

# MINUTES – WAYLAND SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Regular Meeting – May 10, 2023

A Regular Meeting of the Wayland School Committee was held on Wednesday, May 10, 2023, at 6:00 P.M. at Wayland High School Lecture Hall, South Building 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor.

*Present:*

Ellen Grieco, Vice Chair  
Erin Gibbons  
Erin Mueller  
Jessica Polizzotti  
Christina Rodrigo

*Also present:*

Parry Graham  
Acting Superintendent/Assistant Superintendent

Tom Lafleur

Director of Finance & Operations

*Also:*

David Fleishman

**1. Welcome & Call to Order:**

Vice Chair Ellen Grieco called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.; the meeting was recorded by WayCAM. She welcomed Erin Mueller and Christina Rodrigo to the School Committee and introduced Acting Superintendent David Fleishman as of July 1, 2023. However, Dr. Fleishman will be working a few days prior to July 1.

The School Committee shared stories about the 8<sup>th</sup> grade Washington, D.C. trip and the Middle School art work display in the Raytheon Room of the public library.

**2. Public Comment:**

John Pierce of Newton asked if the School Committee was going to address the proposed policy regarding test returns. Ellen Grieco announced that it will be discussed at a future meeting. Mr. Pierce was the facilitator of the Math Task Force, and he wanted to clarify why the Math Task Force was created and what took place during the meetings, as well as the objectives of the Task Force given what has been written in the papers. This issue was ongoing for the past ten years and Dr. Easy was asked to work through the conflict of returning tests to students; thus, a Math Task Force was formed made up of students, teachers, parents and others. The objective was to listen to each other respectfully and reach a strong consensus about what should be done in this regard, even though there was disagreement among the task force members. Research for Better Teaching was consulted and made a presentation around best practices. It was concluded that student assessment should be a part of a student's learning.

Jeff Sklar, Brooks Road, followed up on the topic test returns, the need for students to seek extra help, and the amount of time spent in a teacher's day if only ten minutes per 100 students who sought help assuming that 80 to 90% of students would not ask for help. He commented that Research for Better Teaching talked about the purpose of testing which is assessment of learning and assessment for learning. Mr. Sklar added that if learning is the objective, tests should be returned to students as self-learners so they can continue learning as well as from their mistakes. Mr. Sklar referred to his conversation with DESE in this regard, adding that 54 studies came back with the same result in that tests should be returned to students.

**3. Acting Superintendent Update:**

**3.1 Leadership Updates:**

Parry Graham updated the School Committee on the status of the leadership hiring process. Ms. Ronnie Kessler has been hired as the Assistant Director of Student Services and has worked in Framingham for the past several years. Dr. Graham will hopefully introduce the next Interim Director of Student Services at the May 24 meeting. He announced that Dr. Barbara Cataldo was appointed as the Interim Executive Director of Special Education for the Hingham Public Schools.

The search for a Happy Hollow principal is in its second round with the same search team, and a final decision will be made by the end of the school year. Dr. Fleishman will join the final stage of this hiring process.

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### 3.2 *Discussion and Possible Vote to Approve Interim Assistant Superintendent:*

Parry Graham described the search process for this position which was led by Allyson Mizoguchi. Three finalists were identified at the conclusion of the interview process, but one dropped out to accept a job elsewhere. The two finalists (Brian Ackerman and Betsy Gavron) spent a day in Wayland; Parry explained. He introduced Dr. David Fleishman, the Acting Superintendent as of July 1, as they have worked together in the hiring process.

Dr. Fleishman described his role in this process during which he observed the interviews with the Administrative Council, reviewed the feedback from interviews, and then met with the two finalists. In his career, he has hired thirteen Assistant Superintendents. Dr. Fleishman recommended Betsy Gavron as the Interim Assistant Superintendent, adding that she has a focus on relationships, she is thoughtful, she listens to learn, she has trust and confidence in the staff, cares deeply about racial equity, and she knows the district well since she has worked in Wayland for the past thirteen years.

The School Committee members provided some feedback about Dr. Fleishman's recommendation. Jess Polizzotti expressed her concerns about the process and hoped that feedback from three members of the search committee, who expressed concerns of biases, was properly vetted and investigated. A discussion ensued about the confidentiality of any hiring process. Parry Graham explained, adding that when concerns are brought to him, he would look into them further.

Upon a motion duly made by Erin Gibbons, seconded by Christina Rodrigo, the School Committee voted (4-1) (Jess Polizzotti voted no) to approve the Acting Superintendent's recommendation for the Interim Superintendent's role.

## 4. **Financial Matters:**

### 4.1 *Discussion and Possible Vote to Increase School Lunch Prices for Adults Beginning for the 2023-2024 School Year:*

Tom Lafleur reported that recently there were two smaller DESE audits for Food Service, a procurement review and an administrative review that showed that the district should be charging \$4.78 for adult lunches rather than \$4.50. Tom recommends that the district raise the price to \$5.00 starting in September.

Upon a motion duly made by Ellen Grieco, seconded by Erin Gibbons, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to approve the increase in school prices for adult staff members beginning for the 2023-2024 school year to \$5.00 as recommended by Tom Lafleur.

Tom praised Food Service Director Cheryl Judd for her excellent service to the district.

### 4.2 *Review of FY23 Budget vs. Actual:*

The School Committee reviewed the FY23 Budget vs. Actual Budget. Tom Lafleur noted that the budget is very tight and the budget freeze continues. The two budget lines that he referred to as being over budget are the legal account and out-of-district tuition. Tom anticipates that the budget will break even at the end of the fiscal year noting the items that will be paid in full.

### 4.3 *Review of Positions Previously Cut from FY24 Budget: Loker Special Education Teacher and Elementary English Learner Teacher:*

Based on the previous reductions to the FY24 budget that included these two positions, Parry informed the School Committee of his plan to move forward regarding these two positions which are necessary for next year based on student mandated services and the increase in EL students at the elementary level. After consulting with Tom Lafleur, the budget can now accommodate these positions.

Parry walked the School Committee through the ways in which this will be possible that includes being creative with the Early Childhood Inclusion Coordinator 1.0 position and reducing it to a .5 FTE. In addition, a SPED teacher assistant position will be eliminated (not a person, but a position) at Loker School. A discussion ensued about potential benefit packages.

In terms of hiring an elementary English Learner teacher, a retirement was announced at Claypit Hill after the budget was built, and there is also an open 1.0 EL position budgeted at the high end at the High School, both of which have created enough budget savings to hire an EL teacher. However, budget flexibility for next year is very low, particularly if principals need to hire some staff.

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A discussion ensued about how the elementary Language Based Classroom will be impacted by the budget next year. It was decided to put this topic on a future agenda.

### 5. Administrative Matters:

#### 5.1 School Choice Discussion, including Timing of Hearing:

Parry read the following:

*The Education Reform Act (ERA) of 1993 mandates participation in “School Choice” unless a school district opts out. ...Effective September 1994, every city town, or regional school district is required to enroll non-resident students under the choice program, unless the school committee votes prior to June 1 not to participate. The section of the law states in part, “...this obligation to enroll non-resident students shall not apply to a district for a school year in which its school committee, prior to June 1, after a public hearing, adopts a resolution withdrawing from said obligation, for the school year beginning the following September. Any such resolution with said reasons shall be filed with the Department of Education, provided however, that said department shall have no Power to review any such decision by a School Committee...*

The Public Hearing will be conducted on May 24.

#### 5.2 Approval of the Release with Redactions the Following Executive Session Minutes: May 26, 2021, June 9, 2021, June 23, 2021, July 28, 2021, August 26, 2021, September 22, 2021, October 20, 2021, November 17, 2021, December 1, 2021, December 15, 2021, December 22, 2021, January 5, 2022, March 31, 2022, April 6, 2022, November 9, 2022:

Ellen Grieco announced that the following Executive Session minutes were approved to be released, some with redactions: May 26, 2021, June 9, 2021, June 23, 2021, July 28, 2021, August 26, 2021, September 22, 2021, October 20, 2021, November 17, 2021, December 1, 2021, December 15, 2021, December 22, 2021, January 5, 2022, March 31, 2022, April 6, 2022, and November 9, 2022 at the May 1 Executive Session for declassification.

#### 5.3 Discussion and Possible Vote to Appoint Interim Chair of the School Committee:

Ellen Grieco has asked Erin Gibbons to be the Interim Chair from May 24 until the end of June.

Upon a motion duly made by Ellen Grieco, seconded by Erin Mueller, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to appoint Erin Gibbons as the Interim Chair of the School Committee beginning at the next meeting and lasting through the beginning of the next fiscal year.

### 6. Consent Agenda:

#### 6.1 Approval of Accounts Payables Warrants

- Wayland Public Schools Accounts Payables Warrant, dated May 10, 2023, in the amount of \$668,512.01

#### 6.2 Approval of Minutes: April 12, 2023, April 14, 2023, May 1, 2023

Upon a motion duly made by Erin Gibbons, seconded by Ellen Grieco, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to approve the consent agenda as presented.

### 7. Matters Not Reasonably Anticipated by the Chair:

None.

### 8. Executive Session:

Upon a motion duly made by Ellen Grieco, seconded by Erin Gibbons, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to enter Executive Session at 7:05 p.m. for the purposes of (a) discussing strategy with respect to collective bargaining with the Wayland Teachers Association (WTA), Wayland Educational Secretaries Association (WESA), Custodians and Food Service, 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; (b) approving executive session minutes, pursuant to M.G.L. c.30A, §22: April 12, 2023, May 1, 2023; (c) reviewing Executive Session Minutes, pursuant to M.G.L. c.30A, §§21(a)(7) & 22(g): January 4, 2023, January 9, 2023, January 11, 2023, January 18, 2023 #1 & #2, January 25, #1 and #2, February 8, 2023, March 15, 2023, March 28, 2023, March 29, 2023 ; and (d) Discussion regarding Strategy with Respect to Litigation Where an Open Meeting may have a detrimental effect on the Litigating Position of the School Committee (Easy v. Wayland Public Schools, et al., MCAD Complaint), pursuant to M.G.L. c.30A §21(a)(3).

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<u>Roll Call</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
Ellen Grieco, Vice Chair	X	
Erin Gibbons	X	
Erin Mueller	X	
Jess Polizzotti	X	
Christina Rodrigo	X	

The School Committee will be joined by Parry Graham, Acting Superintendent/Assistant Superintendent, and Diane Marobella, recording secretary.

The School Committee will adjourn in Executive Session and will not reconvene in open session.

10. **Adjournment:**

Upon a motion duly made by Ellen Grieco, seconded by Erin Gibbons, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to adjourn at 9:18 p.m. A roll call vote was taken as follows:

<u>Roll Call</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
Ellen Grieco, Vice Chair	X	
Erin Gibbons	X	
Erin Mueller	X	
Jess Polizzotti	X	
Christina Rodrigo	X	

Respectfully submitted,

Parry Graham, Clerk/Acting Superintendent  
Wayland School Committee

**Observers:**

See attached sign-in sheet.

**Corresponding Documentation:**

1. Agenda
2. Proposed Increase for Adult Staff Lunches
3. FY23 Budget vs. Actual
4. School Choice Language
5. Claypit Hill List of Surplus
6. Accounts Payables Warrant
7. School Committee Minutes of April 12, 2023
8. School Committee Minutes of April 14, 2023
9. School Committee Minutes of May 1, 2023
10. Executive Session Motion