

MINUTES OF WESTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

November 18, 2019

I. A. Call To Order

A meeting of the Weston School Committee was called to order at 7:02 PM at Weston Middle School by Mr. John Henry, Chair. In attendance were Mrs. Danielle Black, Mr. Alex Cobb, Ms. Anita Raman, and Mrs. Rachel Stewart of the School Committee; Dr. Midge Connolly, Superintendent; Dr. J. Kimo Carter, Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning; and Mrs. Sheri Matthews, Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations.

Also in attendance were Mr. Anthony Parker, High School Principal; Mr. John Gibbons, Middle School Principal; Ms. Kelly Flynn, High School Assistant Principal; Ms. Kathy Baker, Director of World Languages; Ms. Marla Schay, Grade 6-12 Guidance Department Head; Dr. Kerry Dunne, Grade 6-12 History Department Head; and Ms. Lisa Reitano, Member of the Town of Weston Finance Committee. Many faculty members were also present.

I.B. Chairman's Report – Mr. John Henry welcomed everyone to the meeting, introduced members of the School Committee and Administration, and reviewed the agenda's Major Business items. He indicated the presentation by the Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC) would be postponed to December 9 and noted that SEPAC was hosting a presentation of food allergies at the public library on Wednesday evening to which everyone is welcome.

I.C. Superintendent's Report – Dr. Connolly provided recent highlights in the district, reporting that Weston Senior Carter Namkung participated in the 2019 NAFME All-National Honors Ensembles held in Orlando, Florida over Veterans Day weekend and was selected first chair bassoon in the All-National Honors Band. Director of Music Chris Memoli reported that the Concert was truly spectacular, and the Department is very proud. Dr. Connolly reported that Weston students did very well at Senior District Festival auditions as well, with 27 students accepted, 14 with All State Recommendations. Dr. Connolly mentioned that the annual Thanksgiving Day football game will be the "last hurrah" for high school athletes this fall.

I.D. Subcommittee Reports –

SAC – Mr. Henry reported on a great, recent SAC meeting that included a discussion about parking and good feedback from students regarding the Program of Studies.

PTO – Ms. Raman mentioned the recent BWMPPO and Weston PTO joint meeting and a brunch that was also held last weekend with the two groups.

Mr. Henry reviewed the protocol for comments during the open forum.

I.E. Open Forum – No comments.

II.A. Middle School World Language Presentation

Ms. Baker shared the work and recommendations of the Middle School World Language Committee, comprised of Dr. Carter, Mr. Gibbons, Ms. Schay, Ms. Baker, and 12 elementary and middle school parents. She reviewed some background information, noting that the selection point is now in spring of Grade 5 for the study of language beginning in Grade 6, of which students have choice of four languages: Spanish, Latin, French, or Mandarin, the same four offered at high school. The World Language Committee reviewed data from a survey conducted of all parents and students to try to determine what language, if any, might be recommended for elimination at the middle school. Ms. Baker reported that the committee recommends maintaining all four languages, but would recommend, if necessary, the elimination of Latin, primarily based on data from the surveys. Ms. Baker did note that Mandarin continues to be the lowest enrolled language. She reported they did not see much of a budget savings to have one fewer language.

The School Committee discussed the report. Mr. Henry indicated they would work with Ms. Matthews regarding financial impact. A few audience members spoke in support of keeping Latin. Ms. Raman suggested the selection point for Grade 5 might be made earlier in the year. Mrs. Black mentioned the inequity of class size, where low enrolled language classes are quite small.

Dr. Connolly asked Ms. Baker to find out if AP French can be reached if study of the language begins at high school. Mr. Henry thanked Ms. Baker and the committee members and indicated the School Committee would look further into financial implications and ripple effect to determine what, if any, action to take, No action taken.

II.B. High School Report (Guidance Report on the Class of 2019, Student Performance & Achievement, Advanced Placement Program

Mr. Parker noted the Committee had received the report in advance of the meeting and talked about the difficulty of maintaining excellence during a period of declining enrollment. He noted that the high school is still operating without a Director of Student Activities and indicated that Athletics have a very high overall participation rate. Mr. Henry wanted to be sure that stipends are not being paid to club advisors that are not meeting. Ms. Flynn reviewed attendance and class cuts and indicated that the later start time has improved student tardiness. Ms. Schay spoke about the quality of the education all students are getting and presented data on the Class of 2019. She noted that nearly 90% applied early to college and 192 students went to 109 schools in the U.S. and Canada, the majority to their first or second choices. She noted that SAT and ACT scores are generally stable, and the number of Advanced Placement exams went up dramatically as the class was large. The School Committee discussed, with some questions as to how to follow up with graduates. Mrs. Black and Mr. Henry expressed concern regarding high teacher absence. Dr. Carter noted that many of the absences are due to teacher participation in Responsive Classroom courses.

MOTION: Upon motion made by Mr. Cobb and seconded by Mrs. Black, the School Committee voted unanimously to receive the High School Report.

II.C. Approval of 2020-2021 School Calendar

Dr. Connolly presented a revised draft calendar with the proposal to have the early release first Wednesdays in February and March 2021 be changed to first Friday early release for professional development. There was brief discussion including the possible impact on student athletes with Friday games. Ms. Raman mentioned that she has heard from many families that they would like to go back to October conferences at the Middle School rather than November. Dr. Carter explained that not everyone can be satisfied although the district does try to accommodate everyone's needs. Mr. Cobb noted that the Committee could always vote to change the calendar back to Wednesdays mid-year.

MOTION: Upon motion made by Mr. Henry and seconded by Mrs. Black, the School Committee voted unanimously to approve the academic calendar for the 2020-2021 school year.

II.D. Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC) Presentation (postponed to 12.9)

II.E. Facility Projects Update (Proctor Field, Case House) –

Case House - Mrs. Black said that everything is running on time and on budget. She thanked the PBC and indicated that a move in should be able to take place sometime in February.

III.A. Approval of Minutes

MOTION: Upon motion made by Mrs. Black and seconded by Mrs. Stewart, the School Committee voted unanimously to approve minutes of November 4, 2019.

III.B. Business Actions –
Certificate of Warrant

Ms. Matthews presented a Certificate of the Secretary, approval of warrants for payment.

MOTION: Upon motion made by Mr. Cobb and seconded by Mrs. Black, the School Committee voted unanimously to approve the warrant for payment of \$1,890,341.30 by the Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations.

IV. Adjournment

MOTION: Upon motion made by Mr. Cobb and seconded by Mrs. Black, the School Committee voted unanimously to adjourn at 8:40 PM.

Documents used by Committee:

- [Revised drafts of 2020-2021 School Calendar](#)
- [Memo to School Committee from K. Baker re: Middle School World Language Program](#)
- [High School Student Performance and Participation Report](#)