

MINUTES OF WESTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

January 9, 2017

I. A. Call To Order

A meeting of the Weston School Committee was called to order at 7:02 PM at Case House by Mrs. Danielle Black, Chair. In attendance were Mr. Alex Cobb, Dr. Ed Heller, and Mr. John Henry of the School Committee; Mrs. Cheryl Antoine, METCO Representative to the School Committee; Jack Mullany, Student Representative to the School Committee; Dr. Robert Tremblay, Superintendent; Mrs. Pamela Bator, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction; and Mrs. Cynthia Mahr, Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations. Not present: Dr. Sanjay Saini of the School Committee.

Also in attendance were Mr. Mitch Finnegan, Director of Health and Physical Education; Ms. Patty Wright, Nurse Leader ; Ms. Marla Schay, Grade 6-12 Guidance Department Head; and Mr. Andrew Rizza, Athletic Trainer.

I.B. Chairman's Report – Mrs. Black welcomed everyone to the meeting, introduced members of the School Committee and Administration, and reviewed the evening's agenda. Mrs. Black read the following statement:

We know there is interest among parents and community members for additional information regarding why Dr. Tremblay will be leaving the Weston Public Schools on June 30, 2017. As this is a personnel matter, further details will not be forthcoming. The only thing we will add to our previously released statement is that the administrator's work within the Weston Public Schools is quite nuanced. It is best for both the district and the Superintendent when the pairing of skill set and district needs are best matched.

The Weston School Committee enjoys a positive and professional working relationship with Dr. Tremblay. Dr. Tremblay remains committed to achieving the district goals established earlier in the academic year. Jointly, we are focused on providing an enriching, creative, and supportive year for our students.

The members of the Weston School Committee know that there are questions regarding next steps. We continue to work out an agreement with Dr. Tremblay. Accordingly, it would be premature to discuss publicly any thoughts regarding future decisions. Additional information will be released when appropriate.

I.C. Superintendent's Report – Dr. Tremblay reported the district administration has been busy with FY18 budget development and presented an update on some of the district goals. Regarding website and branding, he noted that Dr. Lee McCanne, Director of Technology and School Libraries, was conducting a survey of residents and that School Improvement Plans would be presented in the months ahead. He also noted an upcoming Superintendent's Coffee at the public library on Friday, January 13, on the topic of Start Time/Scheduling.

I.D. Subcommittee Reports – Mrs. Black noted the PTO would meet the following Wednesday and there was no WestonPAC meeting scheduled in January.

I.E. Open Forum – Mr. Richard Lee, Grade 4 parent, said he was speaking for a majority of fourth grade parents who are not pleased with current class sizes at Grade 4, nor how it was addressed this year by hiring learning assistants rather than the creation of an additional section. Mr. Lee expressed parent concern that a similar situation might occur in the future for another class and noted the challenges particularly at Grade 4 when it is the first time students are combined from the two primary schools into one grade. He also suggested the School Committee review its class size guidelines.

Several people spoke about the Superintendent position and Mrs. Black's prepared statement. Ms. Louise Carter, resident, expressed concern and asked about next steps. She also said there was not sufficient opportunity for parental or public involvement in the previous search, especially during the public interviews. Ms. Rochelle Nemrow expressed concern regarding a lack of consistency in long term leadership and questioned the process of the previous searches. She also requested transparency in the process, noting that parents and taxpayers have a right to understand what may have gone wrong and how to improve. Mrs. Black stated that there was nothing wrong with the process and said the members of the Committee made their decision regarding the current superintendent with courage and conviction. Mrs. Attia Lennard expressed support for the Committee's actions. Other residents expressed their concerns as well. Dr. Tremblay expressed his appreciation for some of the comments made and indicated his commitment to complete the professional work to be done the rest of the year. Mrs. Black thanked people for their comments regarding Grade 4 class size and the Superintendent position.

MAJOR BUSINESS

II.A. Discussion of Weston Education Enrichment Fund Committee Proposals

Mrs. Bator presented WEEFC project grant proposals for Committee approval. She highlighted a Grade 4 writer in residence grant, noting that Mr. Dennis Belliveau, who traced the steps of Marco Polo, would spend three days with students writing journals. She also reported that the WEEFC Ben Sandalls Program this year would bring Sonia Nazarro, Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist and author of *Enrique's Journey*, to the high school.

MOTION: Upon motion by Mr. Cobb and seconded by Mr. Henry the School Committee voted unanimously to approve WEEFC grant proposals as presented in memo of January 5, 2017, totaling \$23,602.50.

II.B. Discussion of SBIRT ("Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral for Treatment")

Mr. Finnegan and Ms. Wright updated the Committee on SBIRT, "a public health approach to delivering early intervention to anyone who uses alcohol and/or drugs in unhealthy ways." Mr. Finnegan reviewed the governor's signing of the Opioid Bill and aspects of how the law is applicable to public schools. He noted that SBIRT, beginning with Grade 9 students, would provide a brief screening with a goal to keep students healthy and have them make healthy choices, not to get students into trouble. He shared a proposed parent letter. Mrs. Black suggested the work "mandated" be changed to "recommends." Both students present spoke about potential honesty of students. Mrs. Christen Lacey, parent and Chair of Weston PAC, said she was planning a parent forum in March regarding student stress and looking at parental responsibility. The Committee discussed. No action taken.

II.C. Discussion of Concussion Policy

Mr. Finnegan, Ms. Wright and Mr. Rizza presented proposed revisions to the district concussion policy. Mrs. Black noted the current policy addresses concussions due to athletics and indicated suggestions have been made to address non-athletic concussions as well. Mr. Finnegan noted that the policy addresses athletics but that concussion protocols have been in place for all areas. Mrs. Wright noted that accommodating protocols for academics have been followed. Mrs. Black said proposed revisions would be made public and reviewed by the School Committee. Mr. Cobb requested data on concussions; Mr. Rizza said he would provide. Some discussion ensued. Dr. Chun Lim, parent and neurologist, spoke about the need for concussion prevention to protect the susceptible young brains. The Committee said the proposed revisions would be posted on the website and the second review be on the next Committee agenda. No action taken.

II.D. Update on Start Time/Scheduling Innovation Steering Committee

Mr. Henry updated the Committee. He noted there were a large number of volunteers to serve on this new committee and hoped to have the committee formed by the end of the week. He also said he was compiling information that would be put on the website.

II.E. Presentation of the Superintendent's Proposed FY18 School Budget

Dr. Tremblay presented an overview of the proposed school budget for FY 2018. He noted the budget was developed with the input of staff and administrators and meets the guidelines approved by the School Committee. He said his budget proposal includes reduced sections in Grades 2,4,6 and 8, and additional sections in Grades 3 and 5 with a total reduction of 3.10 FTEs. He said the proposed budget includes funds to begin the process to transform the High School Library into a Learning Commons, funds to implement the recommendation of the ELA/Drama Program Review to improve writing curriculum, and funds for continued implementation of recommendations of the World Language Program Review. Mrs. Black requested a report on high school electives at end of first semester. Dr. Tremblay noted further budget review sessions and next steps.

Many Grade 4 parents present expressed dissatisfaction with the current year's class sizes. Karen Meslin, high school parent, expressed concern for large class sizes at the high school, especially in AP Statistics and AP English. Noting the large influx of students during the summer, Ms. Reitano said there should be a better way of finding out when potential students are moving in. Ms. Metraux encouraged parents to ask where the money is being spent. There was much discussion, with many parents speaking, on issue of class size, and allocation of resources. Mr. Cobb noted the School Committee has a commitment to closely watch and better manage enrollments over the summer. He said they could also revisit the Class Size policy in the future.

II.F. Facility Project Updates

Proctor Field - Mr. Cobb said the Proctor Field website is up, a working group meeting would take place Wednesday morning, and that he would begin to draft the Town Meeting warrant articles for Field 1 and Proctor Field.

Case House – Mrs. Black said the PBC was meeting on Wednesday evening and said the timeline for the project may slide back further. She noted that construction funds would not be available until the Spring of 2018.

Case Campus – Dr. Heller provided a brief update on Package 4 that addresses safety and traffic issues.

II.G. 133 Boston Post Road Proposed 40B Development - Comments on Site Visit

Mrs. Black reported that the Town Manager had forwarded a letter from MassHousing to all boards and committees regarding the proposal by Boston Properties for a 40B Development at 133 Boston Post Road, noting that if the School Committee wishes to provide comments, they are due to the Town Manager by January 18. The Committee discussed and agreed that Mrs. Black should send the following comments:

Given the small size of our district, unpredictable fluctuations in enrollment can cause major disruptions in student experience and building management. In order to best ameliorate the disruption to all students, the school committee is interesting in exploring the opportunity to phase in residential units over a multi-year period.

Citing the same reasoning, the school committee is interested in establishing as many age-restricted units as possible. Providing affordable housing for senior residents has been noted as a desired outcome of an increased housing stock.

In regards to transportation, student safety is our foremost concern. It is imperative that a bus stop be located on property, with a proper turning radius so to avoid having the bus back up. Additionally, it is critical that bus access be provided through the Rt 20 access point. Given the traffic patterns, narrow roads, and geography of Weston, it can be a challenge to get all buses to arrive at school on time. It is important that a reasonable access point be identified for the residents of this development.

III.A. Approval of Minutes

MOTION: Upon motion made by Mr. Cobb and seconded by Mr. Henry, the School Committee voted unanimously to approve minutes of December 12, 2016.

III.B. Business Actions

Certificate of Warrant

Mrs. Mahr presented a Certificate of the Secretary, approval of warrants for payment.

MOTION: Upon motion made by Mr. Cobb and seconded by Dr. Heller, the School Committee voted unanimously to approve the warrant for payment of \$2,397,450.65 by the Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations.

Acceptance of Gifts

Mrs. Mahr requested the Committee accept a gift of \$100 from Lueders Environmental, Inc., to be used at the school's discretion, in recognition of their Weston clients.

MOTION: Upon motion made by Mr. Cobb and seconded by Mr. Henry, the School Committee voted unanimously to accept a gift of \$100 from the Lueders Environmental, Inc.

Mrs. Bator described the gift of five educational library licenses of the documentary film series, *Honor and Duty: The Mississippi Delta Chinese*. *Honor and Duty: The Mississippi Delta Chinese* has been made by Samantha Cheng on behalf of the following Weston families: Daniel & Jay Zhu Family, Ding Family, Jessy Wang, Lian/Xue Family, Liew Family, May Meng, Michelle Ng, Mingyu Liang, Family, Shen Family, Tian Family, Wang Family, Wu Family, Xianghui Ren, Zhang & Han Family, and Six Anonymous Donors. Mrs. Bator indicated the value of the gift is \$1,750 and includes five licensed DVDs for use in the classroom and five licensed DVDs for the five school libraries (Weston High School, Weston Middle School, Field School, Country School, and Woodland School) as well as an educators guide in the spring

MOTION: Upon motion made by Mr. Cobb and seconded by Mr. Henry, the School Committee voted unanimously to accept a gift of licensed DVDs as proposed.

IV. Executive Session

MOTION: Upon motion made by Mr. Cobb and seconded by Mr. Henry, at 11:22 PM the School Committee voted unanimously to adjourn to Executive Session for purposes of discussion of Collective Bargaining, with the intent to not return to Open Session, with Mr. Cobb voting aye, Dr. Heller voting aye; Mr. Henry voting aye, and Mrs. Black voting aye.

Discussion on collective-bargaining. Case study: Interpretation and analysis. No action taken during Executive Session.

V. Adjournment

MOTION: Upon motion made by Mr. Henry and seconded by Mr. Cobb, at 12:10 AM, the School Committee voted unanimously to adjourn from Executive Session with Mr. Cobb voting aye, Dr. Heller voting aye; Mr. Henry voting aye, and Mrs. Black voting aye.