

# MINUTES OF WESTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

Case House

January 25, 2018

A meeting of the Weston School Committee was called to order at 3:01 PM at Case House by Mrs. Danielle Black, Chair. In attendance were Mr. Alex Cobb, Dr. Ed Heller and Mr. John Henry of the Weston School Committee; Mrs. Cheryl Antoine, METCO Representative to the School Committee; Dr. Midge Connolly, Superintendent; Dr. Abbie Lareau, Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning; and Mrs. Cynthia Mahr, Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations. Not present: Dr. Sanjay Saini. Mrs. Pamela Bator, Assistant Superintendent for District Advancement, joined the meeting at 4:00PM.

Also present were Ms. Lisa Reitano, Mr. John Sallay and Mr. Keith Johnson of the Finance Committee; Mr. Joseph Russo, Field School Interim Principal, Ms. Jen Faber, Woodland School Principal; Ms. Erin Maguire, Country School Principal; Ms. Jen Truslow, Director of Student Services; Ms. Anne Zernicke, Assistant Director of Student Services; and Ms. LaToya Rivers, Director of Weston METCO.

Mrs. Black welcomed everyone, introduced members of the School Committee and Administration, and reviewed the agenda. She noted that high school budget review would take place on Monday, February 5.

Dr. Connolly presented one new business request for the Committee. She indicated a request from the high school to revise the previously approved 2018-2019 Program of Studies to have Race, Class and Gender as a one-semester course rather than a full year course. She noted that other classes that moved to that model have been robust and a good opportunity for students.

MOTION: Upon motion made by Mr. Cobb and seconded by Mr. Henry, the School Committee unanimously voted to approve the revision to the Program of Studies and offer Race, Class and Gender as a one-semester course.

## Budget Review

Members of the School Committee and Finance Committee liaisons conducted initial review of the proposed FY19 Budgets for METCO, Student Services, Elementary Schools, and Central Office.

Mrs. Mahr reviewed the use of grant funding to support the METCO Program, noting that grants do not cover the costs for the entire program. Mrs. Rivers highlighted the challenges this year of having a reduced community coordinator position. She noted that improvements in the future are anticipated with the PTO adding a board position to assist in Family Friends events.

Dr. Connolly spoke about the proposed leadership restructuring at the elementary schools, noting that plans for leadership restructuring began two years ago with Dr. John Brackett, Interim Superintendent. She indicated a reduction in teacher leaders K-8 and a new stipend structure of \$5,000 for elementary grade leaders and \$7,500 for the Middle School. Dr. Connolly noted that a change like this impacts schools and people, and she emphasized that current leaders have performed well and done much good work. Mrs. Mahr explained that the .5 reduction in the Integration Specialist position, is because it is proposed to have one 1.0 position to cover all three elementary schools in place of the 1.5 currently, a .5 position at Field and a 1.0 shared between Country and Woodland Schools. Ms. Faber, speaking for the team of elementary principals, spoke in support of the proposed instructional coaches model and the Director of Human Resources position.

Ms. Truslow answered School Committee and Finance Committee questions regarding Student Services. She indicated that changes to the language-based classroom structure has been positive change for students and allows for more in-district support. The Committee discussed various aspects of the Student Services program.

Mrs. Mahr indicated there are very few changes proposed in the Central Office. She noted that all six Collective Bargaining Agreements end in 2019, and the administration will likely benefit from the support of legal counsel during negotiations, at an estimated expense of \$30,000. Mrs. Mahr spoke about the need for a Human Resources Director, noting that she has been overseeing the department using Human Resource Specialists and now one HR Specialist and will benefit greatly from a full-time Director. She indicated there has not been one dedicated person to handle the department's responsibilities and requirements, including DESE data and FMLA requests, that require much time and action and would like a person in the role who is approachable for the employees. Ms. Reitano expressed concern about the number of administrators and the cost.

Mr. Henry indicated that the proposed changes to start time do not have much budget impact except for some transportation costs. He said they will have the numbers and financial implications prior to the Committee's vote on the budget. Ms. Reitano said when the school schedules/rotation are reviewed, she would like Finance Committee involvement in the process, if possible. There was some discussion about declining enrollment, its effect on the budget, and how the Committee plans to adjust. Dr. Connolly noted that they are working this year with a consultant and "Planning for Success" with the development of a district strategic plan. She noted a presentation is planned for March.

No action taken.

#### Adjournment

MOTION: Upon motion made by Mr. Cobb and seconded by Dr. Heller, the School Committee voted unanimously to adjourn at 4:31 PM.

MOTION: Upon motion made by Dr. Heller and seconded by Mr. Henry, the School Committee voted unanimously to reconvene at 4:32 PM.

#### Executive Session

MOTION: Upon motion made by Mr. Cobb and seconded by Dr. Heller, at 4:32 PM the School Committee voted to enter into Executive Session for the purposes of discussion of Collective Bargaining, not to return to Open Session, with Mr. Cobb voting aye, Mr. Henry voting aye, Dr. Heller voting aye, and Mrs. Black voting aye.

No action taken during Executive Session.

MOTION: Upon motion made by Mr. Henry and seconded by Mr. Cobb, at 4:47 PM the School Committee voted to adjourn, with Mr. Cobb voting aye, Mr. Henry voting aye, Dr. Heller voting aye, and Mrs. Black voting aye.