

MINUTES – WAYLAND SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Special Meeting – August 19, 2020

A Special Meeting of the Wayland School Committee was held remotely on Wednesday, August 19, 2020, at 1:00 P.M. broadcast by WayCAM in the Wayland Town Building.

Present and participating remotely were:

Jeanne Downs, Chair
Ellen Grieco, Vice Chair
Kim Reichelt
Chris Ryan

Absent:

Kathie Steinberg

Also participating remotely:

Arthur Unobskey
Superintendent

Richard Whitehead
Director of Student Services

Susan Bottan
Director of Finance & Operations

Also:

Louise Miller, Town Administrator
Ben Keefe, Director of Public Buildings
Eric Sheffels, PMBC Member
Brian Chase, PMBC Member
Allyson Mizoguchi, WHS Principal
Pat Keefe, WSCP Director

Chair Jeanne Downs convened the open session at 1:03 p.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 that allows remote participation. A roll call was taken:

<u>Roll Call</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
Jeanne Downs, Chair	X	
Ellen Grieco, Vice Chair	X	
Kim Reichelt	X	
Chris Ryan	X	
Kathie Steinberg	absent	

Jeanne Downs expressed her appreciation to all the Wayland teachers for going above and beyond for our students. She likened their efforts to the main character in the movie "To Sir with Love."

1. Comments and Written Statements from the Public:

Sharon Burke, 16 Highland Circle, called about the lack of ACT and SAT test sites within 50 miles of Wayland, adding that there will now be a testing site in Natick. She inquired if the School Committee would revisit the GPA decision made in the spring to be in line more with the peer towns. Given the college application process, this has had an impact on her child. She asked if Wayland High School could be a test center, so WHS students can have the opportunity to take a test.

Jeanne read a public comment from Deede Bergeron, a teacher at Happy Hollow in which she stated that she takes her health seriously as well as her obligation to the greater community. For the past five months, she has been careful and deliberate about risks to which she would expose herself and her family. She disagrees with the request that staff come into their classrooms to teach, as there are no guarantees that air circulation issues are or will be resolved and she, along with many of her colleagues, have chronic medical conditions and some are pregnant that will result in putting other family members in harm's way of transmission. Ms. Bergeron stated that the Wayland Public Schools has an obligation to protect the health of its staff and employees and to take precautions to reduce community spread where possible; thus, she asked the School Committee to reconsider their decision.

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Jessica Villatoro, a Middle School special education teacher, thanked the School Committee for their letter to the community. She agrees that working together in a positive constructive way will make a difference. After watching several meetings, Ms. Villatoro noted that many promises and statements are being made in terms of changes to teachers' working conditions, many of which may not be logistically or physically possible with no direct input from teachers. She stressed the importance of transparency and factual up-to-date information in order to make safe decisions for everyone. As the experts for teaching and learning, Ms. Villatoro asked for the Committee's consideration to invite teacher representation from each school building.

Jeanne read a public comment from Lori Caddoo. She wrote in response to the comprehensive fall reopening plan, particularly for the High School. Many high school parents and students collaborated to discuss issues and offer constructive feedback on the remote experience of last spring. They outlined what they considered essential priorities for the 2020-2021 school year and submitted them to the administration and School Committee. However, the comprehensive plan did not include their suggestions in this regard. Ms. Caddoo emphasized that there should be clear guidelines for scheduling, assignments, and grading, communication and collaboration between the teachers/administration and students/parents needs to be improved going forward. She requested that the administration hold a Zoom session with parents and students to provide an opportunity to ask questions and to respond to the document, as well as a review of those priorities that will be incorporated in the 2020-2021 school year

Renee H, 96 Lincoln Road, called about WRAP, adding that it is important to talk about this program in a way that does not make the WRAP students feel segregated in any way. She is hopeful that these families and the district can work together to offer specials, such as art, PE, and technology to the students on the one all-remote day in the hybrid model with the Wayland teachers. Finally, she commented that parents are taking a risk committing to a half year in WRAP and hopes that they can have the option to opt out of WRAP if the district stays fully remote for the entire year.

Jeanne read a public comment from Katy Andrus in which she urged the School Committee to reconsider its decision and offer a hybrid model reopening. The majority of families with whom she has spoken are disappointed that the schools will be starting in a remote model and 70% of Massachusetts school districts will be in school in September, including neighboring towns. Her concerns include the loss of outdoor learning time, emotional health of the students, implications of remote learning, academic regression and losses for some children, the inability of some children to focus remotely for a full school day, relationship building for students and teachers, and the time lost for the school staff to assess where the elementary students are academically and to address any deficits by adjusting their instruction. Finally, if Wayland begins remotely, there is a good chance that the district may never start in person learning.

Jenna Brandeleone, Spencer Circle, commented on the lack of communication about all students receiving new email addresses and the concerns she has about this change, which is adding to everyone's stress. She tried to contact the Technology Department and administration but could not reach anyone. Ms. Brandeleone asked the Committee to share any information they may have in this regard and asked for a more transparent process. *Kim Reichelt addressed this concern and noted that she spoke with Leisha Simon, Director of Technology and Accountability, and students should be able to keep both addresses this year. Emails will be forwarded from the new address to the new one.*

Jeanne read a public comment from Kristin Suga Heres, 20 Grove Street, in which she asked for clarification regarding the district's policy of requiring parents to complete daily health forms beginning on October 19 when the district pivots to the hybrid model. As she is familiar with the form, Ms. Heres is referring to the question that asks if anyone in the family has traveled out of state in the last 14 days, as this does not include a question about family members visiting in one's home from a high-risk state or the possibility of some having large gatherings. She asked the School Committee to clarify the way responses to the questionnaire will be used and whether the wording of the form can be tweaked to be a more reliable indicator of high-risk conduct. *Jeanne noted that this process is a work in progress, and her suggestions will be taken into account, as the details are fine-tuned. Arthur commented that he would report back regarding this question on the form.*

Stephanie Brandeleone, Spencer Circle, commented that she and her daughter traveled 3,000 miles during a trip to visit college campuses and she is concerned about the WHS school profile that affects the top tier school system. It does not allow colleges and universities to evaluate individual students within the rigorous environment because it does not include a bar graph with a GPA distribution. Ms. Brandeleone referred to School Committee meetings in 2018 in which there was no discussion about removing the bar charts. She feels strongly that they should be included because this decision puts students at a disadvantage with college honors programs that have benchmarks strictly defined by the GPA. Wayland no longer has a rank percentage as well. More data is always better and Ms. Brandeleone asked the School Committee to discuss this topic at a future meeting.

Jeanne read a public comment from Kristin Murphy in which she asked why the company hired to report on the school

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ventilation attached ASHRAE's guidelines at the end of the report even though the ventilation company's guidelines did not appear to align with ASHRAE's. She continues to question the guidelines around MERV filters and the recommendation in the report to install new filters of existing efficiency immediately. This does not indicate an upgrade of MERV filters. Ms. Murphy points out that there are several errors in the report, including one that is indicated as double the space with a door added that does not exist and that many classrooms have two adults and not one as noted in the report. In addition, some spaces were listed as unusable but offered no plan to relocate these classrooms. Although a firm may be hired to assess these issues, there are no concrete solutions to improve ventilation in the report. Staff and students should not return to buildings until they are safe.

Chris Ryan thanked Happy Hollow principal Tricia O'Reilly for holding a parent ZOOM meeting in which she answered many questions, all of which were tracked by Kim Reichelt.

Ellen Grieco commented that for families who have remaining questions, more information is forthcoming from the various building levels. However, she recommended that families who may have specific questions should reach out to building principals/staff. Ellen appreciates the feedback from everyone that has helped to shape the planning, and reminded everyone that now is the time to work together as the goal is to have a smooth and successful transition this fall.

2. COVID-19 Response (out of order):

- Discussion of Ventilation Review:

Louise Miller and Ben Keefe joined the meeting to discuss the draft of the school ventilation study, which is posted on the Town's website. Their task is to prepare the schools for re-occupancy for the students and teachers based on the School Committee's opening plan and in compliance with DESE's occupancy guidelines. The study is broken down by data gathering and analysis and ongoing cleaning, maintenance and repairs to the existing ventilation system. A sub-phase began in terms of upgrading the existing system to meet the DESE guidelines, such as increasing the filtration in the systems. They will also look at slightly longer-term upgrades and modifications to the existing equipment that would that would improve them, and will exceed the guidelines. Lastly, some CIP items might be included in future Capital Improvement Plans to address longer-term changes and modifications to the systems.

Louise reviewed the recommendations and the executive summary (Page 24) in terms of minimum standards for what the Town needs to accomplish in order to reopen the schools. The first thing is to confirm that all equipment is operational, operates on a proper occupancy schedule, and is clean and maintained. As a result, there have been two walkthroughs to identify necessary repairs. Starting immediately at Claypit Hill and The Children's Way, the next step is to clean all ventilation systems and identify any further repairs as a result. A schedule for the four remaining buildings will be ready by Friday. Once this process is complete, MERV filters, according to DESE standards, will be put in place and a testing and balancing company will test the systems for adequate ventilation. In addition, the equipment will be operated in occupied mode for a minimum of two hours before the building is occupied and two hours after the last occupant leaves the building. Opening the windows is highly recommended whenever and wherever possible. Louise noted that there will be an enhanced maintenance plan next year to ensure that the equipment is operational and the filters are changed, in addition to other enhancements that are recommended. Ellen asked for clarification in the executive summary in terms of timing for upgrades and enhancements related to the Capital Improvement Plans.

Ben reviewed the types and operation of ventilation systems in the schools. The systems are being cleaned to ensure that they operate as designed, not because they contain the virus. With the exception of the high school, the buildings, including The Children's Way, have stand-alone ventilation units and the air does not transfer from room to room. The high school uses centralized roof top units that uses 100% outside air and there is no re-circulation of air because the room exhaust moves it out. The task is to make sure that the ventilation systems operate in the way in which they were meant to operate, including the installation of the highest upgrade of MERV filters. Ben explained the difference between the grades of the MERV filters, adding that they are exactly the same size but differ in the density of filter material.

Louise requested a schedule of which areas of each school will be occupied so that the work can be prioritized. She confirmed that teachers and students could be in the schools while the work continues in other areas, particularly in the areas that were tested and balanced. Kim asked for clarification on MERV filters and their ratings, adding that a filter does not have value if it cannot remove the virus from spaces. Ben noted that MERV filters are designed to remove dust and known particles that carry the virus. HEPA filters are designed to remove the virus; he explained. Louise added that if everyone wears a mask and stays socially distant, the filters are one way in a list of protocols to mitigate the risks.

Ellen asked about the circulation of the air from the wall units in terms of the location of the filters. Ben responded that there are two types of unit ventilators and one of them has two filters. One filters the air coming in from the inside and the

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other filters the recirculated air. He explained further and recommended to increase the outside fresh air and eliminate the use of window air conditioners. A discussion continued and members of the Permanent Municipal Building Committee offered their perspective. Eric Sheffels stated that the systems are being adapted and improved upon so they can be used in a way in which they were not designed to work. He described the differences in the systems at the school buildings and the incremental work being done according to the comprehensive plan to meet DESE guidelines.

Eric Sheffels and Brian Chase described how circulation works in the common areas, such as the hallways, bathrooms, and cafeteria. Rooftop heating and ventilation units service these areas because these spaces typically do not have air conditioning. Restrooms do not have fresh air circulating except from hallways, and the majority have exhaust only. MERV filters were discussed in terms of ratings and their efficiency levels. They are not designed to filter out the virus as such, but each filtration will capture a certain percentage of particles. Research and studies have not definitively determined that COVID is transmitted through ventilation systems; however, it could be and they are working to mitigate this risk in the best way possible. Brian Chase referred to ASHRAE's guidelines in terms of MERV filters.

Cost of Improvements to the Ventilation Systems:

Louise reviewed the costs associated to the study, consulting services, testing and balancing the systems, the work necessary to occupy the buildings, building modifications, some additional improvements, costs for maintenance of the systems, and increased utility bills. Some funding is available through the CARES Act, Green Communities grants, capital improvement funds, the Omnibus budget, and the school budget. The total cost for everything is approximately \$1M for which there is no certainty about what can be funded, but has guidance under the CARES Act. Louise noted that the School Department budget may be responsible for about \$160,000, and the Town will manage the balance of about \$440,000. Ben will provide a schedule and a weekly update to the School Committee. Ellen asked if any projects in the Capital Plan are being postponed because of the ventilation work. The auditorium sound system was removed from the Capital Improvement Plan.

- Discussion with High School about Fall Reopening Plans:

WHS Principal Allyson Mizoguchi described the preparation by the staff for the fall school reopening based on feedback from students, staff and parents, including a document that reflects consistent and best practices around the remote and hybrid schedules, norms and procedures, homework, assessments, and what students and families can expect in terms of 80-minute remote classes. The plan will be shared with students and families on August 31 after which informational sessions will be offered for parents by grade levels. Bi-weekly feedback will be gathered from students, staff and parents via survey tools to measure successes in order to move forward. A student advisory group will be formed as a way to measure additional feedback in terms of their own experiences. WHS staff will receive a draft of the reopening plan by the end of this week.

Allyson addressed questions regarding grading, course offerings, and communication to students and parents for the upcoming school year. The school is going back to letter grades before COVID. However, assessments during remote learning and feedback offered to students is being discussed, including applying consistent principles department by department. In terms of courses, the master schedule maintains all courses that were offered in prior years. The reopening plan will address family engagement.

Allyson spoke about a document that she received from parents in which topics ranged from communication, transparency, and consistency in a remote environment. She described earlier how her staff is addressing this document and the parents' requests. Relative to returning students' assessments, Allyson noted that many things are being reconsidered in a remote environment. Allyson described an old structure that was developed in new ways, such as the Student Study Team (SST), which is led by the Guidance and Special Education department chairs and identifies supports based on where students are struggling. Finally, Allyson addressed the concerns and questions from parents and seniors around SAT's and college preparation and application process. Supports are being put in place, such as senior seminars, parent information evenings, and outside face-to-face meetings with students.

- Discussion and Possible Vote to Approve BASE Budget, including Fee Structure:

Based on a new re-registration for BASE families, the revenue will be diminished by about sixty percent because there is only half the enrollment even though the same number of people will be employed. There will be A and B cohorts on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays. Grade levels could be combined in the cohorts. However, staffing is a huge concern because they will be asked to work below 20 hours per week and will not receive benefits as they did last year. In addition, support staff will take on additional responsibilities as explained by Pat. She described her budget deficits in different scenarios depending on the number of days and the rates charged, adding that the hourly rate will be increased to \$15/hour until next year. Pat explained why former BASE families who opt out this year would be placed in a lottery

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admission system next year. A discussion ensued about this system in terms of fairness for previously enrolled families.

Upon a motion duly made by Ellen Grieco, seconded by Kim Reichelt, the School Committee voted unanimously (4-0) to approve the new tuition rates as recommended by Pat with the understanding that they are temporary for the duration of the hybrid plan and will expire when the hybrid plan expires. 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	
Kim Reichelt	X	
Chris Ryan	X	
Kathie Steinberg	absent	

- Discussion and Review of COVID Related Finances, including Bussing:

Susan reviewed the three different types of funding that is available to municipalities and school departments, such as the COVID-19 relief funding for municipalities. The Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief fund (ESSER) can be spent through September 30, 2022 and is earmarked for spending into four different categories of work, such as virtual math and calculus project tuition for some Boston students, summer work, remote instruction support for elementary students in math and English Language Arts, and summer staff professional development in technology.

The final funding program is the FY21 CVRF (COVID Relief Funding School Reopening Grant Program) which is available to school districts based on \$225 per pupil and must be obligated by December 30, 2020 for various items, such as staff, student services, contracted services, temporary facilities, planning costs, and IT costs. The School Committee reviewed the areas in which this funding will be allocated. Health and hygiene funds of \$205,000 can be used for the health waiting rooms, parent and staff apps for health screening, thermometers, student supervision, PVC and plexiglass barriers, sanitizers, gloves and wipes, and freestanding sanitizing stations. Student supervisors are staff members and if they are needed beginning January 1, the balance of \$96,000 for wages will be covered by the personnel budget. The grant also covers social distancing protocols which includes student storage containers, the lease of tents, outdoor mats, partitions for alternative learning spaces, signage, decals, front foyer posts, WRAP remote learning teachers, and technology all totaling \$325,000. If WRAP continues as of January 1, the expense of \$125,000 for the remainder of the year will come from the operating budget. Susan projects total spending of \$530,000 out of the \$598,000 CVRF grant, leaving a balance of \$68,000. Contracted custodial services is still in discussion.

Susan explained the unanticipated expenses that include the student supervisors (7 total), the WRAP teachers, four additional hours per day of utility costs to run ventilation units, an increase in substitute costs, and cleaning services. There is a projected decrease in revenue and these unanticipated expenses that are covered by the district totals about a half million dollars. Susan noted that full-day kindergarten enrollment is down.

Susan updated the School Committee regarding potential savings. The district may only need eleven busses vs. the projected sixteen. There could be some savings although bus fees won't be collected this year given that only K-6 students who live two miles or more from school will be bussed. Salary differentials or staffing exchanges continue to be tracked for savings. Lastly, there could be savings in the capital budget, as the high school sound system will be repaired and not replaced.

A discussion ensued regarding the student supervisors and their responsibilities, two new full-time WRAP teachers, and the benefits packages for all. However, the numbers of benefits packages could be reduced due to staff resignations. Arthur explained the staffing for WRAP.

Arthur addressed the bussing plan based on state laws whereby parents of children in Grades 7 through 12 and who live less than two miles from school are asked to drive their children to school. Boston students will be bussed to and from Wayland with grades 7 to 12 busses paid for by the METCO grant. An exception could be granted if families cannot drive their children to school. Richard updated the School Committee on the Special Education survey for which there are currently 260 responses and 75% of the respondents want in-person services for their children. Only 7% of families may need transportation while 75% can drive their children to school. These students have had a high success rate with masks, hygiene and social distancing in their active everyday lives.

Arthur provided an MIAA update in terms of engagement of sports for students. There are guidelines, but many protocols need to be in place and there could be a starting delay. He is working with the Athletic Director in this regard. Finally, the

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Board of Health will establish the criteria for the schools' hybrid model being implemented on October 19.

- Review of Timeline for Discussion/Presentation of Topics at School Committee Meetings:
The School Committee reviewed future meeting topics and a possible meeting schedule for the next few weeks. An additional meeting will be added to the schedule to prepare for Town Meeting.

- Review of Upcoming Communications and Listening Sessions:
This agenda topic was passed over.

- Next Steps:
This agenda item was covered in previous discussions.

4. **Policy Matters:**

- EBCFA – Face Coverings

The School Committee discussed Policy EBCFA that is the standard MASC policy language, with the exception of the language on the second page that is specific to Wayland's mask requirements for students, including The Children's Way and those changes made by Ruth Mori. A discussion ensued about requirements for staff masks. Kim added language regarding face shields. School nurses will approve the teachers' use of cloth masks. The School Committee will approve the policy at its next meeting, including the review of the attendance policy and those additional policies listed on the agenda.

5. **Administrative/Procedural Matters:**

- Update on Superintendent Search and Possible Vote to Approve Contract with Future Management Systems:
The School Committee reviewed the contract in which there were edits.

Upon a motion duly made by Ellen Grieco, seconded by Chris Ryan, the School Committee voted unanimously (4-0) to approve the contract with Future Management Systems and to authorize Jeanne to sign it with the changes discussed on behalf of the Committee. 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	
Kim Reichelt	X	
Chris Ryan	X	
Kathie Steinberg	absent	

6. **Consent Agenda:**

- Approval of Minutes: July 20, 2020

Upon a motion duly made by Ellen Grieco, seconded by Kim Reichelt, the School Committee voted unanimously (4-0) to approve the July 20, 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	
Kim Reichelt	X	
Chris Ryan	X	
Kathie Steinberg	absent	

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

None.

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 4:42 p.m. The School Committee will pass over the WESA discussion and for the purposes of discussing strategy with respect to collective bargaining with the Wayland Teachers Association (WTA), as

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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 approving the following executive session minutes, as permitted by M.G.L. c.30A, §22: July 20, 2020.

The School Committee will be joined by Arthur Unobskey, Superintendent of Schools, and Diane Marobella, recording secretary.

The School Committee will adjourn in Executive Session and will not reconvene in open session. 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	
Kim Reichelt	X	
Chris Ryan	X	
Kathie Steinberg	absent	

9. **Adjournment from Executive Session:**

Upon a motion duly made by Jeanne Downs, seconded by Ellen Grieco, the School Committee voted unanimously (4-0) to adjourn at 5:21 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	
Kim Reichelt	X	
Chris Ryan	X	
Kathie Steinberg	absent	

Respectfully submitted,

Arthur Unobskey, Clerk
Wayland School Committee

Corresponding Documentation:

1. Agenda
2. Public Comments
3. BASE Models
4. BASE Tuition Analysis
5. COVID Unanticipated Expenses
6. Summary of COVID-19 Relief Funding
7. School Reopening Fall 2020 – Facilities Update
8. Policy EBCFA – Face Masks
9. Minutes of July 20, 2020
10. Future Management Systems Search Contract