

MINUTES OF WESTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
March 20, 2017

I. A. Call To Order

A meeting of the Weston School Committee was called to order at 7:05 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. Elizabeth Nagarajah, 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.

Also in attendance were Dr. Midge Connolly, Director of Student Services; Dr. Lee McCanne, Director of Technology and School Libraries; Mr. Matt Lucey, Field School Principal; Ms. Jen Faber, Woodland School Principal; Ms. Jennifer Truslow, Assistant Director of Student Services; Ms. Lisa Reitano and Ms. Sandra Metraux, Town of Weston Finance Committee members, Ms. Katharine Odell, Elementary English Language Arts Specialist; Ms. Kate Lemons, Grade 6-12 English Department Heads, and several English Department faculty.

Mrs. Black welcomed everyone to the meeting, introduced members of the School Committee and Administration, and reviewed the evening's agenda. She noted that Dr. Saini was out of the country and Mrs. Cheryl Antoine Alternating METCO Representative to the School Committee, was attending a meeting at METCO, Inc.

I.B. Chairman's Report – Mrs. Black mentioned the upcoming presentation of Screenagers and noted the well-attended recent event hosted by Weston PAC.

I.C. Superintendent's Report – Dr. Tremblay reported on the most recent session in the “Learning How Series” hosted by Mrs. Bator on February 13 where parents grappled with being in the role of students. He expressed appreciation to faculty members who assisted. Dr. Tremblay informed the Committee that Weston Theater Company hosted a recent drama festival and that the student written production of The Undisclosed Country received much recognition.

I.D. Subcommittee Reports –
PTO - Mrs. Black noted the March PTO meeting was cancelled due to snow.

I.E. Open Forum – No comments.

II.A. Discussion of Weston Education Enrichment Fund Committee Proposals
Mrs. Bator presented WEEFC grant proposals for Committee approval. She highlighted a proposed project grant for a Middle School performance workshop with Barrage8, a group of fiddle players, and the proposal to create an innovation lab at Country School. Mrs. Bator shared a video of the Woodland Hatch that demonstrated use of an Innovation Grant.

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 March 7, 2017, totaling \$30,331.

II.B. ELA/Drama Program Review Report

Dr. Mary Ann Cappiello, Chair, and other members of the ELA/Drama Program Review Committee presented the report from the external review conducted in early November 2016. Mrs. Bator described the program review process, noting that there is approximately a ten-year cycle of reviews for each subject. Dr. Cappiello thanked Weston for the opportunity and shared the committee's commendations and recommendations. She also noted the department self-study was comprehensive and thorough, a model for other districts to follow. Among the commendations noted were talented and caring teachers who have a desire for collaboration, a

stable faculty with longevity in the district, a respectful student climate, community support, academic success of students, financial support, and a strong drama program.

Among the recommendations presented were a recommendation for a “tighter spiral” or vertical alignment, more clarity in the PreK-12 writing strands, a drama program throughout K-12, more diverse texts, district-wide content literacy, improved communication, and a Literacy Coach in each school. Dr. Cappiello noted that most districts include Drama in the Arts rather than English. The School Committee discussed the report and had opportunity to ask questions of the review committee. Mr. Henry asked about leveling and meeting the needs of all students. Dr. Cappiello and other team members indicated their preference for fewer levels, noting that differentiation is a key to success. Much discussion ensued regarding the recommendations. Mrs. Bator noted the English Department will review the report and is scheduled to present its response to the recommendations on May 22.

MOTION: Upon motion by Mr. Cobb and seconded by Dr. Heller, the School Committee voted unanimously to receive the report.

II.C. Public Hearing on School Choice

Mrs. Black noted that under state law, if the School Committee does not to participate in School Choice, it is required to hold a public hearing and take a vote rejecting such participation and to so notify the Commissioner of Education by June 1 of each year. Dr. Tremblay recommended that the district not participate in School Choice for reasons cited in prior years. He noted that the receiving district receives only \$5,000 per student while Weston’s per pupil expenditure is significantly higher than that, and there is no control over the application process. Dr. Tremblay noted he had been in a district that participated in School Choice and recommended that Weston not participate.

MOTION: Upon motion by Mr. Cobb and seconded by Dr. Heller the School Committee voted unanimously that Weston Public Schools not participate in the 2017-2018 Massachusetts School Choice Program.

II.D. Update on Superintendent Transition

Mrs. Black informed the Committee that Dr. Tremblay had the opportunity to begin serving as Superintendent in Framingham on April 1 and requested an earlier transition. Mrs. Black indicated that Dr. Connolly expressed a willingness to make the transition earlier as well, with Dr. Tremblay working through March 31 and Dr. Connolly beginning as Superintendent on April 1. Dr. Tremblay recommended that Ms. Jennifer Truslow be named Director of Student Services, effective April 1, to replace Dr. Connolly with someone hired in an interim capacity through the end of the year. Dr. Tremblay noted this would be a good opportunity for everyone to begin serving in the new roles during the school year. Mrs. Black agreed that it was beneficial for both communities with new hiring typically done in the spring. Dr. Connolly said a search for an Assistant Director of Student Services to begin July 1 would begin later, Dr. Tremblay indicated he would work with Dr. Connolly during the next two weeks to assure a seamless transition and would be available after the transition if assistance was needed. He noted he would remain active in the community with three children in the Weston schools.

MOTION: Upon motion by Mr. Henry and seconded by Dr. Heller the School Committee voted unanimously to accept Dr. Robert Tremblay’s resignation as of March 31, 2017, and to hire Dr. Midge Connolly as Superintendent effective April 1, 2017.

Dr. Connolly reviewed Ms. Truslow’s qualifications, noting she is very capable to serve as Director.

MOTION: Upon motion by Dr. Heller and seconded by Mr. Cobb, the School Committee voted unanimously to accept Dr. Robert Tremblay’s recommendation to appoint Ms. Jennifer Truslow as Director of Student Services, as of April 1, 2017.

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

Mr. Henry noted the last meeting was canceled due to snow but that the committee would be meeting on Tuesday of this week. He reported that he and Dr. Heller have been working together to address whether to concentrate on just start time or the complexities of schedule as well. Dr. Tremblay noted that the Dual County League Superintendents have begun discussions on the matter as well and would likely involve principals in the process. He noted their next meeting is scheduled for April 11. Mr. Henry noted they have a web page and will soon be posting documents for the public. The Committee discussed. Audience members weighed in as well. Ms. Attia Linnard expressed support for the eight-day rotation with rotating course times. Ms. Reitano expressed support for a common Middle and High School schedule with the ability to share staff. No action taken.

II.F. Discussion of FY18 School Budget and Possible Vote

Mrs. Black noted two items in the budget remain under discussion, Chromebooks and the Learning Commons. Mr. Cobb suggested both items remain in the budget funded under reserve. Committee members agreed. Mrs. Mahr noted that expenditure of the \$51,000 in reserve would require a School Committee vote.

MOTION: Upon motion by Mr. Cobb and seconded by Mr. Henry, the School Committee voted unanimously to approve the Superintendent's proposed FY18 budget of \$39,302,385, an increase of \$555,743, or 1.43% over FY17.

Mrs. Black expressed appreciation to the Administration and Finance Committee liaisons for their collaboration.

II.G. Facility Projects Update (Proctor Field, Case House, Case Complex)

Proctor Field - Mr. Cobb reported on ongoing meetings related to the Proctor Field, including meeting with the Planning Board and a toxicologist regarding infill and an aquifer. He noted upcoming meeting with Board of Appeals on April 14. Mr. Cobb said that the language for the warrant article had been sent to the Town Manager but that final costs are not yet known. No action taken.

CCMP - Dr. Heller indicated that a presentation and vote would take place at Town Meeting and requested he have opportunity to present to School Committee at their next meeting.

Case House - Mrs. Black said the Owners Project Manager attended the last PBC meeting.

III.A. Approval of Minutes

MOTION: Upon motion made by Mr. Cobb and seconded by Dr. Heller, the School Committee voted unanimously to approve minutes of March 7, 2017.

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 \$1,938,028.75 by the Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations.

FY17 Third Quarter Report

Mrs. Mahr provided an update to the Committee. She indicated a district purchasing deadline of April 28.

IV. Executive Session - Mrs. Black indicated no Executive Session would not be needed.

V. Adjournment

MOTION: Upon motion made by Mr. Cobb and seconded by Mr. Henry, at 9:20 PM, the School Committee voted unanimously to adjourn.