

MINUTES – WAYLAND SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Special Session – December 29, 2014

A Special Session of the Wayland School Committee was held on Monday, December 29, 2014, at 7:00 P.M. in the School Committee Room of the Wayland Town Building.

Present were:

Ellen Grieco, Chair

Barb Fletcher, Vice Chair

Malcolm Astley

Donna Bouchard (arrived at 7:06 p.m.)

Absent:

Jeanne Downs

Also:

Paul Stein

Superintendent

Chair Ellen Grieco convened the Special Session at 7:01 p.m.

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

Tom Sciacca commented on the proposed budget and the dilemma that Wayland's senior residents face financially, which is contributing to the conflict in the town. He noted that the property taxes are the seniors' largest expense and are rising faster than the rate of inflation. Tom commented that incomes are lower than ever and elaborated on the reasons why senior residents can't keep up on a retirement income that includes Social Security and, in some cases, low interest private investments.

Linda Segal commented on the accessibility to the High School Building Committee's (HSBC) records and the town's effort to document records. She thanked the School Committee for providing the files on a hard drive, as well as hard copies and noted that it is evident to her that paper and electronic records have been retained. Linda referred to the comments made at the December 15th meeting in this regard and said that history is important, especially for major town projects. She asked the School Committee to provide a timeline for when she can expect the HSBC files to be restored on the website.

2. **Article for the Town Crier (Matter not Anticipated by the Chair):**

Ellen summarized the pending matter and described the chain of events leading up to this meeting. She noted that Mike Wyner, editor of the Town Crier, requested end-of-year comments regarding the schools; his deadline is this evening. Ellen sent Paul's response to the request to the Committee members and read her draft, which is intended as a supplement to Paul's comments. A discussion followed in terms of the content and language. Given his deadline, Ellen sent the final draft to Mike Wyner during the meeting, as the Committee agreed.

3. **Regular Matters:**

(a) Discussion regarding Budget Drivers, Assumptions, Fees and Funding Sources:

Ellen told the Committee that she asked for this discussion before the Committee begins its work on the budget. She would like to have an open discussion in terms of how the budget was developed and any overarching concerns about the assumptions within the budget.

Ellen began the discussion regarding the concept of fees in terms of placing the burden on families with school aged children rather than on senior residents. Ellen noted that many towns charge more than Wayland for bus transportation and, her opinion is that this is one area where fees can be raised in an attempt to save money in other areas.

A discussion ensued in terms of a philosophical view of this issue. Areas discussed were the responsibility of all residents to provide equal access to all town services, including education, and the idea that all children deserve the same quality education, fees or no fees. Barb noted that there is also a financial hardship for many families who have children in the schools, and can't afford some of the fees

MINUTES – WAYLAND SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Special Session – December 29, 2014

imposed, which raises the point of how much do fees increase before participation decreases. However, because fees are a reality in today's economic climate, it's important to compare Wayland to peer towns and to determine what percent of the budget is covered by fees.

Malcolm added that, in his opinion, much of the problem lies with the state and local level taxes. Malcolm commented on income in terms of the change in pensions and healthcare, which is relative to 70% of the school budget making up the entire town budget.

Donna commented that a level services budget should mean that the same services are offered but at less cost. Donna elaborated on the rationale for her recommendations in terms of benchmarking and analyses. Donna also questioned the Wayland School Community Programs as being a necessary component of the Wayland Public Schools and whether the program could be run separately from the schools. She also inquired about The Children's Way program in terms of other integration preschool program models for children with special needs and how the different models impact the school budget. A discussion ensued on the value of these programs related to educating students and the programs' impact on the school budget.

Susan described how Lexington approached the issue of before and after school programs, which included an RFP. It was agreed that researching Lexington's economic structure in this regard is a long-term objective and not feasible relative to the FY16 budget. An assessment of costs regarding building usage and time spent on the finances of these programs by town building and school personnel related to WSCP and The Children's Way was also discussed. Donna will draft a recommendation for specific questions and information to be included in an analysis related to these programs.

Ellen questioned if there are areas in the budget, aside from ELL, that should be compared to peer towns. Donna suggestions included: 1) combine the METCO Director and High School liaison positions in terms of salaries and direct charges to the METCO grant, 2) gain an understanding of the SPED grant covering TA positions, as well as the Circuit Breaker. A discussion followed, and the Committee agreed that it should research the cost for a SPED review.

Malcolm distributed a document ("Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs") to the Committee that offered valuable thoughts in terms of basic needs of individuals when developing a budget from the lower levels to the higher levels. He elaborated on the thought process contained within the article. Malcolm supports finding ways to hire a full-time health and wellness director, which was placed in the third tier of the budget.

Barb's suggestion included understanding the increases in the cost of regular education transportation and the cost of utilities, how the utility increases are being met, the impact for next year, and what the potential solar energy savings may be. Also discussed were fees for extra-curricular activities, the stipends associated with these activities, and the implementation of online registration for activities, sports, and transportation. Donna noted that she did not support hiring an assistant principal at Claypit Hill Elementary School and explained why.

Ellen asked the Committee members for an immediate list of items that will require groundwork before the Committee delves into its budget deliberations. The list includes:

- Projected enrollment by building and The Children's Way, including a peer town comparison;
- Relative to the base budget, what percentage of an increase is being requested going forward in terms of the elementary reconfiguration, health and wellness, technology, and the Chinese program;
- Q2 Financial Report;
- An understanding of personnel costs if the old salary schedule was used, as well as how the incremental changes and recent negotiations have impacted the budget;
- Obtain budgets for the revolving accounts and grants;

MINUTES – WAYLAND SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Special Session – December 29, 2014

- Determine if balances in the revolving funds can be applied to some capital expenditures or to offset expenses in the FY16 budget;
- Ask the WHS student representative to ask students for their suggestions or ideas regarding cost savings;
- An understanding of the budget in terms of technology purchases and/or leases;
- Custodial services information (will be available early February);
- Possible acquisition of more grants and options for hiring a grant writer (Malcolm noted that grants up to \$2,000 can be obtained through the Lauren Dunne Astley Memorial Fund).

A discussion ensued regarding the possibility of charging fees for after-school programs that are educational vs. extra-curricular.

The School Committee discussed the budget schedule timeline, budget discussions designated for each meeting, and the individual member's schedules. Ellen will send a revised schedule to Tom Greenaway.

4. **Comments from the Public:**

In terms of identifying the largest budget driver increases, Linda Segal commented on the history and work of an Ad Hoc Budget Advisory Committee in terms of cost savings suggestions dating back to the FY07 and Fy09 budgets. She noted the makeup of this Committee included the Chairs from the School Committee, Finance Committee, and Board of Selectmen. Linda advocated for a later Town Meeting schedule and encouraged the School Committee to continue their pursuit of cost savings, despite the timeline.

Molly Upton encouraged the School Committee to pursue the facts in determining the potential difference in dollars for bussing, as she would rather pay for education than transportation.

To keep the discussion open, Malcolm commented that it is his understanding that there is disagreement in terms of whether Wayland Cares was funded at last year's Town Meeting for one year or for multiple years.

Tom Sciacca commented on the level of impact on young families and senior citizens. In his opinion, it would be difficult to move into Wayland without a substantial income. As a way to research demographics in terms of income, Tom suggested that the School Committee approach the Parmenter Food Pantry, as many Wayland families utilize the food pantry.

Linda Segal added that, as a member of a board who issues permits for 40B's, many people, not just seniors, have left affordable units because they can't afford to stay in Wayland. She urged the Committee to do whatever it takes to gain the support of the citizens of Wayland for this budget.

5. **Executive Session:**

Upon a motion duly made by Ellen Grieco, seconded by Barb Fletcher, the School Committee voted unanimously (4-0) to enter Executive Session at 9:18 p.m. for the purposes of discussing strategy related to the Open Meeting Law Complaint filed on November 4, 2014 by Richard Lodge of Gatehouse Media related to prior Executive Session Minutes, as listed on the Meeting Notice, as permitted by M.G.L. c. 30A, §21(a)(1), and to review Executive Session minutes as listed on the meeting notice for possible declassification, as permitted by M.G.L. c. 30A, §22. A roll call vote was taken as follows:

<u>Roll Call</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
Ellen Grieco, Chair	X	
Barb Fletcher, Vice Chair	X	
Malcolm Astley	X	
Donna Bouchard	X	
Jeanne Downs (absent)		

The School Committee will be joined by Paul Stein, Superintendent and Diane Marobella, recording secretary. The School Committee will reconvene in Open Session to conduct regular matters as listed on the meeting notice.

MINUTES – WAYLAND SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Special Session – December 29, 2014

6. **Regular Matters (continued):**

- (a) Possible Vote to Send Response to Attorney General regarding Open Meeting Law Complaint filed by Richard Lodge of Gatehouse Media related to Prior Executive Session Minutes as listed on the Meeting Notice:

Donna Bouchard moved that the School Committee sends its response to the Attorney General regarding the Open Meeting Law Complaint filed by Richard Lodge related to prior executive session minutes as listed on the meeting notice and as discussed in Executive Session. There was no second.

Upon a motion duly made by Barb Fletcher, seconded by Malcolm Astley, the School Committee voted unanimously (4-0) to send a response to the Attorney General regarding the Open Meeting Law Complaint filed by Richard Lodge of Gatehouse Media on November 24, 2014 related to prior executive session minutes as discussed in Executive Session.

Upon a motion duly made by Donna Bouchard, seconded by Malcolm Astley, the School Committee voted (2-2) to amend the response to include the vote that will be taken next to declassify the related minutes. The motion did not carry.

- (b) Vote to Approve Executive Session Minutes for Possible Declassification as Listed on the Meeting Notice:
Upon a motion duly made by Ellen Grieco, seconded by Barb Fletcher, the School Committee voted (3-1) to approve the Executive Session minutes for possible declassification as listed on the meeting notice as discussed in Executive Session.

During discussion, Donna noted that she will oppose the declassification of the minutes, as information remains in the minutes that she believes can be declassified but was not.

7. **Adjournment:**

Upon a motion duly made by Barb Fletcher, seconded by Malcolm Astley, the School Committee voted unanimously (4-0) to adjourn the Regular Session at 9:51 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Paul Stein, Clerk
Wayland School Committee

Observers:

Tom Sciacca, WVN
Linda Segal
Molly Upton

Corresponding Documentation:

1. Agenda
2. Paul's Response to Mike Wyner
3. Ellen's Draft Supplemental Response to Mike Wyner
4. Article distributed by Malcolm Astley - ("Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs")
5. Executive Session Motion