

MINUTES OF WESTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

April 24, 2018

I. A. Call to Order

A meeting of the Weston School Committee was called to order at 7:02 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. 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. Not present: Dr. Sanjay Saini of the School Committee.

Also in attendance were Mr. Anthony Parker, Weston High School Principal, Mr. John Gibbons, Weston Middle School Principal, and Ms. Lisa Reitano of the Town of Weston Finance Committee.

Mrs. Black welcomed everyone to the meeting, introduced members of the School Committee and Administration, and reviewed the evening's agenda. She said that World Language Update, Policy Review, and Approval of Minutes would not take place. She noted that Dr. Saini was out of town.

I.B. Chairman's Report – Mrs. Black said from now until the end of the school year is a busy and often stressful time in the schools with students and staff trying to accomplish so much before year ends.

I.C. Superintendent's Report – Dr. Connolly highlighted recent student achievements, noting that WHS students did very well on the recent National Latin Exam. Ezra Gordon, Albert Wu and Neil Malur all received gold medals (*summa cum laude*); Abigail Lenox Lukas Muzila, Annaliesa Dahl, Michael Rodgers, John Lenox, Nicholas Shashkov, Charles Marchiiony, Peter Lee, Miki Chiang, Bryant Zeng, and Katherine Barber received silver medals (*maxima cum laude*), ten students earned *magna cum laude*, and thirteen students achieved *cum laude*. She noted all names are posted on the district website. In Art Department news, Dr. Connolly informed the Committee that junior Maxwell Fernandez was selected for Art All-State, an intense and highly competitive two-day artmaking experience, and Jackie Liu had a drawing selected for Next Up! 2018 Juried HS Student Art Exhibition at the Page Waterman Gallery in Wellesley.

In Math achievements, Dr. Connolly reported that Country School is a Continental Math League Regional First Place Winner at third grade for 2017-18, She reported that Benjamin Rosenfeld, Jay Zhu and Yasmeen Alam scored perfect scores, and honorable mention (almost perfect scores) were awarded to Riley Andrasco, Torben Valenta and Hamilton Tillen. Dr. Connolly reported that Weston has once again been named a "Best Communities for Music Education" by the NAMM Foundation.

Dr. Connolly updated the Committee on administrative searches, noting that the next three days will be busy ones, with visits by finalists for the positions of Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Operations and Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning. She said there was a strong pool of candidates and a good process used to put forward very qualified finalists. She noted the expectation to recommend appointments by the next Committee meeting.

I.D. Subcommittee Reports – Mrs. Black noted upcoming SAC meeting on May 8.

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 the proposals. Mr. Cobb questioned the proposal for Virtual Trips in 8th grade science and the purchase of additional technology devices. He requested the Committee table this proposal until further information could be provided by Dr. McCanne, stating that he "wants to be sensitive to how many platforms we are supporting." The Committee discussed and agreed to table that item.

MOTION: Upon motion made by Mr. Cobb and seconded by Mr. Henry, the School Committee voted unanimously to approve WEEFC grants in amount of \$19,078.00 as proposed in memo of March 20, 2018, excluding proposed grant #823-809-18.

II.B World Language Update – no update

II.C Homework Committee Update

Mrs. Bator provided an update on the Homework Committee's work this past year. She reported the committee, comprised of faculty, administrators, parents and School Committee representative, was charged with a review of the 2011 policy and to see what other districts do, conduct surveys, research public and private schools across the country, and present proposed revisions to the policy. She indicated a vast diversity of policies exist. Mrs. Bator thanked committee member Vicky Rakov for countless hours working on the surveys that were sent to students, families and faculty. Mrs. Bator indicated they are continuing to conduct data analysis and will have a summer workshop to develop and implement guidelines on time, purpose, balance, clarity and consistency of homework through collaboration across schools. Dr. Heller noted the overlapping of this issue and the start time committee's work. Mr. Cobb mentioned math homework and the need for parent resources. Some discussion of homework occurred, with the mention of need for teacher feedback and timeliness of that feedback. In response to Mrs. Black's request that the Committee be updated regarding the policy, Mrs. Bator indicated she would hopefully have an update to the policy by the end of the school year.

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

II.D High School/Middle School Sectioning Discussion

The Committee reviewed the preliminary course sectioning and average class size for the Middle and High Schools. Mr. Gibbons noted that the Middle School scheduling is not complete yet, but he expressed confidence that classes will be in line with Committee guidelines. He indicated a robust sign-up for languages as well as exceptional sign-ups for music electives. Mr. Parker indicated that there are no overall increases in FTEs at the high school, noting there were a few more override requests to process. He said that all high school classes should be at 15 or above except for Conceptual Chemistry, a Math class and capstone classes such as Latin V. He indicated there are some classes that will not run and they are seeking alternatives. Mrs. Black indicated this would be an agenda item on May 21 and requested a written update be provided the week prior to the meeting. No action taken.

II.E Report on METCO Budget and Funding

Mrs. Mahr reviewed the process of development of the METCO grant, noting that the FY19 grant is based on METCO student enrollment in FY18, or 161 students. She noted this would mean a reduction in the grant of approximately \$30,000. Mrs. Mahr reviewed revenue sources and expenses for the METCO program. She discussed the current status of the METCO budget for FY19, including the recommendation that the School Committee authorize the school administration to submit the annual METCO grant application.

MOTION: Upon motion by Mr. Cobb and seconded by Dr. Heller the School Committee voted unanimously to authorize the school administration to submit the annual METCO grant application.

Mrs. Mahr stressed the importance that the grant be submitted as soon as the Legislature passes the budget.

II.F. Policy Review – - None presented.

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

Case House - Mrs. Black reported on a good meeting last week with Chief Soar in attendance. She said access points and egress were discussed. The PBC was in contact with Traffic and Sidewalk

committee and consensus was reached not to have a gate. She said they are advocating for one way access to Case House.

Proctor Field – Mr. Cobb reported that lights are on and the new policy in place. He said lights will be reviewed and may need tweaking. Mr. Cobb said he is unsure when the bathrooms will be ready.

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 \$2,512,096.10 by the Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations.

Acceptance of Gift

Mrs. Mahr informed the Committee that Eversource has generously donated a live red oak tree to Field School in honor of the Class of 2025, current fifth grade. Dr. Heller noted that the location of a tree had been preapproved as part of the Case Complex landscape design layout. Mrs. Mahr reported the tree has an estimated value of \$500 and that Eversource has also donated the cost of delivery and planting, with an estimated cost of \$300. Noting that the total value of gift from Eversource is \$800, she also noted that Dr. Connolly had accepted the gift.

MOTION: Upon motion made by Mr. Cobb and seconded by Mr. Henry, the School Committee voted unanimously to ratify the action of Superintendent Connolly in accepting the gift of a tree from Eversource.

IV. Executive Session

MOTION: Upon motion made by Mr. Cobb and seconded by Dr. Heller at 8:48 PM the School Committee voted unanimously to adjourn to Executive Session for purposes of discussion of collective bargaining issues with Weston Education Association and legal matter, with the intent to not return to Open Session, with Mr. Cobb voting aye, Dr. Heller voting aye; Mr. Henry voting aye, and Mrs. Black voting aye.

V. Adjournment

MOTION: Upon motion made by Mr. Cobb and seconded by Dr. Heller, at 9:15 PM, the School Committee voted unanimously to adjourn from Executive Session with Mr. Cobb voting aye, Dr. Heller voting aye; Mr. Henry voting aye, and Mrs. Black voting aye.