

## MINUTES OF WESTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

November 13, 2017

### 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; Jack Mullany, Student Representative to the School Committee; Dr. Midge Connolly, Superintendent; Mrs. Pamela Bator, Assistant Superintendent of District Advancement; Dr. Abbie Lareau, Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning; and Mrs. Cynthia Mahr, Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations. Dr. Sanjay Saini joined the meeting at 7:13PM.

Also in attendance were Dr. Lee McCanne, Director of Technology and School Libraries; Ms. Jen Truslow, Director of Student Services; Mr. Anthony Parker, Weston High School Principal; Mr. John Gibbons, Weston Middle School Principal; Ms. Jen Faber, Woodland School Principal; Ms. Erin Maguire, Country School Principal; Ms. Kate Lemons, Grade 6-12 English Department Head; Mr. James McLaughlin, Grade 6-12 Math Department Head, Ms. Erica Cole, Grade 6-12 Science Department Head; Ms. Marla Schay, Grade 6-12 Guidance Department Head; Ms. Katherine Odell, Elementary ELA Specialist; Ms. Susan Erickson, Elementary Science/Social Studies Specialist; and Ms. Tracy Manasouridis, Elementary Math Specialist; and Ms. Lisa Reitano of the Finance Committee.

Mrs. Black welcomed everyone to the meeting, introduced members of the School Committee and Administration, and reviewed the evening's agenda.

- I.B. Chairman's Report – Mrs. Black acknowledged the past couple of weeks were difficult for students, staff and families. She thanked the administrative team for their work and expressed the School Committee's appreciation for the ongoing and future work to address the issues as well as the concerns about the impact of social media.
- I.C. Superintendent's Report – Dr. Connolly reported on the challenges of the past few weeks for the district and community, particularly at the high school. She indicated, as she said in a letter to the community, "we will be mindful and planful as we move forward and provide education for all." Dr. Connolly informed the Committee that the district will be working with Dr. Carroll Blake and Karen Thompson and will be reaching out to the community as plans are developed and put in place. She said that as a district, "we denounce all speech and acts of hate in our schools and are moving forward with forgiveness and understanding through education and support."

Dr. Connolly highlighted some recent events in the district, including the successful Middle School presentation of *The Brothers Grimm Spectaculathon* which involved 30-40 students, under the direction of Claire Higgins, Abe Mills, and Bekki Kowalski and last Friday's well-attended elementary school PTO Science and Math Night that provided many interactive opportunities. Dr. Connolly mentioned the ongoing Bristol Lodge Food Collection sponsored by PTO Community Outreach, METCO fruit sale to benefit the Black Student Union, and Winter Wildcat hat sale to support the Class of 2019.

Dr. Connolly reported on an outstanding fall sports season. She reported that Girls Volleyball and Boys soccer qualified for States, Boys soccer for the first time in three years; Girls Soccer and the Golf team captured DCL Small Championships and qualified for state championships; Crew compiled another fantastic fall campaign, as the team won the Richard W. Stavros Award as the Massachusetts Public School Rowing Association overall champion; and Football, coming off a 1-10 season in 2016 and playing on the road the entire season, heads into the Thanksgiving game at 6-4 after a 12-6 overtime thriller in Bedford last week.

Dr. Connolly reported on last week's event, sponsored by the Weston Historical Society, to kick off the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Weston METCO, noting it drew a standing room only crowd. She indicated there was a panel of people involved in the beginning of METCO in Weston during some difficult times, noting that some of those same people and others is why the

program is still strong here now. She said there will be other events to celebrate the anniversary throughout the year. Dr. Connolly mentioned the upcoming High School Theater Company's Festival of Ten-Minute Plays; reported that singer and songwriter Alastair Moock will work with fourth graders in Field School as Artist in Residence, thanks to the generosity of WEEFC; and noted the upcoming WEEFC and PTO sponsored event at Weston Golf Club for secondary school parents on November 30.

I.D. Subcommittee Reports –

PTO – Mrs. Black noted the joint meeting with Weston PTO and BWMPO took place last week. WestonPAC – Mrs. Black indicated there would be a program on Basic Rights on the upcoming Friday morning.

SAC – Mrs. Black reported that the meeting with students went well with a discussion of recent events and many ideas discussed.

She reminded people of the two forums on Start Time to be held on November 15.

I.E. Open Forum – No comments.

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

Dr. Lareau presented WEEFC grant proposals for Committee approval. She highlighted a new grant for Zoo New England and Rob Bouvier, who will be the keynote of the Ben Sandalls program and work with students on writing.

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 7, 2017, totaling \$13,164.

II.B. Revisit Class Size Policy for Middle & High School

Mrs. Black noted this was an opportunity for the Committee to review its policy on minimum enrollment for Middle and High School classes, currently at 12 students. She said any vote on the policy will be taken at the December 5 meeting. Mrs. Black indicated the Committee must use the Town's resources wisely. Mr. Cobb indicated that, given declining enrollment, he believes the minimum should be higher, while noting the Committee is always open to vote exceptions. Mr. Henry noted that often classes that start the year with 12 students end up with fewer students. Mr. Parker expressed the opinion that the arts would be greatly impacted if the minimum is raised to 15. Ms. Schay spoke to the difficulty of scheduling with fewer sections of courses. Mr. Cobb indicated people should provide feedback and suggestions to individual Committee members. Dr. Connolly mentioned that hopefully Infinite Campus will be able to provide scheduling assistance in the spring. No action taken.

II.C. Learning Commons Update

Mr. Parker updated the Committee on student usage of the Learning Commons, reporting that the quiet study space is used every day, all day and has been a hit since day 1. Jack Mullany said it is nice to have quiet space to work and noted spillover from the quiet space goes into the collaborative space. Mr. Parker said the collaborative space is still evolving with decisions to be made on furniture. The Committee briefly discussed. No action taken.

II.D. Student Performance and Achievement Report

Mrs. Black noted MCAS 2.0, was this past year with all testing done on computers except for science. Dr. Lareau presented the Spring MCAS testing report and summarized her findings and relevant data. She thanked Mrs. Bator for providing the structure for the report and expressed appreciation to the elementary specialists for their work. She encouraged people to read the report and ask questions and noted she would have a parent coffee on Wednesday morning to discuss the results. Dr. Lareau presented an overview and history of the evolution of MCAS, noting that the MCAS Next Generation is an updated, computer-based version that will have all testing on computers in 2019 except History. She reported that Weston outperformed most other districts and noted that Weston is one of the few towns who took the test on computers. The Committee discussed the report.

In response to Mrs. Black's concern about low Science scores, Ms. Cole and Dr. Lareau informed the Committee that the scores are actually last year's scores and the state includes scores of the year the student is in Grade 10, even though science tests may be taken in Grade 9. She said that the current year scores, which will be reported next year, are significantly higher and reflect adjustments in teaching made to address the low scores. There was some discussion about the order of courses in science and math. Ms. Cole noted the Science Department is reviewing this.

Dr. Saini said he would like to have comparable to other towns with just the top group. It was noted there is still an achievement gap at elementary school between Weston students and both African American/Black students and special education students. Dr. Lareau spoke about the standards and noted lots of work remains to be done as we move forward. Mrs. Christen Lacey, WestonPAC Chair, expressed continued concern regarding the results for special education students. She recommended that Weston focus on all students, not just the higher achieving ones, to help close the achievement gap. Mrs. Black suggested that Ms. Truslow in the spring spend time on protocols put in place regarding the data. Dr. Lareau noted that the goal is to address every student in the district. She thanked everyone for their input and said to send her any further questions.

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

II.E. Policy Review/Discussion

Mr. Henry requested the Committee approve the Section J policies presented for review at a prior meeting that had undergone no additional revisions: Policies JIH Searches and Interrogations, JJ Co-Curricular and Interscholastic Programs, JJH Student Travel, JJH-R Student Travel Regulations, JJIB Interscholastic Athletics, JJIBA Adding or Dropping A Sport in the WPS Interscholastic Athletic Program, JJIF Concussion Management Policy, JJIF-R Sports Related Concussion/TBI Protocol, JK Student Conduct, JKA Corporal Punishment, and JKAA Physical Restraint of Students. He noted a slight revision had been made to Policy JE Student Fundraising Activities,

MOTION: Upon motion made by Mr. Cobb and seconded by Mr. Henry the School Committee voted unanimously to approve revised Policies JIH, JJ, JE, JJH, JJH-R, JJIB, JJIBA, JJIF, JJIF-R, JK, JKA, and JKAA

Mr. Henry presented indicated that revised Policy JJF Student Activity Accounts would be tabled for further revision and Committee review.

Mr. Henry presented for a first reading Policies JL Student Welfare, JLA Student Insurance Program, JLC Student Health Services and Requirements, JLCA Physical Examination of Students, JLCAA Growth and Development Screenings, JLCB Immunization of Students, JLCC Communicable Diseases, JLCD Administering Medicines to Students, JLCD Possession of Asthma Inhalers and Epi-Pens, and JLI Student Safety. He noted these will be presented for approval at a later meeting. Mr. Henry indicated he has sent relevant health policies to Nurse Leader Patty Wright for review and policy on immunization to Administrative Council. The Committee discussed the policy on medications such as Tylenol, Advil, etc. Mr. Henry indicated he would discuss that with Ms. Wright as well.

II.E. Town Report /Discussion

Mrs. Black outlined the process on preparation for this year's Town Report. She indicated the report would follow the same format as last year. Mr. Henry agreed to work on this report again this year.

- II.E. Facility Projects Update (Proctor Field, Case House, Case Complex) – Proctor Field/HS Track – Mr. Cobb said the complex would be ready for the Thanksgiving game. Mrs. Black noted a ribbon cutting and celebration of the new field would be held in the spring. Mr. Henry thanked Mr. Cobb for his work on the Proctor Field project.

Case House – Mrs. Black said design development continues.

Case Complex – none presented.

III.A. Approval of Minutes – none presented.

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 \$1,774,168.32 by the Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations.

Acceptance of Gift

Mrs. Mahr requested the Committee accept gift from Weston Boosters to pay Colleen Lanata \$1,250 for website work August 1 to October 15, 2017. There was brief discussion as to whether this had already been accepted at a prior meeting. Mrs. Mahr said she would check past minutes.

MOTION: Upon motion made by Dr. Heller and seconded by Mr. Cobb, the School Committee voted unanimously to accept gift of \$1,250 as proposed from Weston Boosters to pay Colleen Lanata for website work August 1 to October 15, 2017, if gift has not already been accepted.

Basketball Trip to Florida

Dr. Connolly presented a request that the Committee approve a trip for the basketball team to travel to Fort Lauderdale, Florida in December 2017 during Christmas break. She reported the trip, open to all returning varsity players and some junior varsity players, would be December 26-December 31 for 13 players and 2-3 coaches. Mrs. Black noted the School Committee wants to approve all student travel in May of the prior year. Dr. Connolly indicated the coach is not a member of the WHS faculty. Mr. Henry suggested they approve this trip but send a clear message that the School Committee wants to see all trips in May. Committee members noted it is helpful to students and families to know in advance.

MOTION: Upon motion made by Mr. Henry and seconded by Mr. Cobb, , the School Committee voted unanimously approve basketball trip to Fort Lauderdale, Florida in December 2017.

Dr. Saini requested that someone review the details of the trip, scholarship information, etc., noting that the Committee usually receives more information in advance of trip approval.

IV. Executive Session

MOTION: Upon motion made by Mr. Cobb and seconded by Dr. Heller at 10:06 PM the School Committee voted unanimously to adjourn to Executive Session for purposes of discussion of Personnel Matters, with the intent to not 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.

No action taken during Executive Session.

V. Adjournment

MOTION: Upon motion made by Mr. Henry and seconded by Mr. Cobb, at 10:30 PM, the School Committee voted unanimously to adjourn from Executive Session with Mr. Cobb voting aye, Dr. Heller voting aye; Mr. Henry voting aye, Dr. Saini voting aye; and Mrs. Black voting aye.