

MINUTES OF WESTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING  
March 17, 2020

Pursuant to Gov. Baker's Executive Order dated March 12, 2020 modifying the requirements of the Open Meeting Law, the School Committee, to ensure the safety of all participants, held its meeting remotely via Zoom: <https://zoom.us/j/7817865250>.

I. A. Call To Order

A meeting of the Weston School Committee was called to order at 7:00 PM by Mr. John Henry, Chair. Participating were Mrs. Danielle Black, Mr. Alex Cobb, Ms. Anita Raman, and Mrs. Rachel Stewart of 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.

Also attending were Ms. Laurie Melchionda, Director of Health Services, and Dr. Lee McCanne, Director of Technology and School Libraries. *Close to 100 people joined the meeting via ZOOM.*

I.B. Executive Session – Mr. Henry requested an Executive Session for purposes of discussion of Collective Bargaining unit matters.

MOTION: Upon motion made by Mr. Cobb and seconded by Mrs. Black, the School Committee voted unanimously to enter into Executive Session at 7:02 PM for purposes of discussion of Collective Bargaining unit matters, to return to Open Session, with Mr. Cobb voting aye, Mrs. Black voting aye, Mrs. Stewart voting aye, Ms. Raman voting aye, and r. Henry voting aye.

No action taken during Executive Session. *Executive Session Minutes separate.*

MOTION: Upon motion made by Mr. Cobb and seconded by Ms. Raman, the School Committee voted unanimously to adjourn from Executive Session at 7:18 PM, with Mr. Cobb voting aye, Mrs. Black voting aye, Mrs. Stewart voting aye, Ms. Raman voting aye, and r. Henry voting aye.

The Committee returned to Open /session at 7:19 PM.

I.C. Chairman's Report –Mr. John Henry welcomed everyone to the meeting and reviewed agenda items. He noted this new experience of remote meeting seems to be going well. Mr. Henry requested attendees to mute their microphones and to send questions/comments to either Mrs. Black or Ms. Raman to be addressed during the meeting.

I.D. Superintendent's Report – Dr. Connolly thanked the administrative leadership team for their incredible work, teachers and the work they have accomplished during the past two and a half weeks, school nurses, the Board of Health, technology staff, custodial staff working tirelessly, families for their patience, and the members of the School Committee for their support. She reported that schools are locked down for the foreseeable future, not even custodians on site. She indicated that mail is being held and all deliveries for the district are coming to Case House where there is a skeletal staff of administrators working in separate rooms. She noted most Central Office staff have been asked to work remotely. Dr. Connolly said there has been an abundance of communication to families that she realizes may be overwhelming at times, but given the circumstances is necessary. She expressed confidence that the district is ready to move forward and also that Weston School from Home will not be perfect. She commended teachers and support staff who have worked very hard to be ready to open on Thursday.

II.A. Coronavirus Update

Ms. Melchionda provided an update on the Coronavirus statistics, noting that Weston has seven cases “pending.” She said the Board of Health has been overwhelmed with requests and indicated the school nurses will be ready to support the Board of Health and will receive training tomorrow.

Dr. Connolly said playgrounds and equipment should not be used during the school lockdown, people should not congregate, and should maintain a safe distance between one another.

Weston School from Home - Dr. Carter talked about the School from Home Platform set to roll out on Thursday. He informed the Committee that he had sent parents a long communication regarding the program. He thanked the Technology Department for designing the platform and the faculty and staff for developing content, noting that teachers worked the previous Friday and Monday to populate the platform. Dr. Carter requested patience as the program is launched. He indicated that teachers would be sending welcome letters on Thursday along with their first lessons beginning at 9:00 am, noting there may be a preview Wednesday night. Mr. Henry suggested parents be so notified if there is. Mr. Henry thanked the administration, teachers, staff, and noted, “Weston was ahead of the curve.” He indicated his appreciation for all their work to pay attention to the issues and noted this is a wonderful think happening in Weston and part of what makes Weston unique.

There were several questions from Committee members and the public regarding decisions that may need to be made regarding testing, SAT, AP classes, grades. Dr. Carter and Dr. Connolly indicated much is not known at this time but that MCAS have been postponed indefinitely and DESE is reviewing the situation.

Regarding a question about Special Education students by Mrs. Stewart, Dr. Connolly indicated that Director of Student Services Jen Truslow had sent communication to all parents whose students are on an IEP and that services would be individualized whenever possible. She noted some areas are critical for servicing vulnerable children.

Mr. Henry indicated many questions form the public regarding how the online program will work, with what platforms. Dr. Carter said it will vary, some will use Google Classroom, Google Hangout, Google meeting, Seesaw, videoconferencing software, Mrs. Stewart asked if families could opt out of online classwork. Dr. Connolly indicated they should be in touch with Dr. Carter and might need to pursue home schooling option. More details from the state will be likely. Dr. Carter noted there would be much flexibility at the elementary level but Middle and High /school students will have assignments. He noted they want to make it be school but will be flexible and work with families. Mr. Henry spoke to the fluidity of the situation and its unknown as to how long schools will be closed.

When asked about seniors, graduation, and June Academy, Dr. Connolly again stressed that much is unknown. She noted that Commissioner Riley has mentioned pushing out graduation and that department heads and principals will be working on rest of year plans once there is direction from the state. Mr. Cobb suggested principals take part in Zoom principal coffees as a way of connecting with parents.

## II.B. Collective Bargaining Unit Matters

Dr. Connolly spoke about plans for paying employees, noting that hourly employees are unable to work during this closing, and the administration is proposing to continue to pay them a base pay, without overtime, through April 6. She indicated they will reevaluate prior to that date. Ms. Matthews said this would include employees who submit time worked through Novatime, and includes bus drivers, members of WAPA, and food service employees. She said she has been in communication with their directors and department heads. Mr. Henry said the Committee feels very strongly about supporting all employees and requested a resolution from the Committee.

MOTION: Upon motion made by Mr. Henry and seconded by Mr. Cobb, the School Committee voted unanimously to pay Weston hourly workers regular pay through the shutdown, to be reevaluated prior to April 6, noting this is not a practice or precedence but a response to an unusual situation.

Other Matters -

Mr. Henry noted that the capacity of ZOOM participation had reached its maximum. Ms. Raman mentioned the communication sent out by the Weston PTO requesting donations of grocery gift cards for those in the community in need. Mr. Cobb noted the Select Board had called a meeting to discuss a State of Emergency in Weston.

Adjournment

MOTION: Upon motion made by Mr. Cobb and seconded by Mrs. Stewart, the School Committee voted unanimously to adjourn at 7:59 PM.

No documents were used by Committee:

Recording of Meeting provided by Weston Media:

<https://weston.vod.castus.tv/vod/?video=eac38e1c-e815-4a6b-93ef-c9429f3b816f>