

MINUTES OF WESTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
April 23, 2019

I. A. Call To Order

A meeting of the Weston School Committee was called to order at 6:00 PM at Weston High School by Mr. John Henry, Chair. In attendance were Mr. Alex Cobb, Mrs. Danielle Black and Dr. Ed Heller of the School Committee; Jeff Beaudoin, Student Member of the School Committee; Dr. Midge Connolly, Superintendent; and Dr. J. Kimo Carter, Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning. Not present: Dr. Sanjay Saini.

Also present were Ms. Amy Kelly, Director of District Advancement; Mr. Anthony Parker, High School Principal; Mr. John Gibbons, Middle School Principal; Ms. La Toya Rivers, Weston METCO Director; Ms. Kathy Baker, Director of World Languages; and Ms. Marla Schay, Grade 6-12 Guidance Department Head.

I.B. Chairman's Report – Mr. Henry welcomed everyone to the meeting, introduced members of the School Committee and Administration, and reviewed the evening's agenda. He noted that this meeting would be the last for Dr. Ed Heller and Dr. Sanjay Saini and expressed appreciation for their many years of service as School Committee members.

I.C. Superintendent's Report – Dr. Connolly reviewed upcoming events, noting that Spring Fling, hosted by the Weston High School Student Council, would be on Saturday, April 27, on the Town Green. She noted that proceeds of this event for children in grades K-5 will benefit Camp No Limits, a camp for young people with limb loss. Dr. Connolly encouraged attendance at this weekend's Middle School Drama Club production of *In a Nutshell* and next weekend's High School Theater Company's production of *Fiddler on the Roof*. She also noted that the Annual Staff Recognition Program would be held on Wednesday, May 1, at which faculty and staff who have served milestone years and those staff who will be retiring this year will be recognized.

I.D. Subcommittee Reports – None presented.

I.E. Open Forum – No comments.

II.A. Approval of Trip Proposals for 2019-2020

The Committee reviewed student travel proposals the 2019-2020 school year. Ms. Baker presented a High School June Academy service-oriented trip to the Dominican Republic, a trip to China during April vacation 2020 for both Middle and High School students, and a new April Middle School trip to France. She reported that this year's approved trip to Quebec did not take place and there will not be a trip to Ecuador next year. The Committee discussed the trips. Mr. Cobb questioned the amount of time (three days) students would work with pandas in China, and Ms. Baker noted students would be using their Chinese language skills to communicate with workers. Mr. Henry asked about safety, and Ms. Baker indicated all trips would be in safe places.

Ms. Rivers presented a proposed June Academy 2020 trip to South Africa. She noted the South Africa trip previously approved did not take place, mainly due to its cost. She indicated there would be student fundraising to lower the cost of this trip, hopefully to around \$3,000 and she would seek grant opportunities for travel assistance for METCO students. The Committee discussed the idea of combining with another district to reach 12 students with two chaperones.

Ms. Angela Lee, High School History teacher, presented a proposed June Academy trip to Jordan that would include a civics action project and service learning in refugee camps. Committee members expressed concern about the safety of travel to Jordan. The Committee noted it would want to adhere to State Department recommendations. Audience members and parents Dr. and Mrs. Qureshi spoke in support of the trip, noting danger is usually at borders not in interior of the country. Mr. Cobb asked about the treatment of female students, and Dr. Qureshi noted Jordan is very westernized. As the Committee had not had opportunity to review

ahead of time and wanted more information on safety, they did not vote on this trip but agreed to review at their next meeting.

MOTION: Upon motion made by Mr. Cobb and seconded by Mrs. Black, the School Committee voted unanimously to approve proposed student trips to China, South Africa and France and to defer a vote on proposed trip to Jordan.

II.B. Presentation on Social Emotional Learning/Anti-Bullying

Dr. Connolly, Dr. Carter and Ms. Kelly presented an update on Social Emotional Learning and Anti-Bullying efforts in the district. Dr. Connolly reviewed the district goals, noting the focus on student wellbeing. She reviewed data on bullying for the past three years and acknowledged a glitch in submitting the data to DESE. Dr. Connolly acknowledged that students make mistakes, often with social media and student interaction and noted the need to teach students skills in these areas. Dr. Connolly reviewed some actions taken in the district, including training teachers and administrators in the law, developing more specific ways for bullying to be reported, providing professional development for teachers, and revisiting and emphasizing practices for responding to complaints. Dr. Carter reported that 75% of bullying is due to bias and noted a one-time behavior is not bullying. He reviewed Weston's procedures for reporting and responding to bullying and retaliation and noted most incidents of bullying are on-line.

Ms. Kelly spoke about prevention as the best tool against bullying and said that everyone has a role to play in creating a safe and supportive climate, from the home to the classroom. She said they are working to ensure students are supported and able to build resilience. Ms. Kelly noted that Social Emotional Learning (SEL) teams, Challenge Success Team, Safety Team, Administrative Council, and school-based and grade level teams are all using data to work on school culture and climate. Mr. Henry noted a WEEFC funded program, Sources of Strength, to be piloted at the Middle School, which will provide opportunity for students to be trained to become leaders among their peers. The Committee discussed. Student member Jeff Beaudoin spoke about his positive experiences being able to talk to teachers whenever he needed to. He said the SEL report and presentation should be publicized to students and they should be reminded they have opportunity to report. A Field School student spoke about her experiences and suggested that teachers do not always "get at the root of the problem." No action taken.

II.C. High School/Middle School Sectioning Discussion

Mr. Parker and Ms. Schay presented preliminary course sectioning and average class size for the High School based on course selections. Ms. Schay said she anticipates some additional shifting. Committee members noted that some classes, such as Grade 9 English, still seem small and requested some justification for these. Mr. Cobb requested that future sectioning documents include physical limitations that may limit class size. Mr. Cobb also suggested the need to take a hard look at the number of language offerings, noting that all are singletons and have small class size except for Spanish. He questioned the district's ability to continue to offer four languages and noted that parents should be made aware of and involved in future discussions regarding language offerings. The Committee noted that Health classes are small and suggested a reduction in number of classes there. Mrs. Black stressed the need to be respectful of the taxpayers of Weston and requested the high school to be mindful of that.

Mr. Gibbons presented course sectioning data for the Middle School and noted language current projection in Grade 6 are three Spanish classes, two French, one Latin, and one Mandarin, currently at 13 students, with not all requests submitted yet. No action taken.

II.D. Discussion of 40B Development Proposals

The Committee held a discussion on the impact of proposed 40B developments. Mr. Henry noted the Committee would not come out in favor of or against any 40B but were only discussing the impact of additional students, with the schools' limited ability to expand.

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

Case House – Mrs. Black reported Case House renovation is moving along quickly and on schedule. She said they are dealing with some structural support issues and having active dialogue regarding shingles. No action taken.

II.F. Memorandum of Agreement with Local 690 AFSCME (Cafeteria)

Mrs. Black reported that successful negotiations have been reached with Food Services, with an increase of 4.2% over three years. She reviewed changes in the MOA, noting increases in longevity and paid holiday pay. Sheri Matthews has requested you vote to approve and sign the MOA that will be at the meeting.

MOTION: Upon motion made by Dr. Heller and seconded by Mr. Cobb, the School Committee voted unanimously to approve the Memorandum of Agreement with Local 690 AFSCME (Cafeteria) effective August 1, 2019 through July 31, 2022

III.A. Approval of Minutes

MOTION: Upon motion made by Mr. Cobb and seconded by Dr. Heller, the School Committee voted unanimously to approve the minutes of April 8 and April 11, 2019.

III.B. Business Actions

Certificate of Warrant – None presented.

V. Adjournment

MOTION: Upon motion made by Mr. Cobb and seconded by Mrs. Black at 8:00 PM the School Committee voted unanimously to adjourn.

Documents used by Committee:

- 2019-20 HS Sectioning Summary
- Trip Proposals
(*South Africa, China, France, Dominican Republic*)