

MINUTES OF WESTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

October 21, 2019

I. A. Call To Order

A meeting of the Weston School Committee was called to order at 7:04 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; Dr. Midge Connolly, Superintendent; and Dr. J. Kimo Carter, Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning. Mr. Cobb joined the meeting at 7:07 PM; Ms. Jacqueta Oliver-Bigby, Alternating METCO Representative to the School Committee joined the meeting at 7:14 pm.

Also in attendance were Mr. Anthony Parker, High School Principal; Mrs. Kathy Baker, Director of World Languages; Ms. Marla Schay, Grade 6-12 Guidance Department Head; and Dr. Lee McCanne, Director of Technology and School Libraries.

I.B. Chairman's Report –Mr. John Henry welcomed everyone to the meeting, introduced members of the School Committee and Administration, and reviewed the agenda's Major Business items. He noted that Mrs. Sheri Matthews, Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations, was ill and unable to attend the meeting and, therefore, the scheduled presentation of FY'21 Budget A would be postponed to the next meeting.

I.C. Superintendent's Report – Dr. Connolly reported on the success of the recent Pumpkin Fest, noting it was a pleasure to see so many high school students enthusiastically working with the children at this well-organized event for the whole community. She thanked the students and faculty members who volunteered.

Dr. Connolly expressed appreciation to Dr Lee McCanne and the Technology Department for their work on testing the district's communication systems last week. She shared some statistics of the test messages that went out, reporting that in Infinite Campus, there were 3,407 Emails sent with a completion time of 3 minutes. Web Update sent 5,067 Emails with a completion time of 2 hours and 6 minutes. In the RAVE system, there were 3,319 total Emails attempted, with 3,224 delivered in a completion rate of 97% within 29 seconds and total time of 49 minutes to complete. RAVE attempted 2,509 text messages, with 2,479 delivered with a completion rate of 98% within 3 seconds and total delivery in 18 minutes. In RAVE, 3,318 voice calls were attempted, with all being delivered in a completion time of 24 minutes. Dr. Connolly reported a total of 11,793 Email messages sent and that, as a result of the test, Dr. McCanne has been able to gather information from people in the community who may not have received all of the communications, which was about 5%. Dr. McCanne will continue working with his team to improve communication, including looking at the systems currently being used,

Dr. Connolly provided an update on last week's school closing. She thanked the Weston Fire and Police Departments for their assistance, noting she first received a call from Fire Chief Soar at 3:45 AM informing her of the number of street closings in Weston. She acknowledged the assistance of Mr. Tim DeMartin, Assistant Director of Facilities, who met her on the secondary school campus at around 4:15 AM. She said they knew there was power at the schools but checked for downed trees to ensure the campus was safe. Dr. Connolly said she first called for a two-hour delay with the hopes that Eversource would clear the trees that were on power lines, but once it was determined they were unable to do so, the Police confirmed, and the decision was made to close schools for the day.

I.D Subcommittee Reports –

SEPAC – Mr. Henry reported on a wonderful presentation on Transitions made by Student Services at the SEPAC meeting. He encouraged people to look at the presentations provided.

Field Steering Committee – Mr. Cobb said work on the Recreation Master Plan Steering Committee (RMPSC) continues. He reported on the topic of geese around the town and school fields, noting that their waste is somewhat of a health hazard. He said plans are underway to use a service that will bring collies to the fields in an attempt to rid the fields of the geese population in an environmentally friendly manner.

Sustainability Committee – Mrs. Stewart said they are determining what next steps are regarding solar panels.

SAC – Mr. Henry noted a good discussion was held with the students at the most recent SAC breakfast meeting. He said that students are much livelier participants in discussions now that the meetings are at 8:00 AM, due to later start time.

I.E. Open Forum – No comments.

II.A. World Language Update

Mrs. Baker presented an overview of the World Language Program in Grades 1-12.. She reported on the Spanish FLES Program in Grades 1-5, with a focus on input and the Middle and High School programs that includes French, Latin, Mandarin, and Spanish. She noted that students select a language Spring of Grade 5 for three years of Middle School and may continue that language or take a new one at Grade 9. Mrs. Baker discussed the Seal of Biliteracy that Weston now awards and shared data that shows a high rate of achievement for Weston students. Mrs. Baker reported that there is now a shift from the way language has been taught that will have less focus on grammar and vocabulary and more on context, so that students will become more proficient in speaking the languages. She provided the Committee with information on assessment of the FLES program, noting that the assessment takes place in grade 6, which currently has 52 students in Spanish. She reported that most students are above target but noted no assessment is done of the other students not enrolled in Spanish. It was noted that computers are needed to perform the assessment and the computers are in other use during MCAS in the Spring.

Mrs. Baker reported that parents are being surveyed about language at the Middle School and a committee will discuss the survey results and decide which language, if any to recommend eliminating. Mrs. Baker will provide an update to the Committee on November 18. Dr. Connolly expresses appreciation to Mrs. Baker and the World Language Department for the work on the Seal of Biliteracy.

II.B. Discussion of High School Parking

Mr. Parker, along with Ms. Lisa Green, High School PTO Chair, discussed steps being taken to address shortage of parking spaces at Weston High School. It was noted that the school is surrounded by wetlands so there is limited area to increase parking. The lack of parking was discussed, and it was noted that students and parents have a continued expectation that things will go as they have been, but this year in particular, with additional parking spaces needed for staff, there is a shortage of parking for students. Mr. Parker mentioned the possibility of contracting with St. Demetrious Church for parking there, which would have a cost factor, and indicated that the church would require students who park there to keep cars there for the school day. They discussed the idea of reserving some parking spots for special situation or to have some flexibility.

Dr. Connolly noted she is working with Police Chief Goulding to try to determine if the area between the high school and middle school might be utilized for some parking. It was noted that once snow comes, there will not be parking on grassy areas behind school that are currently being used by some faculty now. Dr. Connolly indicated that there is a cost of approximately \$30,000 to explore parking options and indicated the proposed FY21 budget will include funding a study on the wetlands and setbacks. Mr. Parker noted that next step will be for seniors' parking applications to be reviewed and a lottery for juniors as well as a determination of hardship cases. He indicated that he is working with a committee of 20 members comprised of faculty, parents, PTO Chairs, and students, and he will send a communication to junior parents to provide updated information regarding parking.

II.C. FY 21 Budget Projection (Budget A) (postponed to November 4)

II.D. Discussion of 2020-2021 School Calendar

Mr. Henry shared feedback from parents regarding the proposed calendar, with many suggesting no school on the Friday prior to Labor Day weekend. He indicated it would be nice to have faculty feedback regarding that idea. Dr. Connolly shared some feedback that suggested moving some of the first Wednesdays used for professional development to Fridays. Mr. Cobb noted he was not in

favor of having schools closed on the Friday before Labor Day, and Mrs. Stewart thought it might be a nice way to start the school year. Mr. Henry said these ideas worth thinking about and noted the calendar would be up for approval on November 4. No action taken.

II.E. Town Report (Initial Discussion)

Mrs. Black and Mr. Cobb agreed to work collaboratively on this year's school section of the Town Report. No action taken.

II.R. Facility Projects Update (Proctor Field, Case House) – no additional updates provided.

III.A. Approval of Minutes

MOTION: Upon motion made by Mrs. Black and seconded by Mr. Cobb, the School Committee voted unanimously to approve minutes of October 7, 2019.

III.B. Business Actions – None presented.

IV. EXECUTIVE SESSION (anticipated)

MOTION: Upon motion made by Mr. Cobb and seconded by Mrs. Black, at 8:46 PM, the School Committee voted unanimously to adjourn to Executive session pursuant to G.L. c. 30A, § 21(a)(7) to comply with, or act under the authority of, any general or special law or federal grant-in-aid requirements, specifically Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, §§ 22(f), (g), with intent not to return to open session, with Mr. Cobb voting aye, Mrs. Black voting aye, Ms. Raman voting aye, Mrs. Stewart voting aye, and Mr. Henry voting aye.

No action taken during Executive Session.

MOTION: Upon motion made by Mr. Henry and seconded by Mrs. Black, the School Committee voted unanimously to adjourn at 8:54 PM: with Mr. Cobb voting aye, Mrs. Black voting aye, Ms. Raman voting aye, Mrs. Stewart voting aye, and Mr. Henry voting aye.

Documents used by Committee:

- Revised draft of 2020-2021 School Calendar
- World Language Program Grades 1-12 (copy of presentation)
- Aerial photos of parking at Middle and High School campuses