

MINUTES OF WESTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
March 7, 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, Mr. John Henry, and Dr. Sanjay Saini of 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.

Also in attendance were Dr. Midge Connolly, Director of Student Services, and Finance Committee members Ms. Lisa Reitano and Ms. Sandra Metraux.

Mrs. Black welcomed everyone to the meeting, introduced members of the School Committee and Administration, and reviewed the evening's agenda. She noted that Mrs. Cheryl Antoine and Mrs. Elizabeth Nagarajah, METCO Representatives to the School Committee, had a conflict this evening and she was unsure as to whether Jack Mullany, Student Representative to the School Committee, would be attending. Mrs. Black requested a motion to go into Executive Session.

I.B. Executive Session

MOTION: Upon motion made by Mr. Cobb and seconded by Dr. Heller, at 7:03 PM the School Committee voted to adjourn to Executive Session for purposes of discussion of Contract Negotiations, with intent to return to Open Session, with Mr. Cobb voting aye, Dr. Heller voting aye, Mr. Henry voting aye, Dr. Saini voting aye, and Mrs. Black voting aye.

During Executive Session, attended by the five School Committee members only, Mrs. Black updated the Committee on negotiations with Dr. Midge Connolly for her contract as Interim Superintendent.

MOTION: Upon motion made by Mr. Cobb and seconded by Dr. Heller, at 7:10 PM, the School Committee voted unanimously to return to Open Session with Mr. Cobb voting aye, Dr. Heller voting aye; Mr. Henry voting aye, Dr. Saini voting aye, and Mrs. Black voting aye.

The Committee returned to Open Session at 7:11 PM

I.C. Chairman's Report – None.

I.D. Superintendent's Report – Dr. Tremblay reported on the presentation on Athletics made the previous evening and the community forum held earlier in the month. He noted the community forum on Respecting Human Differences was organized in response to hateful graffiti at Field School but that a larger conversation took place with members of the Weston Wayland Interfaith Action Group (WWIAG) and Weston PTO assisting. Dr. Tremblay reported that he is working with Administrative Council on how best to follow up. He noted that spring concert season is underway in the schools and encouraged attendance, noting that the concerts present a wonderful cultural opportunity for music in one's life.

I.E. Subcommittee Reports –

PTO - Mrs. Black noted the PTO would meet the following Tuesday, Weston PAC has a speaker on student stress on March 17, and the SAC breakfast meeting was this upcoming Thursday.

I.F. Open Forum – No comments.

II.A. Interim Superintendent Contract

Mrs. Black reported on successful contract negotiations with Dr. Connolly, noting she updated the Committee in Executive Session. She requested the Committee sign the contract after they vote.

MOTION: Upon motion by Mr. Cobb and seconded by Dr. Heller the School Committee voted unanimously to approve the agreement between the Weston School Committee and Dr. Marguerite Connolly as Interim Superintendent of Schools, effective July 1, 2017 through June 30, 2019.

II.B. Discussion of FY18 School Budget

Mrs. Black indicated the School Committee would present its budget to the Finance Committee on Thursday, March 9, at 7:45PM. The School Committee continued its discussion and review of the proposed FY18 school budget, with discussion focusing on four items: Leadership Model, High School Learning Commons, Chromebooks, and Elementary Floating Teacher. Dr. Tremblay proposed that no decisions on restructuring leadership be made this year and recommended the funds currently held in reserve for Leadership Model Restructuring be appropriated in the budget for stipends.

Mr. Henry reported on a presentation to WEEFC of a reformulated, scaled back proposal for the learning commons. He said the new proposed plan received feedback from teachers and students and are recommending one large room as a collaborative space, flexible furniture, removing the current counter, paint, and a quiet study space to be converted form a closet and realignment of stacks, for a cost of approximately \$20,000. Mr. Henry indicated he believes WEEFC will be supportive of the proposed project. Mr. Henry funds for carpets are not included but noted carpet replacement may prove necessary. Mr. Cobb, though indicating the Committee might support the project in the budget, requested the proposed project be presented to School Committee before funds are appropriated. The Committee agreed to include Learning Commons as an agenda item in the spring.

The Committee discussed the proposal to purchase Chromebooks for Grade 6 students. After much discussion, the Committee decided to consider placing the \$57,000 in reserve for now but would like more conversation with Dr. McCanne and Principal Gibbons to be sure that use of Chromebooks is academically driven. Dr. Tremblay indicated there are practical reasons to move to Chromebooks, noting the use of Google classroom and need of repair of the iPads. Parent Attia Linnard spoke in support of Chromebooks. The Committee requested a written proposal, with data from faculty, at an upcoming meeting, with the funds to be placed in reserve for now.

Mrs. Black indicated that the concept of having a floating teacher hired had been discussed and not considered a good option. Dr. Tremblay recommended keeping funds to hire an elementary teacher in the reserve account. The Committee discussed the merits of having funds in reserve or needing to request additional funds if an additional teacher were needed. They ultimately decided to keep funds in reserve to be used only for hiring for an additional elementary section if needed. Mrs. Black also noted the Committee is committed to discuss Class Size Policy in the fall.

Mrs. Mahr reviewed other areas that have impacted the proposed budget and resulted in fluctuations, including reduction in Special Education costs, retirement notifications, and results of bids. She reported that funds designated for ERBs would be moved to the consultant budget for potential use by the Start Time/Scheduling Innovation Committee. The Committee was also informed that Weston would not be providing transportation for the Roxbury Weston Preschool because of the safety concerns of transporting preschoolers. Mrs. Mahr discussed costs for transporting Weston students to Minuteman, and noted she is in discussion with a neighboring district to share expenses. No action taken.

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 February 8, February 13, and February 27, 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. Henry and seconded by Mr. Cobb, the School Committee voted unanimously to approve the warrant for payment of \$1,967,034.32 by the Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations.

Acceptance of Gifts

Mrs. Mahr requested the Committee accept a gift of \$1,500 from ICARE to be used to support diversity in the district.

MOTION: Upon motion made by Mr. Henry and seconded by Dr. Heller, the School Committee voted unanimously to accept a gift of \$1,500 from ICARE.

Mrs. Bator reminded those present of the WEEFC elementary fundraiser “All Hands In” on Thursday night. Mr. Henry noted tickets still available and would be sold at the door. Mrs. Black thanked WEEFC for all their work in support of the schools.

V. Adjournment

MOTION: Upon motion made by Dr. Heller and seconded by Mr. Cobb, at 8:29 PM, the School Committee voted unanimously to adjourn.