020 OPEB Parity payments for The Children's Way and Food Service.

- (g) Discussion and Possible Vote to Approve Postponement of FY2020 OPEB Parity Payments for The Children's Way and Food Service:

Vote taken in prior agenda item.

- (h) High School Master Athletic Plan:
- Project Status
 - Budget Update
 - Warrant Article

The warrant article was submitted by Jeanne. Monitoring costs are still being worked out, as is the design for the bathrooms/bleachers.

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5. **Administrative/Procedural Matters:**

(a) Review and Discussion of any Outstanding Document and/or Minutes Request:

None.

(b) Review and Discussion of any Outstanding Open Meeting Law Matters:

None.

(c) Discussion of School Committee Communications and Information for The Buzz:

Kim is working on an article for the School Committee's next meeting.

6. **Consent Agenda:**

(a) Approval of Accounts Payables & Payroll Warrants:

- Wayland Public Schools Payroll Warrant, dated January 16, 2019, in the amount of \$1,452,485.81

(b) Approval of Minutes:

- Regular Session of January 7, 2019

Upon a motion duly made by Ellen Grieco, seconded by Kathie Steinberg, the School Committee voted unanimously

(5-0) to approve the Consent Agenda.

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

None.

9. **Adjournment:**

Upon a motion duly made by Ellen Grieco, seconded by Kathie Steinberg, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to adjourn at 9:53 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Arthur Unobskey, Clerk
Wayland School Committee

Observers:

See attached.

Corresponding Documentation:

1. Agenda & Backup Information
2. Written Statements during Public Comment
3. BASE Longevity Comparisons Proposal
4. Expense History and Budget Recommendation for FDK
5. Draft List of FY2020 Capital Budget Requests
6. Status of Special Revenue Accounts as of 1/4/19 (Capital Project Funds)
7. List of Maintenance & Operations Level Service by School
8. OPEB Parity Payback for WSCP
9. Warrant for High School Athletic Complex Renovation
10. Regular Session Minutes of January 7, 2019