

MINUTES – WAYLAND SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Special Meeting – April 2, 2020

A Special Meeting of the Wayland School Committee was held remotely on Thursday, April 2, 2020, at 1:30 P.M. broadcast by WayCAM in the Wayland Town Building.

Present and participating remotely were:

Jeanne Downs, Chair
Ellen Grieco, Vice Chair
Nate Buffum (arrived at 10:38 a.m.)
Kim Reichelt
Kathie Steinberg

Also participating remotely:

Arthur Unobskey
Superintendent

Parry Graham
Assistant Superintendent

Richard Whitehead
Director of Student Services

Susan Bottan
Director of Finance & Operations

Chair Jeanne Downs convened the open session at 10:03 a.m. The meeting was recorded by WayCAM and was conducted remotely due to the COVID-19 health pandemic and according to the revised open meeting law. The Chair also announced that public comment will be at 10:40 a.m., and the public can call 508-358-6812 to make a public comment or email School Committee members.

Jeanne thanked the Food Service staff led by Cheryl Judd for continuing to provide breakfasts and lunches to students/families who need them during this crisis.

1. **Discuss COVID-19 Response:**

- School Closure and Continued Remote Learning:

Arthur thanked the Administrative Council and the curriculum leaders who have worked collaboratively to prepare for the implementation of the second phase of the learning model that will begin on Monday, April 13. Teachers are eager to continue student engagement and learning. He noted that there have been many successes of the first enrichment phase, adding that phase two will offer students more structured learning, including some new content, and will allow students to make some progress depending on the students' ages and levels. The goal is to set clear expectations for students and to provide adequate time for teachers to plan this next phase, noting that it will be somewhat different for elementary and secondary students.

Parry addressed the question of what it means to move forward in the curriculum, such as in first and second grade math. He described the math instructional model before the school closure and the focus within a new instructional model as teachers and students move forward. Although all standards will not be addressed during the closure, there needs to be consistency so teachers have the support they need during this decision making process.

A discussion ensued regarding the email distribution regarding this next phase of learning, including Richard's letter to special education families. Richard explained the preparedness of the email distribution list. Jeanne and Ellen will follow up with Arthur and Richard later today regarding the process in place for the letter distribution.

Kathie asked for examples around the high school and middle school curriculum and the challenges moving into phase two.

Richard left the meeting at 10:28 a.m.

Parry noted some of the challenges at the high school level that includes grading, credits, transcripts, and the GPA, as well as the decisions being made in terms of curriculum and how it will impact students in September.

MINUTES – WAYLAND SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Special Meeting – April 2, 2020

These challenges are also evident at the middle school level, including the importance of social and emotional connections for all levels synchronously or asynchronously. Accessibility for all students can be an issue, as some personal situations may hinder some students' learning. Arthur and Parry addressed grading moving forward and how feedback will be provided to elementary and secondary students.

Nate joined the meeting at 10:38 a.m.

A discussion ensued regarding the need to keep kids motivated and engaged, while providing positive feedback especially for those students who are doing well.

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

Jeanne read an email from Christine McKenna Lok in which she acknowledged that she is impressed with the school system's ability to provide online learning for her third grade daughter and to request that the School Committee add a Spanish Immersion discussion to its agenda on April 13. For various reasons as stated in her email, Ms. McKenna Lok requested that the School Committee discontinue the Spanish Immersion program in 2020-2021 for Kindergarten and first grade students. She also asked for information related to the Spanish Immersion budget/expenses. Although she does not support a bilingual program in Wayland, given its size, Ms. McKenna did recommend a Mandarin program based on the number of parents who can support their children in speaking the Mandarin language.

There were no other public comments.

3. **Discuss COVID-19 Response (continued):**

Susan updated the School Committee on the operational aspects of the school district and how the district has been supporting families, students, and teachers.

Food Service Program:

Cheryl Judd and her staff have prepared thus far 440 Grab and Go lunches and breakfasts to those families who are eligible for and who have ordered the free and reduced lunches. A distribution location was set up in Wayland, but those families who cannot pick up the prepared food, deliveries are being made to their homes. A Federal waiver has been received and the lunches are considered 100% reimbursable.

School Cleaning and Staff Access:

All schools and The Children's Way have been cleaned and fogged. Susan noted a schedule for this week to allow no more than five individuals to enter the buildings at a time. A list of instructions and precautions have been drafted for this process. After completion of this access, the buildings will be thoroughly cleaned again. In addition, all school offices are addressing many issues remotely for students and staff, such as technology requests, human resources, payroll, accounts payables, etc.

Transportation:

At the last School Committee meeting, Susan noted that based on advice from legal counsel, there was an obstacle in continuing to pay vendors for non-deliverable services while school is not in session. Since then, the Federal government approved a bill nationally and will allow Massachusetts to receive some stimulus funds to pay employees and contractors who have been continued to be paid during the shutdown. The funds will be allocated based on the distribution of Title I funds in each district. The Commissioner of Education also advises that districts continue to make payments to ensure continuity of services when schools are reopened. Susan noted the conflicting recommendations based on all information received. Susan asked the School Committee for its authorization for Susan to work with school counsel and the transportation companies in an effort to amend the existing contracts and to allow the district to pay the transportation providers with a percentage of the cost of service. Susan described the methodology in making payments, and she will consult with other school districts in this regard in hopes of reaching a similar approach and contract language. Susan commented that the level of payment in districts across the state ranges from 0% to 95% for many reasons, adding that the MetroWest area is somewhat higher based on variable costs.

A discussion ensued and the School Committee made its recommendations in terms of contract language while keeping the Wayland taxpayers in mind. Susan responded to questions regarding the instructions for school access by staff and the accessibility and eligibility of the free and reduced lunch program post the school shutdown and based on personal situations. Jeanne recommended that families can call the town line (508-358-7701) if they need assistance. Finally, Arthur explained that The Children's Way is providing remote learning in very different ways due to less distribution of laptops. Katy Merrell is working with Leisha Simon in terms of Google Meets. Kathie suggested that there might be a

MINUTES – WAYLAND SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Special Meeting – April 2, 2020

way in which the community can help with supplying devices to TCW staff and families.

4. **Consent Agenda:**

(a) Approval of Minutes:

- March 9, 2020

Upon a motion duly made by Kathie Steinberg, seconded by Kim Reichelt, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to approve the consent agenda, including the March 9, 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:**

Kathie noted that the MASC put out an advisory regarding the roles of district School Committees and the administration during this shutdown. While still working through this unprecedented time, Kathie would like to continue this conversation in an effort to be more responsible, responsive, and supportive to all residents and staff. Ellen agreed and would like to pursue these efforts as well to ensure that the district reaches the best possible outcome. Arthur thanked the Committee for their guidance and support.

Kathie commented on the amount of time that the staff is devoting to formulate this new model in phase two and the amount of stress that they are dealing with given the balance between personal and professional lives. She asked how the School Committee can support them during this time. Arthur and Parry acknowledged the emotional toll on everyone and thanked the Committee for their continued support.

6. **Executive Session:**

Upon a motion duly made by Jeanne Downs, seconded by Kathie Steinberg, the School Committee convened in Executive Session at 11:22 a.m. for the purposes of discussing strategy with respect to collective bargaining with the Wayland Teachers Association (WTA) and possible vote to approve the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) and to authorize the Chair to sign the MOA, as permitted by M.G.L. c.30A, §21(a)(3), as a discussion in open session may have a detrimental effect on the negotiating position of the School Committee; and to approve the following Executive Session Minutes, as permitted by M.G.L. Chapter 30A, Section 22: February 10, 2020 (#2), March 2, 2020, March 16, 2020, March 17, 2020, and March 24, 2020. 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 be joined by Arthur Unobskey, Superintendent of Schools, Parry Graham, Assistant Superintendent, and Diane Marobella, recording secretary.

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

The School Committee reconvened in open session at 12:12 p.m. and Jeanne announced that the School Committee voted to sign the MOA with the WTA, the terms of which will begin on April 8.

7. **Adjournment:**

Upon a motion duly made by Jeanne Downs, seconded by Ellen Grieco, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to adjourn at 12:15 p.m. A roll call vote was taken as follows:

MINUTES – WAYLAND SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Special Meeting – April 2, 2020

<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	

Respectfully submitted,

Arthur Unobskey, Clerk
Wayland School Committee

Corresponding Documentation:

1. Agenda
2. Regular Session Minutes of March 9, 2020
3. Executive Session Motion