

MINUTES – WAYLAND SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Special Meeting – March 24, 2020

A special remote meeting of the Wayland School Committee was held Tuesday, March 24, 2020 at 10:00 a.m.

Present and participating remotely were:

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

Also participating remotely:

Arthur Unobskey, Superintendent
Parry Graham, Assistant Superintendent
Richard Whitehead, Director of Special Services
Susan Bottan, Director of Finance & Operations

Louise Miller, Town Administrator
Cherry Karlson, Board of Selectmen Chair

Jeanne called the meeting to order at 10:04 a.m. noting that the School Committee was participating remotely according to the revised Open Meeting Law procedures during the current state of emergency situation of the COVID-19 virus. The meeting was recorded by WayCAM.

Jeanne thanked Mike McCann and the WayCAM staff for their assistance in broadcasting the meeting. She also thanked all the administrators and school staff for providing online enrichment learning for the students.

1. Discuss COVID-19 Response:

- School Closure and Remote Learning:

Arthur updated the School Committee regarding the meaningful enrichment experiences that staff has provided for the students since March 19th according to the guidelines of DESE. Positive comments have been received from parents regarding the types of learning experiences that the K-12 teachers are implementing. Arthur thanked Parry, Richard and Susan for their collaboration in this process. This enrichment learning will continue until April 3rd with the anticipation that DESE will provide more guidance if the closure extends beyond April 3rd. In the meantime, the district is planning what could be considered a gradual “shift” in virtual distance learning. An amended Memorandum of Agreement will also be put in place if the closure extends beyond April 3rd.

Richard described his meetings with Massachusetts Special Education directors and the Associate Commissioner of Special Education Russell Johnson. Mr. Johnson recently issued an FAQ for directors, but at the next statewide virtual conference call, his goal is not to reissue the FAQ, but rather give some guidance in terms of what may or may not be available. Mr. Johnson did provide guidance for therapists and SPED teachers in terms of what they can provide to students. Staff is already engaged with students and has been doing much of what he has suggested in providing enrichment. This could change depending on the guidance received about forward learning, but he wants to be sure that parents are clear on this service delivery. The staff will follow the spirit of the IEP as best as they can. Richard added that there are guidelines in IDEA for the entire country and, within IDEA, states can create their own guidelines and timelines.

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Arthur commented that the district has approached enrichment and built upon it as a customized type of learning based upon the strengths of the teachers and administrators and taking into consideration the planning process for teachers as they work from home and tackle their own personal issues. Wayland's process and tone is similar to districts such as Natick, Concord, and Wellesley. Weston has a moderate progress paradigm model.

Nate shared his children's learning experiences, adding that he supplements the learning. Ellen agreed as the mother of a high school student, adding that there have been no new assignments, but progress is being made on prior assignments. Social distancing remains a concern in Wayland, particularly for high school students. Allyson has addressed this concern and Arthur will do so going forward in his communications. Kim suggested that the School Committee submit a resolution to Governor Baker in terms of "stay-at-home" procedures with a stronger message in this regard.

Louise Miller and Cherry Karlson joined the meeting remotely at 10:25 a.m.

2. Discuss COVID-19 Response (continued):

Louise and Cherry stressed the need for single messaging from the Town regarding health information and building closures and that the information continues to be reviewed by the Director of the Board of Health. They recommended that principals refer to the Health Director before sending out messages, and when doing so, they should include the last two paragraphs included in the Town's communications, given that there has been some new guidance. Some School Committee members would like to get more real time information and updates on an immediate basis. Louise reminded the School Committee about the protocol in place to post, set up, and provide public access for meetings moving forward during this shutdown, as well as the weekly standing meetings for some Town boards. Emergency meetings can also be called if needed.

Louise updated the School Committee regarding the town wide full-time essential services, such as police, fire, health, Treasury, and Town Clerk. Those essential employees physically reporting to work are in Facilities, Finance, IT, and the Town Administrator's office. All other town employees are working remotely. All town buildings are closed to the public with the exception of the lobby of the town building. The five schools and library have been deep cleaned, fogged and locked down until further notice. Town department managers received their year-to-date budgets, and salaries are on a base salary only moving forward. All budgets are being reviewed and will pay only those expenses that are considered essential. Legislation is currently pending regarding budgets and what will happen if there are overruns or underruns in the budget this year.

The election legislation has been passed and the town meeting legislation remains pending. Louise further described the steps that the town is taking in this regard. Louise recommended that the operating and capital budgets remain the same for now. She explained the process moving forward for the next few weeks and why.

Louise Miller and Cherry Karlson left the meeting at 10:43 a.m.

The School Committee discussed a day and time to have weekly meetings relative to updates. The next meeting will be Friday, March 27, at 1:00 p.m.

Ellen asked for information regarding the proposal for the next shift in online learning.

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3. Comments & Written Statements from the Public:

Jeanne announced that the number to call for public comment is 508-358-6812.

An email was sent to Jeanne from Corey Spaulding as a matter of public comment in an effort to prevent retaliation to those who report fraud in school districts. Ms. Spaulding wrote that her child was targeted by the Natick and Framingham school officials after Ms. Spaulding reported ongoing fraud within those school districts. However, the matter was not investigated and she does not understand why this targeting occurred. Ms. Spaulding expressed her ongoing concern in the Wayland Public Schools regarding the processing of grant money provided by school support organizations per M.G.L. c.71, s 37A, as well as her concern regarding Policy DIF. She fully noted those concerns, as well as the responsibility of those who should investigate should fraud occur. In addition, she commented on the previous existing Rail Trail Committee in 2010 and its tax exempt status for which Kim Reichelt was a member. Ms. Spaulding asked Kim to provide an accounting of the funds contributed by the public as a matter of transparency and accountability. Kim responded in terms of her time spent on the Rail Trail Committee and noted that she was not a School Committee member then.

There were no other public comments.

It was suggested that the Committee encourage the public to email or text School Committee members and note if they want their written statement read during public comment. Jeanne will check with Louise about the appropriate process related to the open meeting law.

4. Consent Agenda

- Approval of Minutes:
 - Regular Session of March 2, 2020
 - Regular Session of March 11, 2020
 - Regular Session of March 16, 2020
 - Regular Session of March 17, 2020

A verbiage change was recommended for the March 17, 2020 minutes. For the March 11, 2020 minutes, a discussion ensued about the School Committee's recommendation and DESE's communication about a potential school closure. The March 11, 2020 regular session minutes were tabled.

Upon a motion duly made by Kathie Steinberg, seconded by Kim Reichelt, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to approve the minutes with the exception of the March 11, 2020 minutes. 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	X	

5. Matters not Reasonably Anticipated by the Chair:

Arthur asked about Policy JH that refers to excused absences and the impact on students in terms of penalty if an exam is not taken. Allyson Mizoguchi has not had an opportunity to discuss this policy with

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the staff and, given the school closure, it is irrelevant at this time. Kim commented that the press release was sent out to appropriate media and the policy for which the School Committee agreed has been posted on the website for thirty days to invite public comment. The existing policy will remain in place unless there is an urgency in this regard. The School Committee will discuss this policy again when the thirty days has expired.

The open session ended at 11:15 a.m. Arthur, Parry, Richard, Susan and Diane left the open session.

6. Executive Session:

Upon a motion duly made by Jeanne Downs, seconded by Kim Reichelt, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to enter Executive Session at 11:15 a.m. to discuss strategy with respect to and in preparation for negotiations with non-union personnel, the Superintendent, pursuant to M.G.L. c.30A, §21(a)(2). 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	X	

The School Committee will reconvene in open session to complete the regular agenda.

7. Possible Vote to Approve the Superintendent’s Contract:

Upon a motion duly made by Jeanne Downs, seconded by Kathie Steinberg, the School Committee voted (3-0-2) to approve the Superintendent’s contract as discussed in Executive Session. A roll call vote was taken as follows:

<u>Roll Call</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Abstain</u>
Jeanne Downs, Chair	X		
Ellen Grieco, Vice Chair			X
Nate Buffum	X		
Kim Reichelt			X
Kathie Steinberg	X		

8. Adjournment:

Upon a motion duly made by Jeanne Downs, seconded by Nate Buffum, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to adjourn at 12:28 p.m. 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	X	

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Respectfully submitted

Arthur Unobskey, Clerk
Wayland School Committee

Corresponding Documentation:

1. Agenda
2. Emailed Public Comment
3. Regular Session Minutes of March 2, 2020, March 11, 2020, March 16, 2020 and March 17, 2020
4. Executive Session Motion