

MINUTES OF WESTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

February 5, 2018

I. A. Call to Order

A meeting of the Weston School Committee was called to order at 7:07 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; Mrs. Cheryl Antoine, METCO Representative to the School Committee; Jack Mullany, Student Representative to the School Committee; Dr. Midge Connolly, Superintendent; Mrs. Pamela Bator, Assistant Superintendent of District Advancement; and Mrs. Cynthia Mahr, Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations.

Also in attendance were Mr. Anthony Parker, Weston High School Principal; and Finance Committee members Ms. Lisa Reitano, Mr. John Sallay, and Mr. Keith Johnson.

Mrs. Black welcomed everyone to the meeting, introduced members of the School Committee and Administration, and reviewed the evening's agenda. She noted neither Mrs. Nagarajah, Alternating METCO Representative, or Assistant Superintendent Abbie Lareau would be present.

I.B. Chairman's Report – None presented.

I.C. Superintendent's Report – Dr. Connolly said she is pleased to announce the appointment of Dan Green as new Field School Principal. She expressed appreciation to those who conducted site visits, served on interview committees, attended forums, and provided feedback on the very qualified candidates.

Dr. Connolly reported that High School Science teacher Gita Foster was a contributor to the book, "Beyond the Egg Drop: Infusing Engineering into High School Physics," published by the National Science Teachers of America. Dr. Foster's contributions include a write up of the "Golf Ball Boat" and "Build a Speaker," Engineering Design Projects done in Weston.

Dr. Connolly reported on recent achievements of students in the Music Department, noting that Weston High School did very well on January 20 at All-State auditions with ten Weston students selected for the 2018 Massachusetts All-State Band & Orchestra. She reported that students selected are seniors Julie Jesurum and Timothy Yu (Trumpet), Ariel Silverman (French Horn) and Thomas Yu (Cello); Juniors Michael Du (Baritone Sax), Emily Kim (Violin), and Zachary Zhu (Clarinet); and Sophomores Joanne Lee (Violin), Sanghoo Lee (Viola), and Jaehyo Namkung (Bassoon). Dr. Connolly noted the selected students will perform at Boston Symphony Hall on Saturday, March 3. Dr. Connolly reported that 27 Weston Middle and High school students were selected to participate in the Eastern Massachusetts Jr. District Music Festival. She noted they will rehearse with guest conductors and perform in a concert at Lincoln-Sudbury High School on Saturday, March 10. She noted that the student names are posted on our website and will be published in The Weston Town Crier.

Dr. Connolly reported that members of the WHS Theater Company participated in the non-competitive Emerson College High School Theater Festival. She noted that Junior Declan Tellier directed seniors Georgia Harper, Hannah LeBaron, and Terry Mullany in the comedy, "This Dating Thing," by local playwright Brandon M. Crose and indicated that students attended workshops in Stage Management, Musical Theater, and Improvisation. Dr. Connolly encouraged attendance at the Weston Middle School production of *Willy Wonka*.

I.D. Subcommittee Reports – Mrs. Black noted that the SAC meeting was later in the week, PTO meets next week, and WestonPAC would have a presentation on Friday. Dr. Heller updated the Committee on the process underway to hire a replacement for the current EDCO Director, Colleen Dolan, who is retiring. He noted a confidential search is underway, with two finalists for the Board to vote on at its next meeting.

I.E. Open Forum – No comments

II.A. Seat Belt- Discussion and Anticipated Vote

Mrs. Black noted that in December the School Committee was presented with a parent request that seat belts be installed on school buses. Parent Jennifer Muldoon addressed some of the concerns mentioned at that meeting, including concern that older students would not use the restraints. She indicated her request is to have students be safe and protected and noted the American Pediatric Association supports seat belts on buses. Parent Lisa Lappi shared that five years ago her daughter, who was riding a school bus in a neighboring community without using a seat restraint, on a school bus with available seat belts, has permanent traumatic brain injury as a result of the bus coming to sudden stop. She noted the bus was traveling at a speed of less than 30 miles an hour in a residential neighborhood. Ms. Lappi also expressed concern that buses are often driven from schools or homes before children are seated. Mr. Henry, noting that Committee members have reviewed the recent data, said that most injuries occur when students are getting on and off buses, not during rides. He proposed the Committee think about installing cameras on outside of buses. It was noted that, unlike many other communities, Weston owns its buses and it would be costly to replace all buses to those with seat restraints, and it was not known if there could be restraints on some buses and not all. Mr. Cobb requested more research data, preferably not from a firm marketing use of restraints, before the Committee take action, and would like to see a written proposal to consider. Mrs. Mahr indicated she would speak to Mr. Bob Wells, Director of Transportation, and would track some information regarding cameras and other communities who have installed seat belts. At Mr. Cobb's request, Mrs. Mahr also said she would contact our insurance company for details on insurance. Mr. Cobb said he would like this to remain on the Committee's agenda. The Committee indicated it would have further discussion at a future meeting. No action taken.

II.B School Start Time/Scheduling Discussion

Mr. Henry presented an update of the work of the Start Time/Scheduling Innovation Steering Committee. He reviewed results of the recently conducted parent survey on the importance of sleep, reporting that the 722 responses represent 1,271 students. He reported that "89% of respondents believe that more sleep, on average, leads to better health and/or academic outcomes for young people," and "69% of respondents believe that their secondary school student(s) will get more sleep under the proposed new Weston school schedule." Mr. Henry presented the proposed 2018-2019 school schedule and noted it could be adjusted once implemented. Middle and high school hours are proposed to be 8:45am-3:15pm, with doors opening at 8:35am; elementary school hours would be 8:00am-2:00pm, with doors opening at 7:45am. He said they are still looking into before school care possibly to be provided by the Recreation Department. Mr. Henry indicated the schedule for the secondary schools would include a weekly "W" block, a dedicated time when teachers will be available for students. Mr. Henry noted the proposed schedule would provide the opportunities for more sleep for students, improved academic performance, have a positive impact on student emotional and physical health, and eliminate unstructured time after the Middle school day. Mr. Henry reviewed the composition of the Start Time Committee, noting it is co-chaired by Dr. Heller and Mr. Henry and includes Dr. Connolly, Mrs. Mahr, Dr. Lareau, Mrs. Bator, Mr. Parker, Middle School Principal John Gibbons, Woodland School Principal Jen Faber, Nurse Leader Patty Wright, parents from all levels, and teachers from the high school and middle school.

Mr. Henry informed the Committee that the last five questions on the survey were related to homework and provided excellent data for the Homework Committee chaired by Mrs. Bator. He noted a parent forum would be held on February 15 at 8:00am at the high school to discuss the proposed schedule. Mrs. Christen Lacey encouraged more time between when school doors open and beginning of classes. Parent Allison Muzilla encouraged the Committee to think about using the extra 10 minutes at elementary school for lunch or recess. Mr. Henry noted that the School Committee can decide on when schools start and end, but the schools decide the composition of the day. Mrs. Black indicated the Committee would discuss and vote on the proposed schedule at its meeting of February 26. No action taken.

II.C. Discussion of Program Reviews – Cycle, Process, Upcoming Disciplines

Dr. Connolly briefly reviewed the program review process, noting that reviews, which can take five years to complete, generally have a 10-year review cycle that begins with a self-study, external review, report and recommendations, department response and implementation of recommendations. She reported the most recent review was ELA and World Language before that. She said Ms. Kathy Baker would present the World Language Department's recommendations for their review implementation in mid-March. Dr. Connolly informed the Committee that review of the Math Program has begun, with a timeline to be developed.

Dr. Connolly reported that an Athletic Program review would be conducted next, to be chaired by Mr. Michael McGrath, Athletic Director. He will be assisted by Mary O'Brien, Rich Brissette, and Colleen Lanata, all members of the coaching staff. She said they will look at the programming and philosophy and will have the internal review before the School Committee by November, and then an external review will be conducted. Mrs. Black suggested Committee members email Dr. Connolly with thoughts on the review and suggested they consider the philosophy of program, budget and its appropriateness, cycle of uniform rotation, and Boosters as related to the gift acceptance policy. Mr. Cobb noted that the Selectmen are interested in the next 10-year plan for facilities use and suggested that the concussion protocol and discussion of pre-season be included in the review. Ms. Reitano suggested discussion of athletic fees be included as well. Dr. McKenzie commended the Committee for conducting program reviews but expressed the opinion that ten years is a long time between reviews. Ms. Lacey suggested an external review of Special Education might be considered as well, commenting that the recent review conducted by EDCO was not done with the same rigor as other reviews. No action taken

II.E. Discussion of Proposed FY19 School Budget (taken out of order)

Dr. Connolly presented some revisions to the proposed budget. She indicated the removal of the proposed high school instructional coach (.5 FTE) and recent notifications of retirements to occur this year reduces the current proposed FY19 budget to an increase of 2.4% over FY18.

II.D. Review of High School Budget

Mr. Parker answered School Committee, Finance Committee and audience questions regarding the high school proposed budget. He indicated there were not many additions to the proposed budget and noted one unfunded request for campus security. Questions arose, and discussion took place regarding class size and enrollments, technology, sectioning, plans for declining enrollment. Responding to comments made by Mr. Sallay regarding comparison of other district's AP test scores, Mrs. Black indicated it is not the Finance Committee's role to judge. Other Committee members mentioned that test scores are not the only outcome to focus on. Mrs. Black tabled the discussion. No action taken.

II.F. Policy Review

Fields Use Policy Review

The School Committee began a review of the fields use policy, including use by youth groups and adult teams and operation of Tower Lighting for Proctor and Baseball/Softball fields. The Committee discussed possible changes to the existing policies due to the new lights, increased usage, and the restrictions placed by the current policy. Mr. Cobb agreed to revise Policies KF Community Use of School Facilities and KFA Operation of Tower Lighting for Proctor Field. He noted they must be respectful of the residents but indicated there is more of a demand for use of the school fields so firm policies must be in place. Mrs. Black indicated the Committee would revisit the policies in March.

Policy JKAA Restraint Policy

John Henry presented revisions to Policy JKAA – the restraint policy, per recommendations of the recent Coordinated Program Review.

MOTION: Upon motion made by Mr. Cobb and seconded by Dr. Heller, the School Committee voted unanimously to approve revised Policy JKAA as presented.

II.G. Discussion of Town Report

Mr. Henry reports that progress is being made on the Town Report.

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

Mrs. Black updated the Committee on the Case House renovation project. She said many projects would be presented at May Town Meeting. Mrs. Black commended the work of the architect and noted the project is now at \$7.5 million, which includes getting the building envelope done and bringing the building up to code. Much discussion ensued. No action taken.

III.A. Approval of Minutes - none presented.

III.B. Business Actions -

Dr. Connolly mentioned a possible June Academy trip that had not yet been approved. Mrs. Black indicated that Dr. Provenzano should present the proposed trip and suggested she do so at a future meeting. No action taken.

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 \$3,559,341.67 by the Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations.

IV. Executive Session

MOTION: Upon motion made by Dr. Heller and seconded by Mr. Cobb at 9:58 PM the School Committee voted unanimously to adjourn to Executive Session for purposes of discussion of Collective Bargaining and concern regarding statute language, 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.

V. Adjournment

MOTION: Upon motion made by Dr. Heller and seconded by Mr. Cobb at 10:14 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.