

MINUTES – WAYLAND SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Budget Work Session/Regular Meeting – January 8, 2018

A Budget Work Session/Regular Meeting of the Wayland School Committee was held on Monday, January 8, 2018, at 7:00 P.M. in the School Committee Room of the Wayland Town Building.

Present were:

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

Absent:

Kim Reichelt

Also:

Arthur Unobskey
Superintendent

Brad Crozier
Assistant Superintendent

Susan Bottan
School Business Administrator

Marlene Dodyk
Director of Student Services

Also:

Ben Keefe, Public Buildings Director
Gretchen Lutz, Early Childhood Coordinator
Kristy Hartono, EL Coordinator/Dept. Head K-12

The Chair convened the regular session at 7:01 p.m.; the meeting is being recorded by WayCAM.

1. Comments & Written Statements from the Public:

Alexia Obar addressed a concern she has regarding the Science Department at Wayland High School. In her opinion, a teacher's performance is below par and she gave an account of her understanding and knowledge of the situation.

2. Special Matters:

(a) Budget Work Session – Review of Budgets for Special Education, Facilities, and Central Office:

Special Education:

Marlene thanked the School Committee and the School Department for all the support given to Student Services and Special Education, and praised the administrative and school staff for their hard work. Marlene highlighted key aspects of the special education budget, such as decreased out-of-district costs due to six in-district programs – two at the elementary level, two at the Middle School, and two at the High School, as well as an early childhood program at The Children's Way. Transportation costs have also decreased as a result of negotiating a three-year contract with Van Pool.

The challenges of the special education budget include decreased state and Federal reimbursement which is at 65% currently and down from 75%, and a decreased Circuit Breaker projected for this year is \$545,000 from \$724,000. Both will have a big impact on next year's budget. Marlene added that enrollment in the early childhood program of children with special needs is increasing. Budgeting is challenging because the district is not aware of incoming students until six months before they arrive. The EL population is also increasing at a dramatic level and does impact staffing needs. Marlene explained the process, including testing, to exit students from the EL program when the service may no longer be needed. She added that there is a screening process that is followed when considering students for the EL program.

In response to questions from the School Committee, Marlene noted that the Circuit Breaker is maintained and kept at a reserve of \$250,000 for unanticipated costs that might include, for instance, a piece of equipment. Given the excellent services in Wayland, many calls are received inquiring about the special education services. Since private

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schools, such as the Carroll School in Wayland, is private pay and those students must be reported to the state, there will be less money under proportionate share given to the public schools for internal services, and it will impact the FY20 school budget. Marlene elaborated on this process. Special education teachers and specialists have a positive impact on regular education. Marlene explained the impact, particularly on RTI, and noted that special education and regular education teachers work together on a regular basis. Brad added that during the past seven years of incoming Wayland students, the special education population ranged from 18.5% to 19.4%.

Marlene noted the six in-district programs that services 54 students:

- Elementary – program for autistic students and a program for students with social/emotional challenges
- Middle School – Language Alternative Program and Emotional Program for students with emotional issues
- High School – Emotional Program for students with emotional issues and a program for students who graduated up from a language alternative program or those who need a modified curriculum and/or adaptive living skills or vocational program

On behalf of the staff, Gretchen Lutz praised Marlene's leadership, both budgetary and educationally, that results in the excellent program for all students.

Facilities:

Ben Keefe took questions from the School Committee regarding the facilities budget. Despite the big turnover in the custodial staff this year, the department is not fully staffed according to industry standards. Since the arrival of the night custodial supervisor five weeks ago, the quality of the work in the buildings has improved greatly. Because of budget underfunding by approximately 50 to 85%, some tasks are being put off, such as routine inspections in and around the buildings. However, safety is not a concern. Arthur has reinstated the work order system at the building level, but the long range maintenance plan needs to be improved upon. Ben's biggest concern is running out of space at the schools, given the new construction in Wayland resulting in increased enrollment.

Ben addressed his concern about money that has been moved into the operating budget from the capital budget for projects such as tiling and the purchase of furniture. This creates the risk of not having the money available if needed, as the money is spent from year to year. Brad noted an example. Currently, the inventory of custodial equipment is sufficient. Ben commented on the long-term condition of the school buildings as being very good, particularly the exterior envelopes of the buildings. However, the Loker roof is the exception. Ben recommended that the elementary schools be climate controlled, as it will help to maintain the interior of the buildings, adding that the Middle School's HVAC system may need an upgrade by the year 2020.

Central Office:

Business Office:

Transportation increased by 2% for next year, including a half percent increase for transportation being shared with other districts.

Assistant Superintendent:

The State has cut back on the amount of money granted for Title I and Title 2A grants over the last two years. For FY17 and FY18, there was an approximate \$13,000 decrease, which is significant given the small amount of the grants. The prospect of lobbying the state was suggested, possibly with the help of organizations such as Massachusetts Association of School Committees, Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents, and The Education Collaborative.

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

There was no discussion.

3. **Financial Matters:**

(a) Discussion of Budget Calendar, Budget Presentations, Finance Committee Guideline and Communication with Finance Committee:

The School Committee discussed the format of the special budget presentations at the schools. The Council on Aging presentation will not be rescheduled from the canceled January 5th date due to inclement weather. However, alternative dates were suggested for the High School PIE presentation; a discussion followed. Kathie will follow up with Allyson Mizoguchi.

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Ellen left the meeting at 8:08 p.m.

4. Educational Matters:

(a) Hear Superintendent's Report:

- School Visits

Arthur thanked Pat Morris, Ben Keefe, Tom Holder, and Joe Doucette for their hard work during the recent snowstorm. There was a pipe issue at Loker today, but all was handled and resolved.

Arthur reported on his school visits and the work that Admin Council is doing in terms of Arthur's research in developing a summary related to his district goals. Survey data from parents, students, and teachers was reviewed in preparation of this summary, which will be presented to the School Committee in February. This summary will also help to framework the discussions going forward to 2021. The schools will embark upon building-based initiatives as well. Goals and action steps will be established by the fall of 2018. During Arthur's monthly school visits, he and the principals are working together to develop the principals' evaluation skills. He described those visits and classroom observations.

A discussion ensued regarding distribution of Arthur's article about civic engagement.

5. Administrative/Procedural Matters:

(a) Discussion of Open Meeting Law Response Process, including Possible Review of Spreadsheet and Discussion of Complaints:

There was no discussion on this topic.

(b) Review and Discussion of any Outstanding Document and/or Minute Requests:

Jeanne followed up with a resident about a potential public records request. He confirmed that he did not make a public records request.

(c) Discussion regarding School Committee Schedule, including Presentation on New Programs Funded in FY17 Budget:

The Writing Center presentation will be on January 10th and the Foreign Language Immersion Program will be on January 11th. Special Revenue Funds will be discussed on January 10th as well.

(d) Review of Public Communications from the School Committee:

The School Committee referred to Kim's article "Sleep Matters." A discussion ensued in terms of how the School Committee should disseminate specific information and whether the School Committee should be taking a position on school start times. Other school/town initiatives were reviewed and the approach by which the School Committee followed in terms of a position and/or recommendation.

6. Matters not Reasonably Anticipated by the Chair:

None.

7. Adjournment:

Upon a motion duly made by Kathie Steinberg, seconded by Nate Buffum, the School Committee voted unanimously (3-0) to adjourn at 8:22 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Arthur Unobskey, Clerk
Wayland School Committee

Observers:

Alexia Obar, Wayland

Corresponding Documentation:

1. Agenda
2. Questions received as 12/29/17 regarding the Superintendent's Recommended FY19 Budget