

MINUTES – WAYLAND SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Special Meeting – September 9, 2020 - #2

A Special Meeting of the Wayland School Committee was held remotely on Wednesday, September 9, 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
Kathie Steinberg

Also participating remotely:

Arthur Unobskey
Superintendent

Parry Graham
Assistant Superintendent

Richard Whitehead
Director of Student Services

Susan Bottan
Director of Finance & Operations

Also:

Carol Martin, Finance Committee

Chair Jeanne Downs convened the open session at 1:04 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	

Kathie joined the meeting at 1:05 p.m.

1. **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 1:06 p.m. for the purposes of (a) discussing strategy with respect to collective bargaining with the Wayland Teachers Association (WTA), 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 (b) approving the following executive session minutes, as permitted by M.G.L. c.30A, §22: July 31, 2020 and August 3, 2020 .

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 adjourn in Executive Session and reconvene in open session to discuss matters as listed on the agenda. 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	X	

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Jeanne thanked Arthur, Parry, Susan and Richard for their tireless efforts over the last few months to reopen schools. Kathie also thanked them and their families, as well as the families of the School Committee and the building administrators for being supportive during this difficult time.

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

Jeanne read a public comment from Orla Daunt in which she expressed concern about the sudden change of course on September 6 regarding plans for the all-remote WRAP option for high school students. Families committed to the WRAP program by August 16 with the reassurance that the Edgenuity program was in place, supported by the Wayland staff, and aligned with Massachusetts curriculum standards. It is just days before remote learning begins and Ms. Daunt asked for the School Committee's support in getting the detailed plans in place with the WHS administration.

Jeanne read a public comment from Nancy Seward about the change in the WRAP remote program for high school students to which 40 or more families were committed to August. Clarity and more definition is necessary given the remote model begins in just five days. Ms. Seward is concerned about the possibility of live-streaming, which she says is not synchronous, and according to DESE guidelines, students must have regular and consistent opportunities to access live synchronous instruction. She asked for the School Committee's help in providing clarification of the remote model for high school students.

Jeff Sklar, Brooks Road, questioned the time limit of two minutes for public comments according to policy and suggested public comments be first in the sequence of the meetings. Many questions were posed to the Committee for which there is no specific place on the website indicating answers to the questions. He referred to School Council meetings for which there are no agendas or minutes posted. Mr. Sklar made a public records request for copies of the minutes from the first high school meeting for each year from 2014 to present. Mr. Sklar read a quote from the former Commissioner of Education regarding School Councils in 1993. Mr. Sklar expressed his concern about the lack of opportunity for community and parent input on several topics, particularly in School Council meetings. He suggested that Glen Koocher train the schools about School Councils.

Jeanne read a public comment from Courtney Smith Conery. She is the parent of an incoming Spanish Immersion kindergartner and she urged the School Committee to vote to allow students in the fee-based full-day kindergarten into the buildings on the first day of school for a full day of instruction. Remote learning is difficult and almost impossible for children of this age and resulted in a decrease in enrollment for the full-day kindergarten program, which is not an option for those in the Spanish Immersion program. Ms. Conery noted that since The Children's Way is tuition-based and resuming in-person instruction, so should the tuition-based full-day kindergarten program.

Jeanne read a public comment from David Howe in which he says that community spread of COVID-19 within schools is a problem and there should be a testing program in the schools to minimize the risk of asymptomatic individuals. Mr. Howe noted that DESE guidelines state that symptomatic individuals are required to test before returning to school and a positive test should generate contact tracing; however, it does not specify a routine testing requirement. With frequent testing, detection and containment of community spread will likely increase.

Arthur responded to the concerns of the high school WRAP remote plan and believes that the change is best for the students. Arthur explained the structure of the plan given that a smaller number signed up for WRAP than expected. Arthur noted that a ZOOM informational session is scheduled for tomorrow evening.

Arthur noted that School Councils in each school address important and substantive issues every year, such as the weighted GPA and conversations around teaching and learning. Arthur acknowledged some of the procedures were not followed regarding minutes and agendas; thus, trainings are taking place in the schools. He will work with the Administrative Council in this regard and report the progress made.

Kim made a public comment regarding School Councils, adding that the district may not be following other procedures in this regard. There should be an equal number of teachers, administrators and parents serving on the councils, and should be an effort to address parity in terms of racial and equity diversity in the school buildings, noting that the PTO selects parent representatives. Kim added that the school councils might not be meeting as often as they should and there is limited engagement for the public. She, too, recommended moving forward with training by Glen Koocher.

3. **Consent Agenda:**

- Approval of Minutes: July 31, 2020, August 3, 2020, August 28, 2020, and August 31, 2020.

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Upon a motion duly made by Kathie Steinberg, seconded by Kim Reichelt, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to approve the minutes of July 31, 2020, August 28, 2020, and August 31, 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	
Kim Reichelt	X	
Chris Ryan	---	
Kathie Steinberg	X	

Chris Ryan was inaudible. The School Committee did not approve the minutes of August 3, 2020.

4. COVID-19 Response:

- Discussion and Possible Vote to Approve Full Day Kindergarten Fee Structure for 2020-2021 School Year:
Arthur addressed the FDK survey and its results around enrollment and the budget structure. Just over 50% of the 174 responses would sign up for full day if the tuition was reduced and the program began on October 19. If the full day program began in the hybrid mode on September 21, 28 or October 5, and the tuition stayed the same at \$2,700, about 54% would remain in the full day program. Arthur described different scenarios around the enrollment, reduction in sections and staffing, and the funding gap of about \$102,000. There is the possibility that the gap would shrink to \$27,000 if 8 sections were filled when the district comes back to the hybrid mode. Arthur recently was told that the target date of September 21 is not possible because there is ventilation work yet to be completed. A later date of September 28 or October 5 might be possible. Arthur commented that parents are concerned about remote learning vs. the cost of tuition.

A discussion ensued about the enrollment and sections, staff benefits, the impact to the program funds, and the possibility of changing the benefits amount at Town Meeting. Susan added that if there were 7 full sections of up to 20 students, the gap would be smaller of about \$40,000. However, fee payers should not pay for staff benefits if the benefits are not incurred due to staff layoffs and/or furloughs. In terms of the gap, Arthur proposed a delay until late winter in regards to staffing until the enrollment numbers are clear and the possibility of more grant relief funding. There are several positions in which staff can be utilized toward the end of the first semester, such as WRAP coordinators and student supervisors. Kathie recommended that staffing is based on fully enrolled sections and could result in a full-day kindergarten waiting list. Susan noted that the Town is aware of this situation in terms of a fund balance for benefits; Susan explained. The discussion continued. The School Committee members agreed that FDK should be sustainable within \$10,000, start in the hybrid mode as soon as possible, and the potential adjustment to the benefits. However, it is Kim’s opinion that more discussion is necessary before bringing kindergarten students into the buildings before October 19. She also wants to revisit mask wearing in The Children’s Way.

Upon a motion duly made by Kathie Steinberg, seconded by Ellen Grieco, the School Committee voted (4-0-1) to begin the traditional kindergarten and full day kindergarten program in the hybrid model as soon as is possible to accommodate the health and safety concerns for students to come into the buildings and that full day kindergarten is offered based upon enrollment and consistent with the fee-based program policies. 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		
Kim Reichelt			X
Chris Ryan	X		
Kathie Steinberg	X		

A discussion followed regarding School Committee approval for a start date based on enrollment, completion of ventilation work, and the priorities of payment schedule vs. in-person learning for kindergarten students.

- Update on Elementary Class Size and Technology Support:
Arthur spoke to and described the reduction in class sections as a way to create the WRAP program. Although some class sizes are larger than usual, they are cut in half in a hybrid model. Sections at Happy Hollow and

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Claypit Hill are over the guidelines, and they are looking for solutions to address this issue. Existing teacher assistants could support the classes in a hybrid model and the administration is looking at those classes that are three over the limit. This work is ongoing.

Parry addressed technology support for staff, families and students, adding that his update is speculative and the work continues in this regard. There is a possibility that high school students can provide technology support to families and students.

- **Special Education Update:**
Plans continue and the first group of students will start the following Monday and Tuesday. Families identified a preference in terms of days of week and blocks of times via a survey. The first two weeks will focus on a successful adjustment for the students being back in the buildings. Richard praised the special education teachers for their planning.
- **Discussion of Formation of Curriculum Progress Committee:**
Once school begins due to everyone's hard work and efforts, Parry commented that there is a need for a group comprised of teachers, administrators, and School Committee members to assess what is happening district-wide. The Remote and Hybrid Learning Progress Committee (RHLPC) is the new name for the group who will report to and make possible recommendations to the Administrative Council and the School Committee.
- **Discussion and Possible Vote to Approve Testing Resolution:**
This agenda item was passed over.
- **Review of Upcoming Communications and Listening Sessions:**
There will be a welcome back letter to parents regarding health, safety, and ZOOM meeting protocols for students.
- **Updates: Reopening Criteria, Ventilation, Testing, Health and Safety:**
Reopening Criteria:
Susan informed the School Committee that all Massachusetts school districts received approval to provide lunches to all families in the free and reduced lunch program and for those not in the program. An online form is available for parents to order lunches, and lunches will be delivered to Boston families.

Jeanne updated the Committee about the Board of Health meeting at which the reopening and closing health metrics were discussed based on the COVID case data in the State. The metrics also include mask wearing, social distancing and other variables such as a possible testing program and contact tracing program in Wayland. The BOH will make a recommendation whether to open schools in the hybrid mode (October 19) by October 5. However, if a school closing is needed, this is a more complicated process.

Ventilation:

The School Committee received an updated spreadsheet regarding ventilation work in the buildings.

Testing:

The Testing Advisory Committee is looking into testing options as well as how other towns are approaching testing including funding. Some options may be available by the end of the year.

Health and Safety:

No update at this time.

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

5. Policy Matters:

- **Review and Possible Vote to Approve:**
 - **Pandemic Policy Updates (policies listed at end of agenda):**
Kim made some minor changes to MASC's Policy EBC regarding masks. She asked school counsel to review the policy, but she has not heard back from him. The School Committee reviewed the changes to the policy that included whether the Superintendent can move ahead with some decisions or should he

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advise the School Committee for the purposes of receiving their consent. Kim referred to Provincetown's policy in this regard. Kathie suggested adding language that if a student violates the policies/directives as set by the Governor or MIAA, as well as the violation of traveling restrictions, there will be consequences as part of the district's code of conduct. Kim will consult the school attorney.

- Sexual Harassment/Title IX Policy:

Policy ACA is current and the new policy would replace it. Richard commented that there have been significant changes to Title IX relative to the administration at the Federal level and more relevant for colleges and universities than K-12 districts. Investigations will be conducted differently as well as communicating with the complainant and the defendant. The administrators participated in a training during the summer. Ellen asked how this policy relates to online activities and about the district's obligation to respond if the offense occurs outside of the school day. Richard noted that Title IX applies to "locations, events, and or circumstances in which the school district exercises substantial control". He provided some scenarios and circumstances for which the district would respond. Richard will consult with the attorney concerning questions posed by the School Committee and if elements of the current policy can be incorporated into the new policy.

6. Financial Matters:

- Discussion and Review of COVID Related Finances:

The School Committee reviewed the most recent budget summary. Susan informed the School Committee that the budget status has changed, as she added and removed some expenses for which Susan explained. Technology support was added as an expense. Some costs are undetermined at this time, such as transportation. Sources of funding for FY20/21 are the same and total \$516,000, and there is a balance of \$18,200 surplus of funding vs. anticipated expenses, which could change. The district received all pre-purchased items/goods with the exception of the Chromebooks.

Susan also provided a CVRD budget document showing current COVID related expenses that was submitted to DESE last week. It shows how the district will spend \$596,000 from the Federal COVID relief grant through DESE based on \$225 per pupil. This grant is available through December 30, 2020 and is in addition to the Town's CARES allotment of \$1.2M. Susan described the grant reimbursement process.

Carol Martin described the FEMA grants that are primarily used for public safety functions. Additional funding for COVID expenses beyond the anticipated expenses in the grant has not been determined yet.

Susan informed the School Committee about a facilities bill from Metropolitan Pipe for \$1,037.06, and it was not paid last year from the FY20 budget. In order to pay the bill, it will be put forth at Town Meeting for approval. Susan also updated the School Committee about benefits and the costs incurred to the Town in FY20. There were 279 benefits packages last year and today there are 231 benefits packages.

- Preparation for Annual Town Meeting – FY21 Budget and Loker School Roof Articles:

Jeanne prepared a statement for Town Meeting regarding the FY21 budget and the Loker School roof articles. School Committee members will send their comments to Jeanne.

7. Administrative and Procedural Matters (continued):

- School Council Meeting Agendas and Minutes and Policy BDFA:

This discussion occurred earlier in the meeting. Kim asked that Policy BDFA be on a future agenda for a possible amendment to the policy. Kim also recommended a school council training with Glen Koocher of MASC. A discussion ensued in terms of the lack of involvement by parents and the community in school council meetings.

Ellen left the meeting at 4:25 p.m.

8. Matters not Reasonably Anticipated by the Chair:

None.

Arthur, Parry, Richard and Susan left the meeting at 4:37 p.m.

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9. **Superintendent Search:**

- Discussion and Review of Community Survey, Advertisement, Focus Groups and Search Committee:
The School Committee discussed the makeup of the members for the Search Committee. The Committee reviewed the sample advertisement and the sample questionnaire, and the timeline. The Committee feels that the advertisement should run for two weeks, possibly in the September 23rd and September 30th issue of Education Week. The Committee agreed that there should be a student focus group and possibly adding a member of the Town offices or Boards on the Search Committee.

10. **Adjournment:**

Upon a motion duly made by Kim Reichelt, seconded by Kathie Steinberg, the School Committee voted unanimously (4-0) to adjourn at 4:50 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	absent	
Kim Reichelt	X	
Chris Ryan	X	
Kathie Steinberg	X	

Respectfully submitted,

Arthur Unobskey, Clerk
Wayland School Committee

Corresponding Documentation:

1. Agenda
2. Public Comments
3. FY21 Budget Status and Summary, incl. CvRD Funding
4. Ventilation Update Spreadsheet
5. Article 9 – Budget
6. Article 19 – Loker Roof
7. DESE Document re: School Councils
8. FDK Tuition FY20-21
9. Policy EBC – Supplemental COVID Policy
10. Policy ACA – Sexual Discrimination, incl. Sexual Harassment Against Students
11. WPS Proposed Sexual Harassment Policy
12. Policy BDFA – School Councils
13. Minutes of July 31, 2020, August 28, 2020, and August 31, 2020
14. WPS Community Survey
15. WPS Superintendent Sample Advertisement
16. WPS Superintendent Search Tasks, Narrative, and Timeline
17. Executive Session Motion