

MINUTES OF WESTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
July 25, 2019

Call To Order

A meeting of the Weston School Committee was called to order at 6:02 PM at Field School by Mrs. Danielle Black, Vice Chair. In attendance were, Mr. Alex Cobb, Ms. Anita Raman, and Mrs. Rachel Stewart of the School Committee and Dr. Midge Connolly, Superintendent. Not present: Mr. John Henry.

Mrs. Black introduced members of the School Committee and administration, welcomed audience member Dr. John McKenzie, and reviewed the evening's agenda items.

MAJOR BUSINESS

Discussion and Approval of High School Courses with Fewer than 15 Students Enrolled

Dr. Connolly explained that she had conversations with Department Heads and Ms. Marla Schay, Director of Guidance, regarding the number of courses with fewer than 15 students enrolled. She mentioned that a low enrolled physical education class had already been deleted with students assigned to another section. Dr. Connolly also announced that in the future, with a new data manager hired this summer, the expectation is that sectioning should be completed much earlier in the calendar. Committee discussion ensued regarding all the courses listed. Mrs. Black suggested that the discussion could be streamlined by pulling out the AP, end of sequence courses, and special sections to support students, as traditionally the school committee has given approval for such to run.

MOTION: Upon motion made by Mr. Cobb and seconded by Ms. Raman, the School Committee voted unanimously to allow AP Music Theory; AP European History; AP Calculus AB; AP Calculus BC; Mandarin V, Honors/AP Chinese, and special sections to support student learning to run next year even though courses have fewer than 15 students enrolled.

Discussion continued; Mr. Cobb noted that AP French was missed in the previous vote.

MOTION: Upon motion made by Mr. Cobb and seconded by Ms. Raman, the School Committee voted unanimously to allow low enrolled AP French to run next year.

Discussion continued to the music courses noted on the list of courses requiring school committee approval. Questions were asked whether it is possible to run Chamber Music before or after school. Dr. Connolly explained that the Chamber Music students are the ones who perform for various town and school events – WEEFC, faculty retirements, etc. She explained that she spoke with Mr. Memoli and he was also surprised by the fewer than usual signups.

MOTION: Upon motion made by Mr. Cobb and seconded by Mrs. Stewart, the School Committee voted unanimously to allow Jazz Ensembles 1 and 2; and Chamber Music to run, with the expectation that Mr. Memoli does some recruiting and address how to go forward.

Discussion resumed with a focus on the Engineering courses. Notation was made that the courses are semester based, and that there are other sections of the courses running that are not undersubscribed. Dr. Connolly noted that the open seats usually fill up and she informed the committee of historic enrollments from the past few years.

MOTION: Upon motion made by Ms. Raman and seconded by Mrs. Stewart, the School Committee voted unanimously to run undersubscribed Problem/Project Based Engineering sections next year.

Discussion resumed with a discussion on world language courses, French Intermediate II and French Honors Intermediate. Mr. Cobb noted the ongoing struggle to fill language courses. He also noted that according to the master schedule, four students are enrolled in French Novice I, yet the course is not on the list for approval because it will run concurrently with French Novice II and stated that this continues to be an issue. Discussion continued regarding low enrollment courses in the world language department

MOTION: A motion was made by Mr. Cobb to not run French Novice IV, leave French Intermediate I at 12, leave Honors French Intermediate at 13, leave Latin V Honors, not run Novice Mandarin at 7, and not run Mandarin Intermediate I at 8. The motion was not seconded and therefore did not carry.

Mrs. Black stated that her concerns with Mr. Cobb's motion rests with the fact that he included courses in which students have already started through the program. She indicated her willingness to consider not running Mandarin Novice I and French Novice I but would like additional information about courses and student selection. Mrs. Stewart questioned the impact of delaying a decision. Dr. Connolly said she will speak with Dr. Baker and get additional information for School Committee consideration.

MOTION: Upon motion made by Mr. Cobb and seconded by Ms. Raman, the School Committee voted unanimously to run undersubscribed French Intermediate II and Honors Intermediate French and table other discussion of language courses pending additional information.

Discussion turned to the art electives, specifically low enrolled Photo I and Video II-III classes.

MOTION: Upon motion made by Mr. Cobb and seconded by Ms. Raman, the School Committee voted unanimously to not run low enrolled Video II-III and Photo I.

Mrs. Stewart expressed interest in asking if the cap of 18 students could be lifted to accommodate the additional students, if possible.

Discussion turned to Art II-III-IV. Mrs. Black expressed interest in allowing to run the courses, given the decision to not run Video and Photo, as students will need art options.

MOTION: Upon motion made by Ms. Raman and seconded by Mrs. Stewart, the School Committee voted 3-0, with Mr. Cobb abstaining, to run Art II-III-IV as presented.

The committee discussed Creative Writing (Poetry). Dr. Connolly explained that it is a semester course and fulfills the English requirement.

MOTION: Upon motion made by Mr. Cobb and seconded by Ms. Raman, the School Committee voted unanimously to allow Creative Writing to run as presented.

The committee discussed Journalism courses. It was noted that the course does not meet a graduation requirement, and the students enrolled are also in another English course. Dr. Connolly stated that she would speak with Ms. Lemons about making the Journalism course more robust so that it could meet the English requirement or make it a club without going through the two-year transition period required of new clubs. Notice was made that Journalism II has 10 seniors enrolled.

MOTION: Upon motion made by Mrs. Black and seconded by Mr. Cobb, the School Committee voted unanimously to allow Journalism I/II to run next year.

Discussion continued regarding program reviews. Dr. McKenzie noted that mini-reviews would be helpful to allow for adjustments in the curriculum. He also suggested it would be helpful if school councils addressed updates on program reviews in their School Improvement Plans.

Mrs. Stewart inquired about establishing 5-year goals for School Committee. The Committee discussed the recent goals – hiring a superintendent, moving to a late start time, and reviewing the high school schedule. Mrs. Black noted that she will forward Mrs. Stewart's question to Mr. Henry upon his return.

Weston Educational Administrative Assistants Association (WEAAA) Contract

Mr. Cobb presented the significant terms of the proposed WEAAA contract, including a COLA of 2.25, 2.0, and 1.75 percent over three years; union's agreement to drop a grievance filed over the removal of a payroll position to confidential; and elimination of longevity compensation bumps for future hires. Mrs. Black voiced her lack of support for the agreement, stating the COLA is too high given the job

descriptions are ill-defined and the positions are not utilized equally throughout the district. She expressed concern about budget growth in support staff and not being able to maintain the current level of staffing.

MOTION: Upon motion made by Mr. Cobb and seconded by Ms. Raman, the School Committee voted 3-1, with Mrs. Black voting against, to agree to the terms of the memorandum of agreement between the Weston School Committee and the Weston Educational Administrative Assistants Association, and the administration was hereby authorized to draft a revised contract between the School Committee and the WEAAA, effective July 1, 2019 through June 30, 2022, to present to the School Committee for signature.

Adjournment

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