

MINUTES – WAYLAND SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Regular Meeting – January 10, 2024

A Regular Meeting of the Wayland School Committee was held on Wednesday, January 10, 2024, at 6:00 P.M. at the Wayland Town Building

Present:

Erin Gibbons, Chair
Jeanne Downs, Vice Chair
Ellen Grieco
Erin Mueller
Christina Rodrigo

Also present:

David Fleishman
Acting Superintendent

Betsy Gavron
Interim Assistant Superintendent

Susan Bottan
Director of Finance & Operations

Debbie Dixson
Interim Director of Student Services

Also:

Allyson Mizoguchi, WHS Principal
Tyler Steffey, WMS Principal

1. Welcome & Call to Order:

Chair Erin Gibbons called the meeting to order at 6:06 p.m. and announced that the meeting was being recorded by WayCAM.

Erin Gibbons recommended that the School Committee members attend the virtual METCO HQ Persuasive Communication Series on February 29 and March 4 from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. David described these sessions as he has participated.

2. Public Comment:

Michael Brown, 23 Concord Road, is a Civics teacher in the Weston Public Schools. Prior to Covid, Weston took 42 consecutive trips to Washington D.C., and resumed these trips last year post-Covid. He believes that these trips present opportunities and teach life lessons for students. For instance, the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum and the National Museum of African History and Culture are two places that provide an education and learning experiences that he could not provide in the classroom. Mr. Brown offered his assistance in planning the Wayland trip, as he believes that not going to Washington, D.C. would be a missed opportunity.

Craig Gruber, 108 Sears Road, also commented on the school trips and volunteered to help in this regard. He expressed his appreciation for the local Boston experience for the 8th graders, but he believes that it was not well planned, is deeply flawed, and the cost seems excessive among other things; he explained. Previously, he asked questions about the Washington, D.C. trip and received responses, some of which he noted. Mr. Gruber does not believe the trip should be approved this evening by the School Committee.

Michelle Galicia, 20 Aqueduct Road, asked the School Committee to consider the gymnastics team proposal when discussing the budget. She would also like the budget to include a language-based classroom at both the Middle School and High School to service those students who need specialized instruction and structured literacy in all academic subjects.

3. Acting Superintendent Update:

3.1 Martin Luther King, Jr. Luncheon Update:

David provided an update about the Martin Luther King, Jr. luncheon event at the Thelma Burns Building in Boston on Monday at 1:30 p.m. There is optional bus transportation from Wayland High School and all proceeds benefit the Boston Parent Council Scholarship Fund.

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4. Financial Matters:

4.1 Discussion regarding FY25 Budget:

David noted that there weren't a lot of changes in the secondary schools given that the proposed budget is a level service budget. Susan reported that she has received several budget questions which have been answered and uploaded in the documents folder. This document will be updated as needed. She is also detailing a budget supplement for all fee-based special education programs. In addition, Susan and Heath Rollins are preparing financial tables for athletics, given that some of the questions revolve around athletics. The total FY25 budget for secondary schools (Gr. 6-12) and the Athletics budget is \$23,492,810 resulting in a \$1.77M increase or 8.18% increase from FY24. Susan added that the projected enrollment for Grades 6 to 12 is 1,480 students which is a decrease of 12 students. Student athletes total 1,020 this year and is projected to be the same next year. The largest driver of the level service budget is personnel which is \$1,754,800 and non-personnel total \$22,554. Susan explained further. Susan noted that there will be a bid opening for a new transportation contract on January 26. There could be a contractual change in the budget as a result of the transportation contract.

- High School

Allyson Mizoguchi shared her positivity about the FY25 budget adding that the High School is in a very good place. The one important item in the budget is to codify the .4 Innovation teacher for next year's Pathways Program which will provide students with a DESE designated pathway around business and finance. Allyson described this program which is an addition to the vigorous programming that exists at the High School. The program services 40-50 9th and 10th grade students with the potential of more students going forward. Allyson addressed the issue of oversubscribed courses resulting in students not always getting their first choice of studies, however, upperclassmen do. DESE invites districts to become designated Innovation Pathways schools which it also funds. Schools can apply for a variety of menu options. The program and applied learning opportunity provides another option for students in addition to traditional learning.

- Middle School

Tyler Steffey expressed his excitement about the Spanish Immersion program at the Middle School next year for about 20-25 6th grade students. Over the years, there were bi-lingual hires in anticipation of this, and there are 10 or more staff members who are bi-lingual or multi-lingual. The Spanish Immersion students will take the same core subjects, but will be in a bi-lingual Social Studies and Spanish class. Special education students are also serviced in the Spanish Immersion program. A discussion followed.

- Athletics

Due to a level service budget, hockey and transportation were the only two changes. Susan noted that the transportation contract is inclusive for all services: day-to-day transportation, field trips, athletics, and Boston transportation; Susan explained and also updated the School Committee on the exploration of the use of electric buses by a MetroWest school district study group, adding that the cost remains very high. A discussion ensued in this regard. Also, \$50,000 was added to the capital budget for a mini-van replacement for athletics. Finally, the School Committee discussed the tiered four-year annual cost of \$15,000 to cover the cost of the hockey program which would reduce the athletes' fee to \$600 annually.

- Special Revenue Accounts

There are 15 fee-based revolving accounts, 6 of which provide offsets to the FY25 operating budget, which the Department of Revenue via a publication "The Cost of Services" allows communities to charge these programs for the indirect services that are related to the use of the school buildings. Susan provided an example for the BASE program. Food service, instrumental music, WHS parking, WHS testing, and The Children's Way are included in those six fee-based revolving accounts; Susan provided additional examples.

Christina commented on the lack of space at the elementary schools for the BASE program resulting in not being able to accommodate more students. She praised the REC Pass Program as a substitute. Susan noted that this issue is more than just a space problem; she explained. David added that many districts outsource after school programming. Susan suggested that the Finance Subcommittee discuss this topic at a future meeting.

- Central Office & Facilities:

Currently, the district's Director of Diversity, Equity and Belonging is a .50 FTE which is unlike most districts. One shift or reallocation is adding a .20 FTE to this position, as she will also focus on anti-semitism moving

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forward. David described Caroline Han's job responsibilities. Caroline will present to the School Committee on February 28 and March 13. Ellen Grieco recommended that a member of the HRDEIC is invited to Caroline's presentations.

In terms of personnel shifts in Central Office, the Interim Assistant Superintendent is focusing on Teaching and Learning and a Human Resources Administrator replaced the HR Manager, as well as a shift for one administrative assistant who is now working in the HR office.

The non-personnel costs include expenses for the School Committee Superintendent search, to streamline and increase on-line subscriptions to reach diverse applicants (HR), to fund on-line assessments, literacy texts and materials, and curriculum writing for the Spanish Immersion program (Teaching & Learning), continue the fifth and final year of the audio visual equipment lease (Digital Learning), funds for a new bus contract (Finance & Operations), replace three 11-year old copiers at the elementary schools (Finance & Operations), and reallocate funds from an unfilled custodial position to building repairs, maintenance services, and plumbing (Facilities).

Susan believes that the district is underfunded in the facilities maintenance budget, adding that systems are old and need to be replaced. A discussion ensued about the Middle School emergency generator that is currently not working for which the Town is in the process of identifying a funding source, but Susan is unaware of the status. Also, there is no funding source to repair and replace the auditorium equipment at both the High School and Middle School, as it was removed from the 5-year capital plan altogether. A discussion followed in this regard and the School Committee will follow up on these issues.

4.2 *Discussion of Community Budget Presentation on January 12, 2024:*

David will present his FY25 recommended budget on January 12, 2024 at 10:00 a.m. in the Council on Aging.

5. **Administrative Matters:**

5.1 *Review and Possible Vote to Approve Acting Superintendent's Evaluation Indicators (out of order after 5.3):*

The School Committee reviewed the indicators and the standards chosen by David. Christina made a recommendation under Professional Culture to add an indicator under the goal "Consensus Building" given that a leader needs to build consensus.

Upon a motion duly made by Christina Rodrigo, seconded by Erin Mueller, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to approve the Superintendent's indicators with the addition of Standard IV – D1 "Consensus Building".

5.2 *High School Turf Field Update:*

Erin Gibbons and Jeanne Downs updated the School Committee and reported that there has been no recent float of the field, and not everything, including crumb rubber, has been extracted or cleaned up because it is so wet. Additional funding is necessary in order to move forward with the next steps.

5.3 *Discussion of 8th Grade Field Trip Proposal (out of order after 4.2):*

Per School Committee Policy IJOA, the School Committee and Superintendent approves those trips if the students' cost is over \$100. Erin Gibbons read the policy.

Tyler Steffey provided an update to the original trip proposal for the School Committee. The 8th grade Boston spring trip is from May 28 to May 31, 2024 and was created by three house leaders with Capital Tours. The theme of that week is "Embrace Connections and Connectedness" which will be explored in Boston as planned out in the presentation, which the 8th graders have already seen. Tyler explained the logistics of the experience for each cluster, as the "Martin" and "King" clusters will attend the Edward M. Kennedy Institute on different days. While one cluster is in Boston, the other will volunteer at the elementary schools as part of the work around Martin Luther King, Jr. Other sites being visited are the Holocaust Memorial, Armenian Genocide Memorial, King's Entrance, Freedom Trail, Chinatown, the 54th Regiment and the Omni Theater, as well as Boston Common, Quincy Market, the Boston Opera House to watch the musical Come from Away, Blue Man Group show, and a Red Sox game. Questions were asked by the School Committee regarding departure times from school, the students' volunteer work in the elementary schools, and the possible option of opting out of some activities/experiences. The registration process ends on January 31, the cost is \$486 for each 8th grade student with scholarships available from funds raised from calendar sales.

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A “Frequently Asked Questions” (FAQ) document will be distributed to families on Thursday morning; the School Committee reviewed.

David and Betsy described the student experience at the Edward M. Kennedy Institute and how it connects with the government work in the classroom. A discussion followed. There are concerns that this Boston trip will not have the same impact that the Washington, D.C. trip offers. The School Committee believes that a working group should be formed in an effort to find a path forward to resume the overnight trips, as they feel it is necessary to understand the existing problems and find solutions. The discussion continued.

Tyler and possibly a Middle School teacher who is involved in the planning will come back to the January 17 meeting with more information, and meanwhile the School Committee will review the information provided at this meeting.

Seventh Grade Trip:

The focus of the 7th grade trip focuses on Rachel Carson, her appreciation and exploration of the outdoors. The dates are May 22 to May 24, 2024 during which students will visit Cape Cod, Boston and MetroWest at an approximate cost of \$250 per student. Tripships are also available for students. As part of the educational experience, they will learn how water affects and is affected by certain ecosystems. More details were requested before the School Committee votes to approve the 7th grade trip.

6. **Consent Agenda:**

6.1 Approval of Payroll Warrants:

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

8. **Matters Not Reasonably Anticipated by the Chair:**

None.

9. **Executive Session:**

Upon a motion duly made by Erin Gibbons, seconded by Ellen Grieco, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to enter Executive Session at 9:02 p.m. for the purposes of (a) approving executive session minutes, as permitted by M.G.L. c.30A, §22: January 3, 2024 with the intent to withhold said minutes; and (b) a discussion regarding strategy with respect to the following litigation matters 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, as permitted by M.G.L. c.30A, §21(a)(3). A roll call vote was taken as follows:

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

The School Committee will not be joined by other participants.

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

10. **Adjournment:**

Upon a motion made by Christina Rodrigo, seconded by Jeanne Downs, the Committee voted unanimously (4-0) to adjourn at 9:32 pm. A roll call vote was taken as follows:

<u>Roll Call</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
Erin Gibbons, Chair	X	
Jeanne Downs, Vice Chair	X	
Ellen Grieco	absent	
Erin Mueller	X	
Christina Rodrigo	X	

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Respectfully submitted,

Erin Gibbons, Chair
Wayland School Committee

Observers:

Michelle Galicia, 20 Aqueduct Road

Corresponding Documentation:

1. Agenda
2. FY25 Budget Questions & Responses
3. FY25 Recommended Budget Publication
4. FY25 Recommended Budget for Secondary, Districtwide, & Revolving Accounts
5. 2024 Spring Trips Presentation
6. Proposed 8th Grade Trip Itinerary
7. Information for 7th & 8th Grade Trips
8. Payroll Warrants
9. Executive Session Motion