

MINUTES OF WESTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
September 23, 2019

I. A. Call To Order

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

Also in attendance were Dr. Lee McCanne, Director of Technology and School Libraries; Ms. Marla Schay, Grade 6-12 Guidance Department Head; Dr. Susan Erickson, and Elementary Science and Social Studies Specialist.

I.B. Chairman's Report – Mr. Henry welcomed everyone to the meeting, introduced members of the School Committee and Administration, and reviewed the agenda's Major Business items. He reported that he and Mrs. Black have discussed having School Committee "office hours" at rotating locations five times during the year to meet with members of the community, teachers or others. Mr. Henry said they are working with Human Resources Director Tim Heavey to build into the drivers contract the opportunity of a referral bonus for bus drivers in the hope of attracting new bus drivers, when needed. He noted the department is fully staffed right now but in anticipation of the need for drivers, this might be a good option.

I.C. Superintendent's Report – Dr. Connolly reported that Jake Ginga, Field School Art Teacher, was selected as Massachusetts Art Teacher of the Year. She noted this is an impressive accomplishment for anyone, especially for someone relatively new to the field of teaching. Dr. Connolly informed the Committee that the high school has a confirmed case of whooping cough and indicated that Laurie Melchionda, Director of Health Services, is working with the Center for Disease Control (CDC) as well as the family to identify others that may have been exposed to the highly contagious disease. She also reported that the spraying for mosquitoes has been completed and the Weston Board of Health will inform the schools, after the first hard frost occurs, when schools can resume elementary before school recess and evening athletic events.

Dr. Connolly said the first Case House newsletter will be out the week of October 21 and will include communication from various administrators who will share happenings in the district.

I.D. Subcommittee Reports – Mr. Henry reported the first SAC meeting had occurred with engaged and eloquent students. Ms. Raman said the first PTO Board meeting took place, and she reported PTO membership is up over last year at the same time.

I.E. Open Forum – No Comments.

II.A. Enrollment Update

Ms. Matthews provided updated enrollments as of September 21, reporting a total enrollment of 2,040 students. Dr. Connolly reported that the numbers are robust at Kindergarten and Grade 2, and she noted that Grade 3 class size is a little high but within range. No action taken.

II.B. Teaching and Learning: Presentation on K-2 Science

Dr. Erickson and other members of the K-2 faculty presented how teaching science has changed and shared with the Committee examples from the curriculum. Presenters were Ms. Kate Benson, Elementary Technology Integration Specialist; Ms. Christie Wyman, Country School Kindergarten Teacher; Ms. Elaine Caramanica, Woodland School Grade 1 Teacher, and Ms. Kate Bonsignore, Woodland School Grade 2 Teacher. Dr. Erickson noted that her goal is to provide the best science and social studies learning opportunities possible for every student. She noted the support of WEEFC, Lands Sake, and Weston Trail and Conservation.

They then shared the differences in ways science is taught now versus just a few years ago when it was all science kits. Students now study science and engineering practices.

Teachers informed the Committee that they use the whole Case Campus, including trails, meadows, fields, and gardens, and take students outside to study the vernal pool, erosion, trees and nature in all seasons as a major part of the early elementary curriculum. Ms. Bonsignore noted, "Science is messy, and that is awesome." They noted they work with Land Sakes, Audubon, and authentic scientists and consultants. Ms. Benson described how they integrate technology with data collection, forming investigations, and sharing knowledge. She also noted the use of drones, both underwater and from above. Dr. Carter said they could consider an interdisciplinary approach to try to have more science in the curriculum. The Committee thanked Dr. Erickson and faculty present for their presentation. No action taken.

II.C. Superintendent's Goals 2019-2020

The Committee discussed the draft of the Superintendent's Goals for 2019-20 that Dr. Connolly had shared with them. Dr. Connolly indicated that any feedback the Committee provides will be incorporated into the goals for approval at the next meeting. Mrs. Stewart spoke about the goal of communication and mentioned ongoing issues with parents not receiving messages sent out by the district. Dr. McCanne spoke about the challenges with the district's communication platforms. He said they will do a communication test of all three systems – RAVE, website newsletter, and Infinite Campus -- and will explore other options, noting a new option could have budget implications. He said the survey and test could take place within a week or so, but a complete transition could take a month or two. It was suggested that messages have an indication where the message is from. No action taken.

II.D. Budget Guidelines

Ms. Matthews presented a draft of FY21 guidelines, with only the dates changed from FY20. These guidelines will serve as the basis for the administration in its development of FY21 budget recommendations

MOTION: Upon motion made by Mrs. Black and seconded by Ms. Raman, the School Committee voted unanimously to approve FY21 Budget Guidelines as presented.

II.E. Initial Discussion of 2020-2021 School Calendar

Ms. Matthews shared the calendar that Westborough Public Schools uses as an example of a different format for consideration. Dr. Connolly informed the Committee that the current format Weston uses is not ADA compliant on the website and must be changed. Ms. Matthews indicated she would incorporate the different format into a draft 2020-21 calendar for the next meeting. Mrs. Black asked if there could be a clearer way to list the earliest last day and last day with five snow days. No action taken.

II.F. Memorandum of Understanding with Weston Education Association

Mr. Henry indicated the packet included a Memorandum of Understanding with the WEA to include stipends for Green Team, not included in the prior approved agreement.

MOTION: Upon motion made by Ms. Raman and seconded by Mrs. Black, the School Committee voted unanimously to approve the proposed Memorandum of Understanding with the Weston Education Association.

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

Case House -- Mrs. Black updated the Committee on Case House renovations, reporting the project is moving along well. She said the Permanent Building Committee (PBC) at its next meeting would discuss the architect's request to reconsider including decorative window shutters, an Alternate 3 option, at a cost of approximately \$50,000. Mrs. Black said she was not advocating for the additional expense but was presenting to the School Committee for discussion. The Committee briefly discussed. Mrs. Stewart said she thinks the building, especially as a historic landmark, would definitely look better with shutters, which the building had in previous, older

photos. She noted \$50,000 is not much out of an \$8 million project but could see both ways. Mrs. Black said she would share that input with the PBC. No action taken.

III.A. Approval of Minutes

MOTION: Upon motion made by Mrs. Stewart and seconded by Mrs. Black, the School Committee voted unanimously to approve minutes of August 28, 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 Mr. Henry, the School Committee voted unanimously to approve the warrant for payment of \$3,539,156.15 by the Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations.

Acceptance of Gift

Ms. Matthews requested the Committee accept a gift from Weston Boosters for a 10 x 12 foot shed at High School Field I to store lacrosse, field hockey and soccer equipment. She indicated the cost is \$5,247. Dr. Connolly said Gary Jarobski has worked with high school administrators regarding location. She noted the need for a storage shed and Boosters has offered to help.

MOTION: Upon motion made by Ms. Raman and seconded by Mrs. Black, the School Committee voted unanimously to accept a gift from Weston Boosters of a shed by Field 1, valued at \$5,247.

IV. Adjournment

MOTION: Upon motion made by Mr. Henry and seconded by Mrs. Stewart, at 8:18 PM, the School Committee voted unanimously to adjourn.

Documents used by Committee:

- Enrollment 2019-2020 as of September 18, 2019
- Draft FY21 Budget Guidelines
- Draft Superintendent's Goals 2019-20
- Memorandum of Understanding with Weston Education Association
- Westborough Public Schools Calendar
- Memo from Athletic Director Mike McGrath re Gift of Shed from Weston Boosters