

SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Regular Meeting – January 4, 2021

A Regular Meeting of the Wayland School Committee was held remotely on Monday, January 4, 2021, at 3:00 P.M. broadcast by WayCAM in the Wayland Town Building.

Present and participating remotely were:

Jeanne Downs, Chair
Ellen Grieco, Vice Chair
Kim Reichelt
Chris Ryan
Kathie Steinberg

Also participating remotely:

Arthur Unobskey
Superintendent

Parry Graham
Assistant Superintendent

Richard Whitehead
Director of Student Services

Susan Bottan
Director of Finance & Operations

Chair Jeanne Downs convened the open session at 3:02 p.m. WayCAM recorded the meeting and it was livestreamed via ZOOM. The meeting was conducted remotely due to the COVID-19 health pandemic and according to the revised open meeting law that allows remote participation. A roll call was taken:

<u>Roll Call</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
Jeanne Downs, Chair	X	
Ellen Grieco, Vice Chair	X	
Kim Reichelt	X	
Chris Ryan	X	
Kathie Steinberg	X	

1. Superintendent Search:

(a) Update on Process and Search Committee:

Ellen reported that the School Committee interviewed the three semi-finalists that the Superintendent Search Screening Committee recommended. Ellen reviewed the process moving forward, and Jeanne reported on the process of the last search. A discussion ensued regarding timing, logistics, including school tours and virtual meetings with school and community stakeholders. The School Committee would like each finalist to produce a writing sample. Future Management Systems will conduct background checks. Jeanne and Ellen will draft a schedule for the Committee's approval on January 6.

2. Comments and Written Statements from the Public:

Jeanne addressed the inability of many people to attend the joint emergency meeting with the BOS and BOH on January 2nd because of the Town's ZOOM meeting capacity. Jeanne thanked Mike McCann for his assistance as meeting moderator. Public comments will be posted with the minutes.

Jeanne read a public comment from Kori Rogers, WTA President and Happy Hollow teacher. Ms. Rogers noted the WTA's absolute opposition to increasing in-person learning for any students at this time, as she cited the data from the Massachusetts DPH Covid-19 Dashboard that included two student positive cases at Claypit Hill in two weeks. Ms. Rogers commented that post-Thanksgiving and post-Christmas positive numbers are predicted to spike and younger people are dying at "historic rates." She continues that returning to pre-Covid situations in the schools is reckless and will result in more positive cases and potential deaths.

Jeanne read a public comment from Jessica Villatoro, a Middle School Special Education teacher, in which she requested that the School Committee consider having a teacher representative at each meeting because topics of discussion and votes by the Committee directly impact teachers and students. Teachers' concerns and stories of success could be heard

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in real time and could result in more productive and collaborative meetings.

Jeanne read a public comment from Lee Ann Cohen, 12 Kelsey Road, in which she praised the WRAP programs and the staff who teach in the remote classes. Ms. Cohen two children are enrolled in WRAP and, although there have been some challenges, she is thankful for the program. As peak pandemic months approach, she raised concerns about fluctuating student populations weakening the strong WRAP program and will hopefully not be too disruptive to the community.

Alexia Obar raised her concerns about a letter sent to families from Allyson Mizoguchi about the procedure for self-quarantining. In her opinion, the letter may have been seen as a negative and could cause some not to self-quarantine. Ms. Obar suggested changing the procedure in this regard. Ms. Obar asked why the whole week was pivoted to remote when only some middle school students needed increased nursing care, and she noted her concern that the School Committee was not aware of the district nursing shortage.

Arthur addressed Ms. Obar's concerns. Allyson's intention was not to limit the ability to self-quarantine, but he will review the letter again for clarification. As the nurses' supervision fall under the auspices of the Town and Ruth Mori, work is underway to provide a sub-pool of nurses and to contact those who have volunteered to assist with the nursing shortage and do it in the best interest of the children. The students will return on Monday, January 11.

3. Financial Matters:

(a) Review and Discussion of Q1 Financial Summary:

Susan reported that at the end of Q1, \$94,000 remains and this balance will be allocated to pay for upcoming expenses for bringing the Kindergartners all-in four days a week at the end of February and the augmented synchronous learning for elementary students. Susan detailed these expenses and referred to the December 14th budget presentation that included staff salaries. In addition, there is a need for about \$100,000 to \$140,000. The cost of utilities was less than anticipated. Susan will re-project utilities going forward with the hopes of moving these funds to help pay for the educational shift. Principals will identify non-personnel categories of the budget for which spending can be postponed to provide adequate funds to shift the instruction delivery.

A total projected savings of \$480,000 is generated from Special Education, transportation and athletics. The maintenance and operating budget is stable, and Susan expects to meet all appropriated expenses. She added that next year's SPED tuition of \$300,000 will not be pre-paid and is reflected in the FY22 recommended budget. All expenses for safety and health protocols to date have been covered within the school department's appropriation by reducing expenses, reallocation of funds, re-prioritizing and the Covid Relief Grant of \$596,000. Susan noted the additional expenses of about \$22,000 that were not covered by the Covid Relief Grant. State legislators extended the deadline for spending Cares funding to December 20, 2021, and Susan will follow up with the Town Administrator in terms of additional funds for Wayland. Susan noted that available funds fluctuate often when estimating costs associated with increased instruction. Susan will share the revised summary and Q1 with the Town Administrator and the Chair of the Finance Committee.

Susan addressed and explained the non-personnel report and the process for account 2210, as DESE has a prescribed chart of accounts, such as a 2000 series for personnel and a 2000 series for non-personnel. She also addressed the tuition account noting that there are shifts and trends for out-of-district placements. However, Richard confirmed that trends are not emerging at this time and cited examples if trends took place. Tuition rates are non-negotiable as they are set by the State.

(b) Review of Capital Requests and Five-Year Capital Plan:

The School Committee supported the capital funding recommendations that the Town Administrator and Finance Director recommended to the BOS and FinCom. The School Committee also supported the funding recommendations as they were made for the approvals and supported recommendations to defer other capital projects. However, questions about prioritization for the deferred projects, such as the fire control panels for the Middle and Field House and the food service refrigeration and cooling units at Happy Hollow, were discussed in terms of reconsideration or swapping out for other projects.

Susan gave an update regarding the Fire Chief's report, as he recommended that the fire panels in both locations could be postponed one year to FY23. Kathie commented that the custodial equipment and storage units were mistakenly omitted from the capital plan and will be added back in the plan. Replacement and repair funds were requested for two refrigeration and cooling units, one at Happy Hollow and one at Claypit Hill and were deferred to about two years. As a result, the projects now include a renovated storage room and access to an outside door.

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Susan elaborated further on the current issues of the Happy Hollow existing unit, as there is nothing more to be done to upkeep the equipment. Therefore, the need for a new refrigerator and freezer is essential and could be replaced with the appropriated funds from 2017. A discussion followed regarding replacement of the refrigerator and freezer.

Ventilation issues are a placeholder, and the Town Administrator will address these issues later in January with the School Committee. There is a concern if funds come out of the operating budget because the ventilation study is not complete and has not been provided to the Committee. Kathie explained this matter further and a discussion ensued about the concerns moving forward. The funding request is yet to be determined. Arthur and Susan will follow up with the Town Administrator.

Kathie addressed two items that would be funded with exempt debt – the final phase of the athletic improvement plan that was deferred to FY25 and the implementation of recommendations in the Feasibility Study. CPC funds were not applied for regarding the athletic fields, and the deadline has passed. Kathie updated the School Committee on these two projects, and a discussion ensued in terms of prioritized projects, such as the Council on Aging, the Loker field, and the library projects. As previously noted by the Athletic Director, Phase 3 of the athletic improvement plan could wait until 2025, but Committee members recommended that the athletic improvement plan is brought forward to 2023 and no later than 2025.

Finally, there are space needs at the elementary schools for next year, as more information is needed, particularly regarding possible modulars. There is an urgent need for space studies to have all students come back to school in September and the capital funds would be appropriated at Town Meeting if a warrant article is drafted by January 15. Mid-March is the deadline for the placeholder. In addition, elementary principals would prefer student storage be done this year and to defer the voice lifts for a year in the amount of \$152,000. Richard and Susan will discuss the storage issues.

(c) Discussion of FY22 Recommended Budget:

The School Committee will submit questions to Susan for all areas of the budget. Jeanne reviewed the budget process moving forward. Kathie asked Susan to clarify the grade levels in which students left because of Covid in larger numbers and how this will factor in the enrollment if they return in the fall.

(d) Review of Budget Calendar:

The School Committee will review the Technology budget on January 6 and a date will be chosen to have a virtual forum in which the public can ask questions about the FY22 recommended budget before the School Committee's vote on January 20. A budget hearing will take place on a later date in late February.

4. Superintendent Update:

(a) Hybrid Mode Update:

Arthur reported on virtual instrumental concerts prior to the holiday break, as well as other events. He thanked the Middle School teachers for their ability to pivot quickly to remote learning for this week. Arthur acknowledged Ms. Cohen's public comment regarding WRAP and noted that he was present in Ms. Olivier's 3rd grade virtual classroom and it was as if they were physically in the classroom. Finally, Arthur acknowledged the wonderful work of the nursing staff under Ruth Mori's leadership.

5. COVID-19 Response:

(a) Discussion and Review of Planning for Remainder of School Year, including Kindergarten and Synchronous Augmentation:

The plan to bring Kindergartners into school four days a week continues. There will be meetings with the principals this week as well as with the Facilities Department and the Town Administrator.

Positions were posted for 1st and 2nd grade at each elementary school. Parry is meeting with the Curriculum Directors to review the details of the teachers' feedback in this regard.

Arthur addressed the health and safety protocols regarding family and staff quarantines after the holiday break. He noted that the Health Watch attestation should be completed as they have done each day regardless of being at home or in school. Arthur talked about the logistics of a school day if a student is at home in quarantine, but it varies at different grade levels.

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- (b) Surveillance Testing Program Update and Possible Vote to Approve Fee:
Ellen reported that received bids for the testing program are being reviewed. Current registrations include 600 students and about 150 staff members.
- (c) Special Education Update:
Richard reported that the remote pivot this week for middle school students is difficult for students, as there is an added level of complexity. The staff prepared for the pivot over the weekend.
- (d) Ongoing Review Groups: Remote and Hybrid Learning Progress Committee and COVID Learning and Safety Committee:
RHLCP: Parry reported that feedback is being collected from the family and staff surveys. The Committee has also collected data regarding student achievement in the fall as well as some high school data. The RHLCP will meet again in three weeks.

COVID Learning and Safety Committee:
There was no update.
- (e) Transportation Update:
No update.
- (f) Ventilation Update:
Susan reported that the State provided twelve air purifiers to the district free of charge and they were put in Kindergarten classrooms in addition to three more units purchased by the district. Energy Recovery Units (ERV) were installed at Happy Hollow and once hooked up by the electrician, the reading rooms will be in use again.
- (g) Next Steps:
Covered in earlier discussions.

6. Consent Agenda:

- (a) Approval of Minutes: December 2, 2020, December 7, 2020, December 14, 2020 (passed over), December 18, 2020, December 29, 2020 #1, December 29, 2020 #2, December 30, 2020:

Upon a motion duly made by Kathie Steinberg, seconded by Ellen Grieco, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to approve the minutes of December 2, 2020, December 7, 2020, December 18, 2020 as amended, December 29, 2020 #1, December 29, 2020 #2, and December 30, 2020. A roll call vote was taken as follows:

<u>Roll Call</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
Jeanne Downs, Chair	X	
Ellen Grieco, Vice Chair	X	
Kim Reichelt	X	
Chris Ryan	X	
Kathie Steinberg	X	

7. Administrative/Procedural Matters:

- (a) Discussion of Upcoming Meeting Schedule:
This topic will be discussed at the next meeting.

8. Matters not Reasonably Anticipated by the Chair:

None.

9. Executive Session:

Upon a motion duly made by Jeanne Downs, seconded by Chris Ryan, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to enter Executive Session at 5:33 p.m. for the purposes of (a) discussing strategy with respect to collective bargaining with custodial union, as permitted by M.G.L. c.30A, §21(a)(3), as a discussion in open session may have a detrimental effect on the negotiating position of the School Committee; (b) discussing strategy with respect to collective bargaining with WESA, as permitted by M.G.L. c.30A, §21(a)(3), as a discussion in open session may have a detrimental effect on the negotiating position of the School Committee; and (c) the School Committee will pass over the approval of the following

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executive session minutes, as permitted by M.G.L. c.30A, §22: December 18, 2020.

The School Committee will be joined by Arthur Unobskey, Superintendent of Schools, Parry Graham, Assistant Superintendent, and Diane Marobella, recording secretary.

The School Committee will adjourn in Executive Session and will not reconvene in open session. A roll call vote was taken as follows:

<u>Roll Call</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
Jeanne Downs, Chair	X	
Ellen Grieco, Vice Chair	X	
Kim Reichelt	X	
Chris Ryan	X	
Kathie Steinberg	X	

10. **Adjournment:**

Upon a motion duly made by Jeanne Downs, seconded by Ellen Grieco, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to adjourn at 5:56 p.m. A roll call vote was taken as follows:

<u>Roll Call</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
Jeanne Downs, Chair	X	
Ellen Grieco, Vice Chair	X	
Kim Reichelt	X	
Chris Ryan	X	
Kathie Steinberg	X	

Respectfully submitted,

Arthur Unobskey, Clerk
Wayland School Committee

Corresponding Documentation:

1. Agenda
2. Public Comments
3. Q1 Financial Report
4. Q1 Financial Report – Personnel
5. Q1 Financial Report – Non-personnel
6. FY22 Funding Recommendations by Town Administrator
7. FY22 Capital Budget Request Updates
8. FY22 Recommended Budget Q&A
9. Minutes of December 2, 2020
10. Minutes of December 7, 2020
11. Minutes of December 18, 2020
12. Minutes of December 29, 2020 - #1 and #2
13. Minutes of December 30, 2020
14. Executive Session Motion