

## MINUTES OF WESTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

December 16, 2019

### I. A. Call To Order

A meeting of the Weston School Committee was called to order at 7:03 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; Ms. Jacqueta Oliver-Bigby, METCO Representative to the School Committee; Ms. Ally Kirk, Student Member of the School Committee; Dr. Midge Connolly, Superintendent; and Dr. J. Kimo Carter, Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning

Also in attendance were Ms. Marla Schay, Grade 6-12 Guidance Department Head; Ms. Kathy Baker, Director of World Languages; and Dr. Stephen Ribisi, Grade 6-12 Science Department Head.

### 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.

### I.C. Superintendent's Report – Dr. Connolly provided recent highlights in the district, reporting that Weston Middle School's 8th grade robotics team qualified for and competed at the state championship this past weekend. She said they were very close to qualifying for the World Championships and placed 3rd overall, which may qualify them to receive an invitation to the open championships. The team also came in first in robot performance for the high score of the day and first in the elimination rounds. Dr. Connolly reported that 23 Weston Middle School students competed and performed exceptionally well in Rose Debate's annual Fall Classic Speech and Debate tournament with more than 75 participants from 13 different schools. She noted that top rankings included 1st Place in Panel Debate: Nathaniel Ko, Alexander Ko, and Caleb Graupera; 2nd Place in Panel Debate: Thomas Cheng Li, Calvin Yu, and William Zhang; 1st Place in Platform Speaking: William Zhang; 3rd Place in Stand Up Comedy: Jianxin Wang; and 3rd Place in Limited Prep Speaking: Alexander Ko. Many students received honorable mentions as well.

Dr. Connolly congratulated the 39 Weston DECA students on their successful District competition, noting that five of the students came in first place out of more than 700 students from 12 schools. All of the students/teams who finished in the top 5 of their events qualify for the State DECA competition in February.

Dr. Connolly informed the Committee that the High School Principal position had been posted on December 8 and will remain open for one month. She reported that a survey regarding qualifications desired in a new principal was being sent to students and parents and indicated there has been an overwhelming response from parents who want to be part of the process. Dr. Connolly, noting that this is a testament to a commitment to find a new leader, said she will communicate over break with those who will be participating in various aspects of the process. She noted that, if not chosen, there will be opportunities for participation at forums. Dr. Connolly anticipates a selection of a principal in February.

### I.D. Subcommittee Reports –

Mrs. Stewart provided updates on solar panels and the Sustainability Committee. She reported that it looks like Weston will make it into Block 3 for solar panels and Town Manager Leon Garamond is working on finalizing the contract. She said the Sustainability Committee would love to hear from students regarding possible projects. Ms. Kirk suggested students take a survey during Advisory Block or contact students in Students for Environmental Action (SEA) after break.

Mr. Henry reviewed the protocol for comments during the open forum.

### I.E. Open Forum – No comments.

IIA. Weston Education Enrichment Fund Committee Proposals

Dr. Carter presented WEEFC four proposals for approval, including funding for one Mamba Gaga Court at both Field and Middle Schools, a communication system for Country School playground, a speaker for the Ben Sandalls annual program on May 27, and a high school field trip on racial identity. Mr. Cobb noted that Ben Sandalls was a Weston student tragically killed while crossing route 30 and this program is a funded memorial program.

MOTION: Upon motion made by Mr. Cobb and seconded by Mrs. Stewart, the School Committee voted unanimously to approve WEEFC proposals as presented, per memo of December 3, 2019, totaling \$ 15,585.

Mr. Henry, who serves as School Committee liaison on the WEEFC Board, noted that WEEFC does not typically approve field trips and would be developing a clear policy for consideration of funding field trips

II.B. Approval of 2020-2021 Grade 6-12 Program of Studies

Dr. Connolly shared some of the courses offered at Weston High School that provide unique opportunity for Weston students. She highlighted the Discrete Math course, the rich curriculum offered in the Wellness Program, and the connection with Syracuse that started this year. Ms. Baker reported a change in the World Language offerings, noting the elimination of Novice I/II to be replaced with just Novice as an entry point.

Ms. Schay indicated that, for the most part, students are not tracked at Weston High School and can usually take any courses, with the exception of Calculus as a requirement for AP Physics. She noted that the Guidance Department has a four-year planning document for students but noted that most students do change their mind on what they want to take between 8<sup>th</sup> grade and senior year and having flexibility and fluidity in the process is beneficial, although some prioritizing of course choices may be necessary. Ms. Schay explained some of the process of course selection, including how communication with students and parents might be improved. Mr. Henry noted that Weston High School is a small school with a broad array of courses and provides students opportunity and ability to explore.

The Committee reviewed proposed additions in English Language Education (ELE), Science and Wellness Education Departments by discipline.

English Language Education

MOTION: Upon motion made by Mr. Henry and seconded by Mr. Cobb, the School Committee voted unanimously to approve the addition of courses Academic English for Emergent Bilinguals I and Academic English for Emergent Bilinguals II as proposed.

Science

MOTION: Upon motion made by Mrs. Black and seconded by Mr. Cobb, the School Committee voted unanimously to approve the addition of courses College Prep Engineering, Honors Engineering, and Honors Forensics in Science Department as proposed.

Mr. Henry noted the School Committee would want to monitor the enrollments in these courses

Wellness/Physical Education

There was considerable discussion regarding the addition of four new Wellness courses at a time of declining enrollment and budget cuts and concern that low enrolled classes might result.

MOTION: Upon motion made by Mr. Henry and seconded by Mrs. Black, the School Committee voted unanimously to approve the addition of Racquets, Nets, and Clubs; Yoga, Meditation, and Mindfulness; Leadership in Competitive Sports Teams; and Aquatics and Sports-Based Fitness as proposed, with a mandated average class size of 20 students in physical education classes.

World Languages

Mr. Henry noted that School Committee should have received the information regarding elimination of or change in a course in a memo prior to the meeting. The Committee discussed

Middle School World Languages and whether to eliminate one of the four offerings, noting that the World Language Committee had recommended offering all four languages but would recommend the elimination of Latin if there had to be one removed. Ms. Kirk spoke in support of retaining Latin, and it was noted that enrollment in Latin has been robust. The Committee noted that Mandarin continues to be the low enrolled language and would closely monitor sign ups this year. It was noted that offering a language in Grade 6 is a three-year commitment. The Committee consensus was that it would not approve classes of fewer than 15 students this year. Mrs. Baker indicated that Grade 5 students would begin language selection immediately after February vacation, much earlier than in the past, and could have a second choice option, if their first selection was not offered.

MOTION: Upon motion made by Mr. Henry and seconded by Mrs. Black, the School Committee voted unanimously to approve replacing Novice I and II with Novice in World Languages as proposed.

MOTION: Upon motion made by Mr. Henry and seconded by Ms. Raman, the School Committee voted unanimously to retain four World Language courses in the Program of Studies, with further discussion to take place about minimum class size after the selection process has been completed.

II.C. Facility Projects Update (Proctor Field, Case House) –  
Case House - Mrs. Black reported that the PBC was meeting later in the week.

III.A. Approval of Minutes

MOTION: Upon motion made by Mrs. Black and seconded by Mrs. Stewart, the School Committee voted unanimously to approve minutes of December 9, 2019.

III.B. Business Actions –  
Certificate of Warrant

Dr. Connolly presented a Certificate of the Secretary, approval of warrants for payment.

MOTION: Upon motion made by Mr. Cobb and seconded by Mrs. Stewart, the School Committee voted unanimously to approve the warrant for payment of \$1,536,521.64 by the Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations.

IV. Adjournment

MOTION: Upon motion made by Mr. Cobb and seconded by Mrs. Stewart, the School Committee voted unanimously to adjourn at 8:30 PM.

Documents used by Committee:

- WEEFC Proposals and Grant Descriptions