

MINUTES OF WESTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
November 7, 2016

I. A. Call To Order

A meeting of the Weston School Committee was called to order at 7:01 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; 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; Mr. John Gibbons, Middle School Principal; Ms. Susan Erickson, Elementary Science/Social Studies Specialist; Ms. Kathy Baker, World Language Director; and several members of the World Language Department faculty.

I.B. Chairman's Report – Mrs. Black welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced members of the School Committee and Administration. She noted that Dr. Saini would try to join the meeting later and was not sure if Veronica Rigobon, student representative to the Committee, would be in attendance. Mrs. Black reviewed the evening's agenda and thanked members of the administration for their presentations at the Citizens Academy and the PTO for the two Parent Education events.

I.C. Superintendent's Report – Dr. Tremblay reported that WHS Mandarin student Celeste Samaratunga returned from a two week trip to Kunming, China, where she was one of only two secondary school students in the United States invited by the Chinese educational authorities to experience the International Chinese Speech Competition. Dr. Tremblay commended Middle School theater advisor Aidan OHara, as well as the cast and crew, for the “fantastic and impressive” musical production of *Peter and the Star Catcher*, noting that more than 100 students were involved.

Dr. Tremblay reported on the well-attended Superintendent's Coffee, the first of four he plans to hold this year, and the first session of the Learning How Series. He noted Mrs. Mahr would be leading the next one, “What Do We Eat?” He noted these initiatives are helping introduce him to the community. He informed the Committee of his recent attendance at the MIAA Wellness Summit with Nurse Leader Patty Wright, Food Services Director Tess Sousa, and students Mack Rodgers and Ariel Silverman. He said the students found the event inspiring and will make suggestions to the district Wellness Committee for school based assemblies that address appropriate use of communication technology and impact of digital footprints. Dr. Tremblay reported on arrangements underway for a PreK-5 parent forum on safety and security with consultant Michele Gay.

Dr. Tremblay congratulated the Weston High School Golf Team for its 4th consecutive State Championship. He noted that all other Fall sports teams have finished competition, with the exception of the Thanksgiving Day football game.

Dr. Tremblay reported on steps he is taking to review the Middle Management Study conducted last year, noting he has been meeting with grade leaders, curriculum specialists and others to find the best model that will work for the Weston Public Schools. He indicated his intent to work with Administrative Council and present to School Committee as part of budget discussion.

Mr. Cobb requested an update on Field School's use of the Learning Assistants that were added due to high enrollments. Dr. Tremblay said he would gather information and provide an update on how the mitigation plan is working.

I.D. Subcommittee Reports –

Mrs. Black said the November PTO meeting was cancelled, due to election. She noted the School Committee would be meeting with SAC this week, and that WestonPAC had an upcoming evening panel discussion on November 16. Mr. Henry reported on internal meetings and conversations on school structure.

I.E. Open Forum – No comments.

MAJOR BUSINESS

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

Mrs. Bator presented four WEEFC project grant proposals for Committee approval, highlighting proposals for support of the Middle School Robotics Club, Creative Arts poetry workshop for Grade 4, and Urban Improv anti-bullying program.

MOTION: Upon motion by Mr. Cobb and seconded by Dr. Heller, the School Committee voted unanimously to approve WEEFC grant proposals as presented in memo of November 1, 2016, totaling \$5,733.75.

II.B. Teaching & Learning: World Language Update

Ms. Baker updated the Committee on data collected regarding potential change to year of language selection. She noted one of the recommendations of the World Language Program Review was to move the selection point to Grade 5 from Grade 6. Ms. Baker said the department conducted a student survey, held two parent forums, and discussed at department meetings and Middle School Curriculum Cabinet. She discussed points in favor of and against moving the language selection process to grade 5. She noted logistical concerns and potential conflicts with scheduling additional languages at Grade 6 and difficulty in staffing. She also reported that other districts that have Grade 5 selection point offer Grade 6 language more than two times a week. The Committee discussed. Mr. Cobb noted this might be the time to discuss reducing the number of language offerings, due to declining enrollment. Mr. Henry, noting his support for an increase in number of times per week language would be offered, indicated that something else would be sacrificed. Mrs. Bator said the report would be discussed with Curriculum Cabinet and a recommendation may come forward as a Program of Studies proposal. No action taken.

II.C. Student Performance and Achievement Report

Mrs. Bator presented the annual Spring MCAS and PARCC testing report. She noted that in general Weston students exhibited positive change and growth but there are areas that do need to be addressed: diminishing the gap between All Students and Students with Disabilities, addressing the gap between All Students and African-American/Black Students, and having students move from Needs Improvement to Proficient and Proficient to Advanced in Science at all levels. Mrs. Bator discussed low science scores and said a team of teachers is visiting other schools to observe how others are teaching. She said she would be sharing the results at faculty meetings in the district and that teachers and grade level teams will use the data, combined with other sources, to improve instruction and develop programs. Ms. Kristen, Lacey, parent and Chair of WestonPAC, expressed appreciation to Mrs. Bator for the presentation and noted the importance of its transparency in acknowledging areas that need to be addressed. No action taken.

II.D. Discussion and Approval of 2016-2017 School Calendar

Dr. Tremblay reported that the proposed calendar had been shared with faculty and parents and a survey sent. He discussed the survey results, noting there were 215 total respondents, comprised of 89 parents, 113 faculty/staff, and 13 students. He indicated some responses in favor of a March vacation but noted there would need to be more opportunity for parent involvement before such changes could be made. He shared highlights of a revised calendar to include September 5, 2017 as the First Day of School for Students in Grades 1-12 and Visiting Day for Kindergarten; September 6 as the First Day of School for Kindergarten, with full day Kindergarten beginning on Monday, September 11; no school on two days of low attendance

(Good Friday 2018 and Rosh Hashanah 2017), and a shift in the professional development days from January and March to the day after Thanksgiving and day after 180th day in June.

MOTION: Upon motion by Mr. Cobb and seconded by Mr. Henry, the School Committee voted unanimously to approve the proposed 2017-2018 School Calendar.

II.E. Facility Project Updates

Proctor Field – Mr. Cobb indicated a working group continues to meet, noting they are evaluating turf vs. infill field, reviewing data on a foam concussion layer, and have not yet come to a decision. They are reviewing size and layout of proposed track and location of sports wall. He noted they expect to have their first public meeting with parents in December and anticipate a request for construction funds at May 2017 Town Meeting.

Case House – Mrs. Black reported that the Town Manager is still finalizing contract with architect and reviewed the Historical Commission request for \$27,000 in CPA funds. She noted the first order of business will be to assess the building for its use and purpose, then identify the historic preservation aspect. She noted they would not be ready for May 2017 Town Meeting.

Case Complex Master Plan – Dr. Heller indicated that some segments are expected to go before Town Meeting in May.

III.A. Approval of Minutes

Dr. Heller requested that Item I.I. be changed in the discussion of the Case Complex Master Plan to read, “construction funds” rather than “design funds.”

MOTION: Upon motion made by Mr. Cobb and seconded by Mr. Henry, the School Committee voted unanimously to approve amended minutes of October 17, 2016.

III.B. Business Actions

Acceptance of Gift

Mrs. Mahr requested the Committee accept a gift from Weston Boosters of \$2,500, intended for payment to Colleen Lanata, Athletics Department Office Aide, for Booster website maintenance through December 2016.

MOTION: Upon motion made by Mr. Cobb and seconded by Dr. Heller, the School Committee voted unanimously to accept gift from Weston Boosters as proposed.

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 \$2,298,592.68 by the Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations.

IV. Executive Session

MOTION: Upon motion made by Dr. Heller and seconded by Mr. Cobb, at 9:03 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, Mr. Henry voting aye, Dr. Heller voting aye, and Mrs. Black voting aye.

Dr. Saini joined the Executive Session at 9:05 PM.

No action taken during Executive Session.

V. Adjournment

MOTION: Upon motion made by Mr. Cobb and seconded by Mr. Henry, at 10:05 PM, the School Committee voted unanimously to adjourn from Executive Session with Mr. Cobb voting aye, Mr. Henry voting aye, Dr. Heller voting aye, Dr. Saini voting aye; and Mrs. Black voting aye.