

MINUTES – WAYLAND SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
Regular Meeting – September 23, 2019

A Regular Meeting of the Wayland School Committee was held on Monday, September 23, 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 (arrived at 7:32 p.m.)  
Nate Buffum  
Kim Reichelt

*Absent:*

Kathie Steinberg

*Also:*

Arthur Unobskey  
Superintendent

Parry Graham  
Assistant Superintendent

Richard Whitehead  
Director of Student Services

Susan Bottan  
Director of Finance & Operations

Chair Jeanne Downs convened the regular session at 7:00 p.m.; the meeting was recorded by WayCAM. Due to the large presence and the number of people who wanted to make a public comment, each public comment was limited to two minutes.

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

Bo Morley has 3 elementary-aged children at Claypit Hill who are not adjusting well to the time change. She finds it difficult to find the time to support her children before they go off to school. This change has been difficult for parents as well.

Chris Ryan also has 3 children at Happy Hollow and the start of the year has been challenging for many reasons. He wishes Ms. Cramer well, but because the newly hired principal has not been present, he commented that parents and teachers would like greater clarity in this regard. He posed several questions for which he would like answers at some point from the administration. The children are the priority, and he is thankful for Mr. Graham's presence and the teachers' commitment.

Sheetal Acharya commented that the school start time change does work for her family, but hopes the School Committee and administration can work toward making it work for all families. Ms. Acharya is the Happy Hollow PTO President and commented on the concerns parents have regarding the transition in leadership due to a lack of credibility and trust. She suggested that an hour a week is designated for parents to come in for a discussion and observe the day-to-day operations at Happy Hollow. Ms. Acharya wished Ms. Cramer well.

Jen Pearlman commented that the time change is going well for her family, although she had concerns in the beginning. She commented that everyone was excited to welcome the new principal, but there hasn't been the opportunity to do so. Parents are disappointed and have many concerns.

Jessica Greenfield has a second grader and the time change is working well for her child, despite the issues at Happy Hollow.

Jeff Sklar commented on the non-use of textbooks at the high school in some of the math classes. In his opinion, students should be encouraged to use textbooks. Mr. Sklar also commented on the negative experiences for students by not returning math tests and noted that some English classes are doing the same. He encouraged the School Committee to speak to parents about their experiences.

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Melissa Spelman has the same concerns as Chris Ryan and other Happy Hollow parents.

Jessica Polizzotti agreed with previous comments and added that her children struggle with the time change. She noted some of her families' experiences. Ms. Polizzotti praised the Happy Hollow teachers, but noted that everyone is suffering due to the new principal's absence.

Alexia Obar is not in favor of the change in start times and commented that band-aid solutions are in place to solve many challenges in the district. She commented that the high school is in full mode at 7:30 a.m. despite the later start. Ms. Obar expressed her concern that some high school staff are leaving early for sporting events. Ms. Obar also noted that administrators are doing jobs for which they were not hired.

Jillian Kohl noted that the bus situation in North Wayland/Concord line is not improving. There are long waits at the bus stops which can be unsafe, middle school students are missing homeroom, and all this is challenging and frustrating for working parents.

Lisa Goodman echoed Ms. Kohl's comments, adding that elementary and middle school children are exhausted, and the bus situation and childcare is stressful. Although she supported the time change, the bus situation is not helping to ensure that everything runs smoother. She is concerned about the number of students who are at Claypit Hill very early before school begins and creates more stress for everyone. In her opinion, this change does not support SEL, because, in her opinion, this is all setting children and parents up to fail.

Gina Dallin's has been very vocal with her concerns about bus transportation, and, in her opinion, it has not improved. Her daughter has not arrived in time for any homeroom time causing her stress. She has been driving her daughter to the middle school and she is receiving calls from high school teachers that her son is frequently arriving late. She described a pick-up situation on Friday, September 20. In her opinion, middle and high school kids are losing critical time to do homework or enjoy a snack, and parents are extremely stressed. Because parents drive their kids, this adds to the traffic and speeding has increased.

Kristen Heres spoke about elementary Bus #1 which picks up students on the Wayland/Lincoln line. The first week went well, but families had to adjust to a new pickup time twice, given traffic and kids arriving to school late. She began driving her daughter to school, but the traffic situation is very dangerous at Claypit Hill. The other issue for her is that she does not want her daughter going to the cafeteria before school starts. Ms. Heres praised Dr. Harvey's efforts to work out the challenges.

David Green, a teacher, commented on the lack of leadership at Happy Hollow, noting that teaching in chaotic situations can take an enormous toll on the educators. He and his wife appreciate and support the Happy Hollow teachers, as well as the BASE personnel during this difficult time.

Christine Sipriani echoes the comments from Ms. Heres regarding the buses. For her family, there is a 30-minute loss of sleep each morning due to an early bus pickup.

Kathryn Sabella moved to Wayland from a neighboring town. The first year was great, but this year has been rocky for many reasons. Her family opted not to sign up for bus transportation, so there was extra time at home in the morning. However, the traffic around Happy Hollow is also horrendous. Ms. Sabella suggested that the crossing guard come a few minutes earlier in the morning and stay a few minutes later in the afternoon. She noted that there are basic expectations when hiring someone new, and she feels that there has been a lack of communication from the beginning of school and throughout this ordeal. She sees chaos at the school, and this is difficult for teachers. Ms. Sabella wished Ms. Cramer well.

Inessa Shur agreed with the comments made by the Happy Hollow parents. Although she is grateful for Mr. Graham's presence, it has been difficult for her to get the critical support that her son needs. She attributes this to the principal's absence.

Laura Malnight recently resigned as the SEPAC chair. From what she has heard, Wayland is getting a very bad reputation, given a lot of issues. She cautioned about using band-aid solutions. Ms. Malnight also suggested that housing values can decrease easily because of gossip.

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Kim Reichelt praised parents for being respectful during public comment. She also announced that WHS Math Department Head, Barbara Coughlin, will attend the October 7 School Committee meeting to give an update regarding math tests. Both she and Jeanne called DESE about the policy of returning tests. Students can ask for their tests to be returned to them and the teachers will do so.

*Jeanne read two statements:*

Roman Shulman commented that the time change has been a challenge and a disruption for his family and his children at Happy Hollow and the Middle School and described the negative impact thus far. They have been driving his elementary child to school to regain much needed sleep in the morning due to the late schedule from after school activities. Mr. Schulman commented on the issues that his 8<sup>th</sup> grader is having given the time change. He also noted that this schedule has impacted his and his wife's ability to get to work on time. Mr. Shulman commented that Happy Hollow went from having the best principal to practically no principal, and he would like some understanding.

Jenny Silberman thanked the School Committee and Dr. Unobskey for implementing the change in start times. Her middle school and high school children are doing well with the change.

Stephanie Berman has a child at Happy Hollow and one unintended consequence that is noticed is parental wellbeing. She believes that everyone is resilient, but there is a lot going on right now.

2. **Educational Matters:**

(a) Superintendent's Report:

- School Visits
- School Start Times

*Happy Hollow Leadership:*

Arthur thanked everyone for their time and heartfelt comments. He noted that the administration is working very hard to ensure the very best for the children, both short term and long term. In terms of the Happy Hollow principal, personnel issues cannot be discussed due to privacy concerns.

*School Start Times:*

Arthur commented that there are transportation challenges, given the start time changes. He described the traffic situation, adding that changes were made in an effort to alleviate the issues as a result. Arthur described the shifts in morning pickup times and believes that middle and high school buses will arrive at schools on time due to the shift for elementary buses. He also ensured parents that students are well supervised and very active before school. Arthur acknowledged that there is more work to be done in this regard. Positive results are being noticed; however, in mid-October, data will be processed for both positive and negative impacts. Arthur praised the teachers during this adjustment period.

Susan noted that Zonar data is being used to look at all bus movement each day. She will gather the data and share it with the School Committee. Arthur commented that the district is working with the police regarding the traffic patterns at the schools and the routes were tested throughout the year as Arthur described. They will continue to work with the experts to reach solutions. Susan explained the registration process that began last March, including several late registrations. Bus routes were published on June 7 based on paid registrations and those who required transport. Susan provided detail regarding ridership.

A group will be formed to study the impact of the change in start times. Arthur will put a call out to the community for volunteers. He also encouraged parents to reach out to him regarding their concerns.

Jeanne confirmed that the only role the School Committee has regarding personnel is to hire the Superintendent and the Director of Finance and Operations. The School Committee is not privy to the personnel issue surrounding the Happy Hollow principal and is very aware and concerned about the safety and wellbeing of the children. Jeanne welcomed the public to contact any School Committee member for any reason. Nate also encouraged parents to reach out to the Committee, given the rumor mill and social media. Parry invited Happy Hollow parents to contact him with their concerns.

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*Professional Development:*

Arthur, Parry and Richard described the professional development work that took place on September 18 for staff of all grade levels.

*Triple EEE:*

The situation is status quo, but the threat is still high until the temperature reaches 28 degrees for four hours. All activities are ending at 6:00 p.m., and the athletic director has been flexible with the athletic schedules.

Gina Dallin followed with another public comment. She loves the teachers in Wayland, but their anxiety is rising due to the start times, traffic, and the inability to meet with students before or after school because of the teachers' schedules. She asked the administration to think about the teachers.

3. **Administrative/Procedural Matters (taken out of order):**

(a) Review and Possible Vote to Approve the 2020-2021 School Calendar:

Jeanne noted that the calendar moving forward two years is typically approved at the end of the school year. The WTA reviewed two drafts of the 2020-2021 calendar recently, and its preference is Draft B. However, the WTA proposed a one-year exception to the CBA contracted dates (August 31-June 30) for the teachers' work year, given that the teachers would start on August 27, 2020. The WTA also proposed closing schools on election days, given that the town votes at the Middle School, and there is a possible safety risk for the students. One option is to move the voting location to the Fieldhouse. Lastly, the WTA asked to adjust payroll dates to reflect an earlier starting date. Arthur explained the safety concern at the Middle School on election days. The administration will work with the town on the election location issue. Kori Rogers spoke to the WTA's preference.

Kim proposed changing Columbus Day to Indigenous People's Day. This proposal will be discussed at another meeting.

Upon a motion duly made by Kim Reichelt, seconded by Ellen Grieco, the School Committee voted unanimously (4-0) to accept Draft B of the 2020-2021 school calendar.

4. **Financial Matters:**

(a) Review and Possible Vote to Approve and Authorize the Chair to Sign the Fiscal Sponsor Agreement with Team Wayland:

Jeanne noted the change from the Boosters' Fiscal Sponsor Agreement to the Fiscal Sponsor Agreement with Team Wayland. For instance, Team Wayland will charge for their services similar to the Parent Teacher Organization. Susan will review the agreement and provide feedback at the next meeting.

(b) Discussion of Transportation, including the Upcoming Bus Contract:

To provide more bus transportation efficiency, Kim proposed offering one-way bus passes. Ellen proposed selling a book of bus passes. A discussion ensued about some possibilities moving forward, adding that the bus contract will be put out to bid in early November. Arthur suggested that there could be a cost to hire staff to oversee these ideas. Kim offered to facilitate a subcommittee or task force regarding transportation.

A discussion continued regarding ridership, the bus contract with First Student, and the lack of other potential bidders, which is typical across the state. Kim, Susan, and Arthur will meet with First Student to discuss possible options for bus transportation.

(c) High School Athletic Complex Project:

- Project Status

Completion of the turf field is scheduled by November 15, and the tennis courts by the end of December. The bathrooms and concessions will be completed sometime later.

5. **Administrative/Procedural Matters:**

(a) Review and Possible Vote to Approve Annual Town Report:

The School Committee delegated Jeanne and Ellen to work together to draft the Annual Town Report, which is due September 30.

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(b) Discussion of Upcoming Meeting Agenda Items:

The School Committee discussed topics that they would like to address and/or information they would like to receive prior to Barbara Coughlin's presentation at the October 7 meeting.

- What is the data on unit tests and mid-terms from last year (2018-19) to compare the impact of students' grades, if any, from last year? It's possible the data is not available yet.
- Is there an increase of communication/time that teachers are spending with students?
- Is there data/information on the number of move-ups and the drop-downs during the last 3 years? Kim described in more specificity the type of information she is requesting.
- Is there research or something else that contributed to the decision not to return math tests?

The purpose of Barbara Coughlin's presentation on October 7 is to communicate the roll out, what the goals are, and what they're doing to reach those goals. The School Committee discussed how to move forward with this process.

(c) Diversity Training Update:

Jeanne updated the School Committee regarding possible diversity training.

(d) Review and Discussion of any Outstanding Document and/or Minutes Requests:

None.

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

None.

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

Jeanne and Arthur will appear on The Buzz on September 25<sup>th</sup>. There will be a wide range of topics that include the high school field project and school start times.

6. **Policy Matters:**

(a) Review and Possible Vote to Approve the Following Policies:

- DIF – Anti-Fraud Policy
- GBEBD – Tobacco Use on School Property by Staff Members (incorrect lettering)
- IB – Academic Freedom
- IC/ICA – School Year/School Calendar
- IE – Organization of Instruction
- IGB – Support Services Programs
- IHA – Basic Instructional Program
- IHAM – Health Education
- IHAMA – Parental Notification Relative to Sex Education
- IHB – Special Instructional Programs and Accommodations
- IHBEA – English Language Learners
- IJ – Instructional Materials
- IK – Student Progress Reports to Parents/Guardians

(b) Update/Review of Policies to Put Out for Public Comment:

- BEDH – Public Comment at School Committee Meetings
- IJNB – Empowered Digital Use Policy
- IJND – Access to Digital Records
- IJNDD – Policy on Social Media
- IJOA – Field Trips
- ILD – Student Submission to Educational Surveys & Research
- IJOB – Community Resource Persons/Speakers
- IKF – Graduation Requirements
- IMG – Service Animals

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No comments were received for those policies put out for public comment. Policy IJNDC will be on the next agenda, Policy IHAM was previously passed but not posted, Policies GEBD and IKAB were posted incorrectly. Upon a motion duly made by Kim Reichelt, seconded by Ellen Grieco, the School Committee voted unanimously (4-0) to approve the policies as previously put out for comment.

The School Committee reviewed Policies BEDH and IJNDD (IJNDD postponed for approval due to a question regarding coach/player communication about student participation). Policy IJOA was postponed for approval, as well as Policy IKF. A discussion ensued regarding student surveys related to Policy ILD. Policy IMG was passed over.

Upon a motion duly made by Kim Reichelt, seconded by Ellen Grieco, the School Committee voted unanimously (4-0) to approve Policies BEDH and ILD be put out for public comment.

6. **Consent Agenda:**

(a) Approval of Accounts Payables & Payroll Warrants:

- Wayland Public Schools Accounts Payables Warrant, dated September 23, 2019, in the amount of \$259,299.82

(b) Wayland Public Schools Accounts Payables Student Activities Accounts for 2019-2020

(c) Approval of Minutes:

- September 9, 2019

Upon a motion duly made by Nate Buffum, seconded by Ellen Grieco, the School Committee voted unanimously (4-0) to approve the Consent Agenda.

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

Jeanne informed the School Committee that the Budget Guideline was posted online for the members' review.

8. **Executive Session:**

Upon a motion duly made by Jeanne Downs, seconded by Ellen Grieco, the School Committee voted unanimously (4-0) to enter Executive Session at 9:28 p.m. for the purposes of discussing strategy with respect and in preparation for negotiations with Non-Union Personnel as listed on the agenda, as permitted by M.G.L. c.30A, §21(a)(2), discussing strategy with respect to and in preparation for negotiations with Non-Union Personnel, the Superintendent, as permitted by M.G.L. c.30A, §21(a)(2); and approving the following Executive Session minutes, as permitted by M.G.L. c.30A, §22: September 9, 2019. 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          |           |
| Nate Buffum              | X          |           |
| Kim Reichelt             | X          |           |
| Kathie Steinberg         | absent     |           |

The School Committee will reconvene in open session for adjournment purposes only.

9. **Adjournment:**

Upon a motion duly made by Jeanne Downs, seconded by Ellen Grieco, the School Committee voted unanimously (4-0) to adjourn at 9:48 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Arthur Unobskey, Clerk  
Wayland School Committee

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**Observers:**

See attached sheet.

**Corresponding Documentation:**

1. Agenda & Backup Information
2. Public Comments in Emails
3. 2020-2021 School Calendar Drafts
4. Accounts Payable & Payroll Warrants
5. Student Activity Accounts 2019-2020
6. Policies as Listed in the Minutes
7. 2021 Budget Guideline
8. Regular Session Minutes of September 9, 2019
9. Executive Session Motion