

MINUTES OF WESTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

October 17, 2016

I. A. Call To Order

A meeting of the Weston School Committee was called to order at 7:03 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; 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; and Ms. Lisa Reitano of the Finance Committee.

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 that Veronica Rigobon, newly elected student representative to the Committee, was unable to attend the meeting. Mrs. Black reviewed the evening's agenda.

Mrs. Black expressed appreciation to WestonPAC for the recent Eye to Eye speaker presentation and to the PTO for the upcoming Parent Education Program on October 27.

I.C. Superintendent's Report – Dr. Tremblay highlighted several recent events, including a collaboration with Brandeis University and Waltham High School coordinated by Dr. Kerry Dunne, History and Social Studies Department Head. WHS history teachers, Robin Wanosky and Monny Cochran, will represent Weston in the innovative project, "The History Makers." Dr. Tremblay reported that Mr. John Bracey, Latin teacher, has received the 2016 Excellence in Teaching Award from the Classical Association of Massachusetts.

He informed the Committee that MCAS and PARCC results have been distributed to families and that Mrs. Bator would analyze the data and make a formal presentation to the School Committee on November 7 and the external program review of English Language Arts/Drama would occur November 8-10, with a team of educators spending the three days in the district. Dr. Tremblay reported on the recent Weston Citizen's Academy Presentation made by school administrators and the upcoming kick off to the Weston Public Schools "Learning How" Series.

Dr. Tremblay reported on his attendance at the National Superintendent's Roundtable Fall 2016 Meeting in Washington DC, noting he had the opportunity to meet with school leaders and educational researchers from around the country. Dr. Tremblay noted next week he would be hosting an informal coffee with community members, the first of four he intends to hold, and that representatives from MSBA would visit Woodland, and Weston Middle and High Schools as part of ongoing assessments. Dr. Tremblay expressed appreciation to the Goldstein family for hosting the Grade 4 social and the Wu family for hosting students from China.

I.D. Subcommittee Reports –

PTO – Mrs. Black noting she would be unable to attend the upcoming PTO meeting. Mr. Henry said he would attend.

Sports Wall – Mr. Cobb said they have officially engaged a designer group for the project.

I.E. Open Forum – No comments.

MAJOR BUSINESS

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

Mrs. Bator presented WEEFC grant proposals for Committee approval. She highlighted the PTO Author Grants, formerly called "Wordfest," and the proposal for funds for a Technical Director for the fall and winter plays. Mrs. Black noted this has been a recurring item. They briefly discussed the budgeted item of more than \$100,000 in support of theater productions.

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 October 11, 2016, totaling \$19,000.

Mr. Henry reported on strategies being planned for increasing involvement and contributions and noted the WEEFC matching grant challenge underway again this year.

II.B. High School Learning Commons Update

Mrs. Black noted that the School Improvement Plan from two years ago, approved by the School Committee, included proposals for a High School Learning Commons and a June Academy. Dr. McCanne updated the Committee on the plans for a Learning Commons to replace the existing library space. He reviewed shortfalls in the current library structure and reported that librarian Alida Hanson and other staff visited other schools and have received feedback from students.

Dr. McCanne presented preliminary architect plans and proposed layout of the new space, noting there are no major structural changes involved. The plans include a smaller circulation desk, a café, meeting space, quiet study areas, maker space, production space, and new furniture with USB power. Dr. McCanne indicated that the committee included himself and former Facilities Director Jerry McCarty, Principal Anthony Parker, Ms. Hansen, and Technology Coordinator Michael Sanford, who will meet again to determine how to proceed. He noted that preliminary cost estimates were higher than expected, so next steps will include receiving cost estimates and discussion of priorities, possible funding sources, and a timeline. Mrs. Black noted when approved by School Committee as part of the SIP, it was agreed that additional funds would not be sought from the Town. The Committee discussed. Mr. Cobb said that any changes should be lasting ones. Resident Dr. John McKenzie suggested visuals of current space be part of future presentations. Ms. Reitano noted that the Town's new Innovation Center includes both maker and production spaces. Dr. McCanne said all options will be considered in future discussions. No action taken.

II.C. Update on New District Website

Dr. McCanne updated the Committee on progress made to date regarding a new district website, one with a more modern look and better search and navigation tools. He said a committee has met with vendors and is still determining district needs, including communication tools, calendars, and mobile phone web presence and application. Dr. McCanne said they are now reviewing set up costs, ongoing hosting and support costs, service offerings, and platform. He said he hopes to have a vendor by the end of October, with a timeline of design structure during November/December, content migration from January to March, training during April and May, and a possible June rollout. The Committee discussed. Mrs. Black asked that pricing information be available during the budget process. Mr. Henry said that the majority of the website should be service to families. Dr. McKenzie encouraged use of surveys to the parents. Dr. McCanne mentioned the use of separate websites by groups, such as WestonPAC and Boosters, noting they could be impacted. Mr. Cobb suggested the PTO be involved in the website process, especially in the area of calendar. PTO President Alix Campbell noted the current website calendars are not user friendly. No action taken.

II.D. Discussion of 2016-2017 School Calendar

Mrs. Black said the Committee would not take action on the calendar this evening, that it would be shared with staff and parents prior to Committee scheduled approval on November 7. Dr. Tremblay said the administration revised the proposed calendar to incorporate some School Committee suggested changes, and that they had been reviewed with principals and Cabinet. He shared various options that the administration considered and reported that in an informal faculty survey conducted by WEA President David Poras asking about attendance on Days of Low Attendance, with 60 responses, 30% indicated they would be absent. Dr. Tremblay said some of the changes in the proposed calendar are moving the January professional development day to the Monday following Thanksgiving and the March one to June, following the last day for

students. He indicated that the administration was looking at the most productive use of the calendar for education. Several parents presented opinions on the calendar. Dr. Tremblay indicated he would send a survey to staff and parents and share results November 7. No action taken.

II.E. Approval of Superintendent's Goals 2016-2017

Dr. Tremblay presented goals, modified to incorporate School Committee feedback.

MOTION: Upon motion by Dr. Heller and seconded by Mr. Henry, the School Committee voted unanimously to approve the [Superintendent's Goals for 2016-2017](#).

II.F. FY 17 Census, Enrollment Information ; FY 18 Enrollment Projections

Mrs. Mahr presented the annual student census and enrollment report, noting that the enrollment is 35 students above projection, with an October 1, 2016 enrollment of 2,111 students, K-12. She shared distribution of enrollment by school and by residency and reviewed courses with enrollments of fewer than 12 and greater than 25 students, noting that no core courses have classes of greater than 25 students. Mrs. Mahr shared steps for enrollment projection development, and indicated a further decrease of students next year. She recommended the hiring of a demographer going forward. The Committee discussed. Committee members expressed concern about the number of classes having low enrolments and how this can be prevented. It was mentioned that the scheduling has to be done earlier in the budget process.

MOTION: Upon motion made by Mr. Cobb and seconded by Dr. Heller, the School Committee voted unanimously to receive the [2016-2017 Enrollment Report](#) and Projections and adopt Table K, K-12 Enrollment History and Projection, for Fiscal Year 2018 budgeting purposes.

II.G. FY17 Adjusted Budget Discussion

Mrs. Mahr presented the FY17 Adjusted Budget for Committee approval.

MOTION: Upon motion made by Mr. Henry and seconded by Mr. Cobb, the School Committee voted unanimously to approve [the FY17 adjusted budget](#) as presented.

II.H. FY 18 Budget Projection (Budget A)

Mrs. Mahr presented initial thoughts and estimates for the FY18 budget, in the form of a preliminary budget review exercise, referred to as Budget A. This included the base budget as a level service budget, taking into account contractual agreements, step increases, mandated programs, a reduction in supplies and materials, and enrollment changes. Mrs. Mahr indicated the projected preliminary budget is 1.62% over FY17.

MOTION: Upon motion made by Mr. Cobb and seconded by Mr. Henry, the School Committee voted unanimously to receive [Budget A](#).

II.I. Facility Project Updates

Case Complex Master Plan – Dr. Heller indicated a request for construction costs would likely go to the voters for May Town Meeting.

Proctor Field – Mr. Cobb reported that a designer had been selected and contract signed. He noted the bid came in lower than anticipated. He noted they would have to be communicating with the community regarding the project prior to May Town Meeting.

Case House – Mrs. Black reported they PBC was working out contract details with architect McKinley, Azlo. She noted that Mr. Jim Pollando was meeting with the Historical Commission and discussing use of availability of CPA funds and scope of project.

III.A. Approval of Minutes

MOTION: Upon motion made by Mr. Cobb and seconded by Mr. Henry, the School Committee voted unanimously to approve the minutes of September 26 and October 4, 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 \$1,986,577.51 by the Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations.

IV. Executive Session – None needed.

V. Adjournment

MOTION: Upon motion made by Dr. Heller and seconded by Mr. Cobb, at 9:49 PM, the School Committee voted unanimously to adjourn.