

MINUTES OF WESTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
April 8, 2019

I. A. Call To Order

A meeting of the Weston School Committee was called to order at 7:05 PM at Blue Hills Collaborative, 20 Como Road, Hyde Park by Mr. John Henry, Chair. In attendance were Mrs. Danielle Black, Mr. Alex Cobb, and Dr. Ed Heller of the School Committee; Mrs. Cheryl Antoine and Ms. Onika Jenkins, METCO Representatives to the School Committee; Dr. Midge Connolly, Superintendent; Dr. J. Kimo Carter, Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning; and Ms. Sheri Matthews, Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations

Also in attendance was Ms. La Toya Rivers, Weston METCO Director; and members of the Weston METCO staff Cyril Kakulu, Theresa Dryden, and Riola Lazo.

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

I.B. Chairman's Report – None.

I.C. Superintendent's Report – Dr. Connolly highlighted the performance of the Weston High School's Science and Math Teams at their State meets, reporting that the Math Team came in first place in the State. The team includes seniors Jeff Liu and Sasha Shashkov, juniors Ezra Gordon and Andrew Yao, sophomore Ben Chen, and freshman William Houston. Dr. Connolly noted that Sasha and William achieved individual perfect scores at the meet. The team, coached by Alison Langsdorf and Mary Fierabend, will attend the New England Championship meet after April vacation. Dr. Connolly reported that the Science Team also had a solid performance at the State Science Olympiad Meet and placed 14th out of 55 schools. Finishing in first place in "Python Coding" were Adi Saligrama and Anthony Cui and in 3rd place in "Chem Clue" were Willy Middlezong and Kevin Ma.

Dr. Connolly informed the Committee that Ezra Gordon has become the third student in Weston history to qualify for the United States of America Mathematics Olympiad, and Ezra and Andrew Gumbert also qualified for the National level of the United States Chemistry Olympiad. She reported that junior Angad Jasuja qualified for the National Junior Science and Humanities competition.

Dr. Connolly reported that the Athletics Spring season is off to a great start and extended congratulations to the Weston students named as Winter Season *Boston Globe* All-Scholastics: Stella Alphas – Skiing, Kathryn Milligan – Swimming, and Dale Nickerson – Swimming/Diving; named *Globe* Coach of the Year were John Monz for Indoor Track and Kevin Rowe for Girls Skiing. Dr. Connolly indicated that Dale Nickerson was also named an All Scholastic in Swimming/Diving by the *Boston Herald*.

Dr. Connolly reported that Weston has again received a 2019 Best Communities for Music Education award from the NAMM Foundation. She noted that Weston hosted the League of Women Voters 11th Annual Civics Bee where teams from Sudbury, Wayland, Weston and Concord-Carlisle competed. The Weston team included Middle School students Caroline Curley, Clara Odio, Daniel Zhu and Tobi Jonas; High School students John Goulart, Adele Mah, Eli Berman and Arda Cataltepe; and community members Pamela Fox, Vincent Rougeau, Joe Berman and John Henry. Weston's team was coached by Kerry Dunne.

I.D. Subcommittee Reports – None.

Mr. Henry mentioned that 40B projects are a "hot topic" in town and discussion of their potential impact will be an agenda item at the next School Committee meeting. He noted the School Committee is not endorsing any projects but are in the information gathering stage.

I.E. Open Forum – No comments

II.A. 2018-2019 Report on Weston METCO Program

Ms. Rivers reported on the 2018-2019 Weston METCO Program, noting that there are ten graduating METCO seniors this year. She shared the list of colleges at which the students have been accepted, noting that decisions will depend on financial awards. Ms. Rivers highlighted the accomplishments of students inside and outside of school, noting that METCO students are National Honor Society members, class officers, members of Student Councils, members of School Councils, and participate in theater, athletics, chorus, band and orchestra, art clubs and other after school activities. Ms. Rivers updated progress on last year's goals and noted the hiring of a new "amazing" community coordinator. She discussed changes in the summer program and working to update Family Friends and family alliances. Ms. Rivers thanked the Boston Weston METCO Parents Organization (BWMPO), the Weston PTO, Weston Public Schools administration, schools and community, School Committee, students, Historical Society, Wildcat Fund, Black Student Union, and the METCO staff. The Committee discussed the report.

Mr. Cobb inquired if students receive assistance with scholarships and financial aid from the Weston Guidance Department and asked if students are using the seat belts on the buses. Dr. Connolly indicated the seat belts are being used inconsistently. Ms. Rivers noted the Guidance Department hosts small evenings in Boston for parents. Discussion took place regarding course selection and if students are taking the most challenging courses. Mr. Cobb noted Ms. Rivers might encourage students to explore the embedded Honors options. A parent asked about the elimination of the weighted GPA, and Dr. Connolly said that more than 200 colleges were surveyed and stressed that they look at the rigor of the course and program a student takes, not the GPA.

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

II.B. BWMPO Annual Report

Ms. Keitrice Johnson, BWMPO Co-Chair, spoke about the year of transitions. She stressed the collaborative efforts undertaken this year, partnering with the Weston PTO and meeting with Director of District Advancement Amy Kelly. She stressed a one community mentality, not one with Boston students and Weston students, but one with all students., though noted the challenge presented with students living in Boston and being educated in Weston. Ms. Johnson also encouraged Boston families to become more engaged in their children's experience. No action taken.

II.C. Report on METCO Budget and Funding –

Ms. Matthews discussed the current status of the METCO budget for FY20, noting she anticipates a decrease of approximately \$1800. She noted the grant covers the cost of METCO staff and some transportation but does not fully cover the cost of the program. She indicated the grant would be written with Ms. Rivers' assistance.

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

II.D. Program of Studies – Change in Language

Dr. Connolly presented proposed changes for the previously approved Grade 6-12 Program of Studies. She said the change reflects the elimination of the weighted GPA and the new Seal of Biliteracy in the World Language Department. She requested the Committee approve the changes. It was noted that the unweighted GPA would go into effect for the incoming freshman class, and Dr. Connolly indicated she anticipates some questions will arise "down the road."

MOTION: Upon motion by Mr. Cobb and seconded by Mrs. Black, the School Committee voted unanimously to approve proposed language changes to the 2019-2020 Grade 6-12 Program of Studies.

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

Case House - Mrs. Black reported that the PBC has similar concerns as the School Committee had regarding the dark colors in the lobby and different iterations of greens and yellows for the offices. They suggested that the number of colors be narrowed down for maintenance purposes and were waiting for the architect to respond. She noted cost of additional framing and other construction costs and noted there cannot be any more changes. Mrs. Black said construction is moving along quickly and, in response to a question, she will request photos to be posted on the website.

Proctor Field – Mr. Cobb said a bid for irrigation on Field 6 has gone out as well as ongoing work on access ramp from student parking lot. He discussed the need to push to have work completed now on the building rather than waiting until fall.

III.A. Approval of Minutes

MOTION: Upon motion made by Mr. Cobb and seconded by Dr. Heller, the School Committee voted unanimously to approve minutes of March 25, 2019.

III.B. Business Actions

Certificate of Warrant

Ms. Matthews presented a Certificate of the Secretary, approval of warrants for payment.

MOTION: Upon motion made by Mrs. Black and seconded by Dr. Heller, the School Committee voted unanimously to approve the warrant for payment of \$1,760,293.52 by the Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations.

Acceptance of Gift

Fifth Grade Tree –

The Committee discussed proposed gift of trees, of around \$2000 total value, to be donated by Eversource, and the planting and trees sourced from Weston Nurseries. Mrs. Black indicated the Tree Advisory Group (TAG) met with Mr. Gary Jarowski, Director of Facilities, about the trees and placement and said TAG would like the School Committee to accept the two trees, one to be planted on island in library parking lot, which may be on school property. She told TAG that the Committee would not continue to accept trees without a 3-5 year plan in place. She suggested donations of shrubs or plantings rather than trees might be considered instead. The Committee discussed.

MOTION: Upon motion made by Mr. Cobb and seconded by Mrs. Black, the School Committee voted unanimously to accept gift of two trees to be planted on Field School property, subject to identification and approval of trees and their placement by the Facilities Department.

IV. Executive Session

MOTION: Upon motion made by Mr. Cobb and seconded by Dr. Heller at 8:23 PM the School Committee voted unanimously to adjourn to Executive Session for purposes of discussion of Collective Bargaining, with the intent to not return to Open Session, with Mr. Cobb voting aye, Mrs. Black voting aye, and Mr. Henry voting aye

During Executive Session, participants discussed negotiations with the WEA. Various points of negotiation and strategies were brought up and discussed. No action taken.

V. Adjournment

MOTION: Upon motion made by Dr. Heller and seconded by Mr. Cobb at 9:23 PM, the School Committee voted unanimously to adjourn from Executive Session with Mr. Cobb voting aye, Mrs. Black voting aye, and Mr. Henry voting aye