

MINUTES OF WESTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
June 17, 2019

I. Call to Order

A meeting of the Weston School Committee was called to order at 6:30 PM at Weston Middle School by Mr. John Henry, Chair. In attendance were Mrs. Danielle Black, Mr. Alex Cobb, 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.

Executive Session

Upon motion made by Mr. Henry and seconded by Mrs. Black, the Weston School Committee voted to enter into Executive Session at 6:33 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.

No action taken during Executive Session.

Upon motion made by Mr. Henry and seconded by Mrs. Black, the Weston School Committee voted to adjourn from Executive Session and go into open session at 6:55 PM, with Mrs. Black voting aye, Mr. Cobb voting aye, 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 7:01 PM at Weston Middle School by Mr. John Henry, Chair. In attendance were Mrs. Danielle Black, Mr. Alex Cobb, Ms. Anita Raman and Mrs. Rachel Stewart of the School Committee; Mrs. Cheryl Antoine and Ms. Onika Jenkins, Alternating METCO Representatives to 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.

Also present was Mr. Michael McGrath, Athletics Director and Mrs. Tess Sousa, Director of Food Services.

Mr. Henry welcomed everyone to the meeting, introduced members of the School Committee and Administration and indicated the Chair's report and other opening items would be delayed so that the students could present at this time.

III.A. Teaching & Learning - Student Presentation

Weston High School students Julia Hobenberg and Sydney Patel shared details from their Freshman Geometry project, the Scientific and Mathematical Discoveries of Spirographs. Math teacher Alison Langsdorf said that their paper has been submitted for publication so could not be shared online at this time. No action taken.

- II.B. Chairman's Report – Mr. Henry reviewed the evening's agenda. He announced that a tentative agreement had been reached with the Weston Education Association and presented the terms on the new collective bargaining agreement. He noted that while this could be discussed, the Committee would include the vote as an agenda item at the next meeting. Mr. Henry reported that COLA would be 2.5% in year one, 2.5% in year two, and 2% in year three of the agreement. He indicated that teacher stipends would be increased 2% and not tied to COLA, and the agreement would include a restructured longevity scale, an increase from 12 to 15 steps on the salary scale, an additional 5 days of work for teacher leaders, an added advisory block for middle school, an added academic support block at the high school, and changes to the tuition reimbursement policy. Mr. Henry expressed appreciation to Dr. Ed Heller who remained on the negotiations team beyond his term on School Committee. Other Committee members spoke in support of the agreement. Mr. Cobb offered his support and cited the work done by the negotiating team. Ms. Raman noted the COLA is competitive with other districts, Mrs. Black noted that additional faculty productivity should be seen as beneficial to the taxpayers, and Mrs. Stewart offered support and praise.

Director of Human Resources Tim Heavey was acknowledged by Mr. Henry for his work during the process, which included greater than six sessions with the faculty team.

- II.C. Superintendent's Report – Dr. Connolly highlighted some end of school traditions, including the beautiful graduation ceremony on June 7, Woodland School Bug Play, Country School Carnival, Field School Field Day, Middle School J Term Showcase, and High School June Academy.

Mr. McGrath informed the Committee that both the Boys and Girls Tennis Teams would be competing for State Championship in the upcoming week.

- II.D. Subcommittee Reports –

SEPAC - Mr. Henry and Mrs. Black reported that they had met with representatives of SEPAC (Special Education Parent Advisory Council) and noted they would be setting up a regular schedule of meetings.

PTO – Ms. Raman noted the PTO held its annual Transition Dinner and the new Board is in place.

- II.E. Open Forum –.

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, then identify themselves and provide address when recognized. He also reminded people to respect the confidentiality and privacy of students, families and staff.

No public comments.

- III.B. Weston Education Enrichment Fund Committee

WEEFC Board Membership

Ms. Allison Abrams, WEEFC Chair, informed the Committee that within the next year, the WEEFC Board will experience some transition with the departure of three long term members. To ease the transition, she indicated that WEEFC would like to temporarily increase the number on the board from ten to eleven and requests the School Committee consider this increase of one seat. Mrs. Black noted this had been done in the past too.

MOTION: Upon motion made by Mr. Cobb and seconded by Mrs. Black, the School Committee voted unanimously to approve an increase in WEEFC board members to eleven members.

Ms. Abrams presented a proposed slate of WEEFC Board members for 2019-2020 and presented the credentials of three proposed new members: Aida Arain, Jennifer Bradner and Megan Covington. She noted that Deb MacNamara will be going off the Board this year.

MOTION: Upon motion made by Mrs. Black and seconded by Ms. Raman, the School Committee voted unanimously to approve the WEEFC slate as proposed.

WEEFC End of Year Report

Ms. Abrams provided the Committee with an update of WEEFC's year, reporting that 57 grants were approved this year, nine more than last year, and included many new ones. She reported fundraising to date of \$155,000, less than last year, and indicated that participation is at only 11% of families. Ms. Abrams reports that WEEFC is working to get the message out about WEEFC and will try some targeted marketing and greater fundraising initiatives. She noted that they would have the Wingding Fundraiser on March 28 at Weston Golf Club in addition to mailing appeals, Giving Trees, STAR Awards, and Principal for a Day fundraisers. Ms. Abrams thanked Mr. Henry, Dr. Carter, the Board, and Janet Bohlin and Patty Ferguson, Administrative Assistants, for their assistance. The Committee discussed possible ways to increase participation and how to get the word out about all the enrichment and great programs WEEFC provides.

MOTION: Upon motion made by Mr. Cobb and seconded by Mr. Henry, the School Committee voted unanimously to receive the WEEFC Annual Report.

WEEFC Proposals

Dr. Carter presented WEEFC mini-grant and project proposals for Committee approval for the 2019-20 school year. He presented proposals for Coding with Chromebooks at Country and Woodland Schools, a 3D Printer for the High School, Field School Poetry, Landsakes Programs for K-5 students, professional development for faculty, a social studies presentation at the High School, and Creative Arts proposals.

MOTION: Upon motion made by Mr. Cobb and seconded by Mrs. Black, the School Committee voted unanimously to approve WEEFC grant proposals as proposed in memo of June 11, 2019, totaling \$38,736.46.

III.C. Athletics Department Program Review Report

Mr. McGrath shared an evaluation of the Athletics Department with the Committee, noting the evaluation team included Mr. McGrath, Ms. Colleen Lanata, Coach and Athletics Administrative Assistant; Mr. Rich Brissette, physical education teacher and coach, who is retiring this year; Mr. John Monz, coach and faculty member; and Mrs. Mary O'Brien, Golf Coach and retired faculty member. Mr. McGrath indicated the focus was on four areas: Program facts, including offerings, participation, registration, trainers, evaluations; Benchmarks; the vibe of student athletes, coaches, parents; and celebrating what we do differently, such as Wildcat Pride Night.

The Committee discussed next steps for an external review. Mrs. Black mentioned a guideline or process for maintaining choices of low enrolled sports with declining enrollment. They discussed some sports, such as Crew, which is not a sport recognized by the MIAA and for which the WEA contract does not include stipends. Mr. McGrath explained that some sports, such as Crew and skiing have volunteer coaches. He noted that the student athletes in these sports are recognized even though the coaches do not receive stipends.

Dr. Connolly indicated she would work with Mr. McGrath to develop a process for questions to include in the full review. Mr. Henry requested that data behind the Benchmarking be included, and Mr. Cobb said he would like to see data from other communities too. Mrs. Black inquired about the role of Boosters, and Mr. McGrath said Boosters does a good job of supporting the program but should be spoken with directly. Mr. Cobb expressed concern about transparency and oversight regarding Boosters. Mr. Henry requested any suggestions for the charge be sent to him for sharing with Dr. Carter and Mr. McGrath in developing the charge.

MOTION: Upon motion made by Mr. Cobb and seconded by Mrs. Black, the School Committee voted unanimously to receive the Athletics Program Review Report.

III.D. Professional Development Summer Workshops

Dr. Carter presented an update on professional development workshops taking place this summer. He said that contractually a specific number of days are given to teachers, and this year half would focus on district initiatives, including Responsive Classroom, Social/Emotional Learning, and a Lucy Caulkin Reading Initiative. Dr. Carter reported he was very impressed with the quality of workshop proposals. He said other workshops would include addressing vertical alignment, new classroom curriculum, and instructional strategies. No action taken.

III.E. School Year 2019-2020 School Lunch Prices, Rental and Tuition/Fees

Mrs. Matthews presented a schedule of proposed fees and rental rates for next year. Mrs. Sousa presented the rationale for the proposed increase in cost of school lunches and noted that participation in the school lunch program, especially at the high school, is very low. She proposed an increase of 25 cents in all lunch fees. Mrs. Matthews shared a chart of prices of other communities and noted that school lunches and pricing must meet DESE criteria. It was suggested that a task force, with student involvement, be formed to look into not participating in the National School Lunch Program. The Committee discussed a greater increase in the price of lunches to become closer to other communities and to perhaps allow higher quality lunches which might increase participation.

MOTION: Upon motion made by Mr. Cobb and seconded by Mrs. Black, the School Committee voted unanimously to increase the cost of school lunches by fifty cents each.

Mrs. Matthews requested the Committee vote to approve fees and rental rates for next year. She indicated she does not have costs for travel to Minuteman yet. At Committee request, Mrs. Matthews said she would speak to people in Wayland about their perhaps being able to offer the transportation.

MOTION: Upon motion made by Mr. Cobb and seconded by Mrs. Black, the School Committee voted unanimously to approve fees for 2019-2020 as proposed.

III.F. Superintendent Evaluation

Mr. Henry described the process used for evaluation of Superintendent Connolly, noting that input from former School Committee members Dr. Ed Heller and Dr. Sanjay Saini was obtained prior to the election. He said he solicited feedback from members and compiled data into one summative which would be submitted online to DESE. He indicated that Dr. Connolly was Proficient across all categories. Mr. Henry shared some of the written comments he received and indicated some consistent, overall areas for growth that include areas of budget and financial management as well as communication. No action taken.

III.G. Approval of School Improvement Plan – High School

The Committee tabled this item until the summer workshop meeting indicating the document, though in an acceptable format, needed more work to include some long term projects for next year. Mr. Cobb questioned whether the High School Council held enough meetings.

III.H. Policy Review – Second Reading of Appropriate Use Policy – item tabled until July workshop.

III.I. School Committee Calendar

Mr. Henry noted the packet included schedule of meeting dates. He noted one change in a January budget meeting from Thursday, January 30 to Wednesday, January 29 at 4pm. He said the proposed agendas would be proposed and discussed in August. The Committee discussed presentation of School Improvement Plans and whether to include one or two at regular meetings. Dr. Connolly said she would discuss with Administrative Council. No action taken.

III.J. School Committee Summer Workshop Agenda

Mr. Henry indicated the School Committee would hold its summer workshop on Monday, July 15 at Babson College Conference Center. He said the agenda would include a morning open session meeting with a presentation from Amy Kelly, Director of District Advancement, and Discussion of Technology, and other administrators present in the morning. He indicated that the afternoon workshop would include training from legal counsel on education law. No action taken.

III.K. Facility Projects Update (Proctor Field, Case House, Case Complex) –

Mrs. Black reported that the Case House project is moving along with a slight hangup due to specialty materials for the brownstone of the port cochere. No action taken.

III.L. EDCO Articles of Agreement

Mr. Henry indicated that the EDCO Collaborative has requested the Committee approve the draft Articles of Agreement.

MOTION: Upon motion made by Mrs. Black and seconded by Mr. Henry, the School Committee voted unanimously to approve the EDCO Articles of Agreement and authorize Mr. Henry to sign on the Committee's behalf.

IV.A. Approval of Minutes of June 3, 2019

MOTION: Upon motion made by Mr. Cobb and seconded by Mrs. Black, the School Committee voted unanimously to approve the minutes of June 3, 2019

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 Mrs. Black, the School Committee voted unanimously to approve the warrant for payment of \$2,833,026.00 by the Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations.

Non-Aligned Salaries

Mrs. Matthews requested the Committee approve non-aligned salaries for 2019-2020. She indicated the proposed salaries include a 2% increase in the salaries for the Superintendent and two Assistant Superintendents, and an average increase of 2% for salaries of all other non-aligned employees.

MOTION: Upon motion made by Mr. Cobb and seconded by Mrs. Black, the School Committee voted unanimously to approve non-aligned salaries for 2019-2020.

V. Adjournment

MOTION: Upon motion made by Mr. Cobb and seconded by Ms. Raman, at 9:10 PM the School Committee voted unanimously to adjourn

Documents used by Committee:

- Athletics Program Review Report
- Draft Acceptable Use Policy
- Fee Schedule
- School Improvement Plans (Weston High School)
- School Committee Meeting Dates
- Draft EDCO Articles of Agreement