

MINUTES OF WESTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
May 20, 2019

I. A. Call To Order

A meeting of the Weston School Committee was called to order at 6:35 PM at Weston Middle School Chorus Room by Mr. John Henry, Chair. In attendance were Ms. Anita Raman and Mrs. Rachel Stewart of the School Committee; former School Committee member Dr., Ed Heller; Dr. Midge Connolly, Superintendent; Ms. Sheri Matthews, Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Operations; and Dr. J. Kimo Carter, Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning. Not present: Mrs. Danielle Black, Mr. Alex Cobb of the School Committee.

Executive Session

Upon motion made by Mr. Henry and seconded by Ms. Raman, the Weston School Committee voted to enter into Executive Session at 6:36 PM for the purpose of discussing collective bargaining matters, with the intent to return to open session, with Mrs. Black voting aye, Mr. Cobb voting aye, Mrs. Stewart voting aye, Ms. Raman voting aye, and Mr. Henry voting aye.

Participants discussed negotiations with the WEAAA, and WEA. Various points and strategies were brought up and discussed. No action taken.

Upon motion made by Mr. Henry and seconded by Ms. Raman, the Weston School Committee voted to adjourn from Executive Session and go into open session at 6:58 PM, with Mrs. Stewart voting aye, Ms. Raman voting aye, and Mr. Henry voting aye.

II. A. Call To Order in Open Session

A meeting of the Weston School Committee was called to order at 7:00 PM at Weston Middle School Amy Potter Center by Mr. John Henry, Chair. In attendance were Ms. Anita Raman and Mrs. Rachel Stewart of the School Committee; Dr. Midge Connolly, Superintendent; Ms. Sheri Matthews, Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Operations; and Dr. J. Kimo Carter, Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning. Mr. Alex Cobb joined the meeting at 7:03 PM. Not present: Mrs. Danielle Black of the School Committee.

Also present were Dr. Lee McCanne, Director of Technology and School Libraries; Ms. Jennifer Truslow, Director of Student Services; Mr. Anthony Parker, High School Principal; Mr. John Gibbons, Middle School Principal; Ms. Marla Schay, Grade 6-12 Guidance Department Head; and Ms. Lisa Reitano of the Town of Weston Finance Committee.

II.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.

II.C. Superintendent's Report – Dr. Connolly informed the Committee that 54 Weston students will graduate this year with the Massachusetts Seal of Biliteracy, 14 of those with distinction. She noted this is an impressive number, greater than 25% of the senior class. Dr. Connolly said that these outstanding results reflect the commitment the community has made to the grades 1-12 language program and the focus on proficiency-based instruction and assessment the department has made.

Dr. Connolly reported that Kimya Jalinous was awarded an Honorable Mention in this year's *Boston Globe* Scholastic Art and Writing Awards for her short story *I May Only Be Dreaming* on which she worked with English teacher Mr. Michael Kelley. She reported that Weston Middle and High School students were completely engaged in learning African dance with the lessons from **Origination** dance troupe in a presentation organized by METCO Director La Toya Rivers. This performance by professional youth dancers was followed by a Q&A with students and a chance for everyone to dance together. Dr. Connolly noted that the event was made possible through METCO cultural mini-grants

Dr. Connolly reported that concerts at all levels have been more than impressive, from High School, Middle School, Field School, Woodland School and culminating with Country School's concert this past week. She noted there continues to be an extremely high percentage of students participating in some aspect of the award-winning music program

Dr. Connolly provided an update on Athletics, noting that Boys Lacrosse, Boys Outdoor Track and Girls Tennis teams have all won the DCL small Champions. In addition, she noted that girls lacrosse is currently ranked 22nd in the state and boys tennis and all of the above mentioned teams have qualified for the state tournament. She reported that the crew program currently has a number of Weston rowers preparing for nationals.

Dr. Connolly spoke about a recent visit to social studies classes by a Vietnam Veteran, sponsored by WEEFC. She said that Department Head Kerry Dunne said the speaker was incredible, powerful and energetic and would be a good speaker for other grades.

- I.D. Subcommittee Reports – Mr. Henry reported that Negotiations with Collective Bargaining Units are well underway with the four bargaining units, with one unit close to settling and bus drivers completed earlier in the year. He said they hope to have all negotiations completed before the end of the fiscal year.

Mr. Henry reviewed the guidelines that apply during the public comment period, noting that those who wish to speak should wait to be recognized by the Chair and identify themselves when recognized. He also reminded people that they respect the confidentiality and privacy of staff and students.

- I.E. Open Forum –. No public comments.

II.A. Student Services Annual Report

Ms. Truslow presented the annual report on Student Services, noting that Student Services includes Special Education; related services (OT, PT, Speech, Psychology, APE); English Language Learners; Health Services; Home-based Services; and McKinney-Vento Homeland Assistance Act. She provided program updates on each area and reflected on the goals of the current year. Ms. Truslow reported that there are 70 ELL students this year and indicated that ELL students arriving are coming in at a lower proficiency level than in the past. She reported this year there are 30 students in out of district placement, noting that two thirds of those are in day schools. She noted the integrated pre-school has 48 students this year. The Committee discussed the report. No action taken.

II.B. Guidance Department Program Review Report

Ms. Schay presented the report of the Guidance Department Self-Study conducted this year in anticipation of an external review next year. She noted the review committee, comprised of K-12 teachers and administrators, reviewed the department's organizational structure, indirect and direct services, meeting student needs, support for counselors, and guiding thoughts or the external team. Mr. Cobb asked about the use of outside college counseling used by many students, and Ms. Schay indicated that the department does provide college counseling and advice for many students who do not use outside counselors. Ms. Reitano asked about student use of Naviance to assist with college searches, which took into account the weighted GPA, and its possible replacement that would not recognize strength of classes. Ms. Schay noted they do not know yet but noted the replacement service does not recognize anything beyond GPA as Naviance did. No action taken.

II.C. High School/Middle School Sectioning Discussion

The Committee reviewed data provided by the principals. Mr. Gibbons noted he currently has no classes with fewer than 15 students. He indicated the language classes are the only ones with low numbers, and he indicated he would close enrollment in French to any move in sixth graders. Ms. Schay and Mr. Parker presented data on class size at the high school and indicated classes with current enrollment below 15. Mr. Parker requested the Committee approve Journalism, currently at 13 students, an Intermediate Algebra section with 6 students, five French classes under 15, a video course. They discussed all other courses with low enrollments.

The Committee held a discussion on languages, with Mr. Cobb noting the need to eliminate one language due to reduced enrollment. Dr. Connolly noted she is in discussion with Ms. Baker and Dr. Carter about how to address this long term but they were not prepared to make a decision at this time. Mr. Parker said he would meet with Ms. Baker tomorrow. The Committee discussed small class sizes in various disciplines and indicated they would like more information before approving changes. Mr. Parker said he would review numbers again and make recommendations to Dr. Connolly. Ms. Reitano indicated the Finance Committee has requested a reduction of greater than 1.48 at the high school. No action taken.

III.D. Facility Projects Update (Proctor Field, Case House, Case Complex) – Mr. Cobb presented a brief update on Proctor Field.

III.E. Discussion of Solar Panels

The Committee held a discussion regarding proposed solar panels at Field School. It was noted that an issue the requirement of a 20-year lease with penalties for early termination. Concern was expressed if there becomes need to expand the school due to increased enrollment due to the potential impact of 40B developments. It was noted that they are waiting for information from the town regarding the gym roof. Noting that the longer they wait, the less beneficial the proposal would be, Committee members said they would be comfortable moving forward and supporting the proposal for solar panels once the “I’s are dotted and T’s crossed” and additional information provided. No action taken.

III.F. PTO Report

Leila Hooper and Amy Olivier presented the PTO Annual Report. They reported that Membership is down to 740 this year and indicated they have created a new position, “PTO Family Engagement.” They presented an update on Creative Arts, STEM Council (formerly Science and Math Council), PTO Community Outreach efforts, the Green Team, and the collaborative efforts between Weston PTO and BWMPO. No action taken.

IV.A. Approval of Minutes

Mr. Henry indicated he had some edits to make to the minutes regarding discussion during Executive Session.

MOTION: Upon motion made by Mr. Cobb and seconded by Mrs. Stewart, the School Committee voted unanimously to approve the minutes of May 7, 2019, subject to revision by Mr. Henry.

IV.B. Business Actions

Certificate of Warrant

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

MOTION: Upon motion made by Mr. Cobb and seconded by Ms. Raman, the School Committee voted unanimously to approve the warrant for payment of \$1,975,846.21 by the Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations.

V. Adjournment

MOTION: Upon motion made by Mr. Cobb and seconded by Mr. Henry, at 10:13PM the School Committee voted unanimously to adjourn

Documents used by Committee:

- Student Services Annual Report
- Grade 6-12 Guidance/Counseling Program Self-Study Report
- MS/HS Sectioning Planning Documents