

MINUTES – WAYLAND SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Special Meeting – July 20, 2015

A Special Meeting of the Wayland School Committee was held on Monday, July 20, 2015, at 2:00 P.M. in the School Committee Room of the Wayland Town Building.

Present were:

Ellen Grieco, Chair
Barb Fletcher, Vice Chair
Jeanne Downs
Kathie Steinberg (by remote)

Absent:

Donna Bouchard

Also:

Paul Stein
Superintendent

Brad Crozier

Assistant Superintendent

Susan Bottan

Business Administrator

Chair Ellen Grieco convened the Special Session at 2:06 p.m. and announced that WayCAM is recording the meeting, as is a member of the news media. Ellen noted that she received an email from Kathie Steinberg requesting her participation by remote. She did fill out the proper paperwork.

Ellen announced that the agenda will be moved around and public comment will be at the end of the meeting, as she must leave the meeting by 3:15. Ellen commented that Barb Fletcher has recused herself from this discussion.

George Harris handed an Open Meeting Law Complaint to Ellen at the start of the meeting.

1. **Discussion of Wayland School Committee Communication with the Public regarding the Allegations made by the Former Athletic Director:**
Ellen informed the School Committee of her conversation with Adam Simms, counsel for the School Department. Mr. Simms will attend the August 3rd meeting for a discussion and to explain the parameters within which the Committee can communicate with the public in terms of requirements and restrictions that would be in the best interest of the Town of Wayland. Gini Tate is also planning to attend the August 3rd meeting.
2. **Discussion of and Possible Vote to Send Response to the Former Athletic Director regarding his Letter of May 19, 2015:**
Ellen commented that Kathie drafted a response, which has been reviewed by the School Committee. Upon the advice of counsel, the Committee will make a decision in Executive Session, due to pending litigation, of whether to send this response to the former Athletic Director. Gini Tate has also reviewed this response.
3. **Discuss and Potentially Vote to Respond to Request for Documentation from the Office for Civil Rights:**
The School Committee discussed the process in terms of responding to a request from the Office for Civil Rights (OCR), as the School Committee has been asked to fill out a standard consent form giving permission for the OCR to use the name of the complainant. As a ministerial matter, there is no process in place for such a request. Gini Tate has the consent form and will respond to the Office of Civil Rights, as is also agreed to by Attorney Simms.
4. **Matter not Reasonably Anticipated by the Chair:**
Due to a timing issue, Jeanne asked the Chair to address the funding of the Northeastern Study. The School Committee discussed how the study/survey being done by the Center for Sports in Society at Northeastern University is being funded. Paul commented that when he and Allyson first met with this organization, they

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received initial cost estimates, which in his opinion, were too high. After some discussion, the group agreed to contribute to some of the cost of the project of about \$10,000. The Northeastern representatives felt that this process could serve as a model for other school districts. Paul noted that the funding could come from the FY16 salary budgeted for the Athletic Director, which is not being expensed for the month of July.

In terms of the study, Paul commented that this situation is divided into three domains: 1) the personnel issue, on which he can't comment; 2) allegations made by Mr. Cass, which are being investigated internally and possibly by some or all of the state agencies to which information has been sent and the School Committee has referred the matter to; and 3) broader issues surrounding the Athletic Department, which will be addressed in the Northeastern study. Paul elaborated on the purpose of the study, what its focus will be, the process that will be followed, and who will be asked to participate in the survey. Paul requested that the School Committee approve the transfer of funds in the personnel line item to contracted services.

Linda Segal asked what the School Committee's policy is when a board member recuses him/herself from a topic discussed. In her opinion, Linda believes the board member should leave the room. Barb commented that she attends public meetings, but does not participate in the discussions or any votes taken.

Ellen commented that, given the current situation, the Northeastern Study is a worthwhile endeavor and applauded Paul for his efforts in this regard.

Upon a motion duly made by Ellen Grieco, seconded by Jeanne Downs, the School Committee voted unanimously (3-0-1) to approve the transfer of funds from the personnel line item to contracted services. A roll call vote was taken as follows:

<u>Roll Call</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Abstain</u>
Ellen Grieco, Chair	X		
Barb Fletcher			X
Donna Bouchard (absent)			
Jeanne Downs	X		
Kathie Steinberg (by remote)	X		

As another matter not anticipated by the Chair, Ellen commented that she received 2 public records requests from George Harris in the past week, and she would like to delegate the responsibility of responding to these requests. Jeanne volunteered to assist Paul in responding to these public records requests. Ellen explained the nature of these 2 public records requests and noted that legal counsel will review the documents before they are released. Barb confirmed that the executive session minutes related to these requests have been reviewed, but will check to see if they have been released.

5. **Approval of the June 8, 2015 Regular Session Minutes:**

Upon a motion duly made by Barb Fletcher, seconded by Ellen Grieco, the School Committee voted unanimously (4-0) to approve the June 8, 2015 regular session minutes, as written. A roll call vote was taken as follows:

<u>Roll Call</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
Ellen Grieco, Chair	X	
Barb Fletcher	X	
Donna Bouchard (absent)		
Jeanne Downs	X	
Kathie Steinberg	X	

A discussion ensued regarding the format of the meeting.

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6. **Comments & Written Statements from the Public:**

Kent George commented that, in his opinion, many situations, including the current one regarding the Athletic Director, stems from problems with management. He also believes that taxpayers should be involved in the Northeastern study.

Linda Segal asked a procedural question in terms of the agenda related to the Office of Civil Rights and other state agencies. She wanted to know if inquiries have been made by these agencies and if they are conducting investigations. Although Ellen responded that the State Ethics Commission has made contact, she would like to confer with legal counsel in terms of giving the correct information.

John Flaherty did not support the study by Northeastern and believes that this type of study can be done internally.

A resident asked why taxpayers (without children in schools) are being excluded from the study. Paul responded that they are not being excluded and will discuss adding them to the study with the consultants.

Philip Cohen asked if an investigative process is in place at the high school to address serious allegations, such as Title IX allegations, and when town counsel is consulted.

Ellen addressed the audience because this portion of the meeting was becoming a public forum. Ellen asked the public to email their questions to the Committee, so it can have time to answer them. Once the answers are complete, they will be posted.

George Harris explained why he hand delivered an Open Meeting Law Complaint to the Chair at the July 20, 2015 School Committee meeting. The OML complaint was filed because the July 6th agenda did not identify for the public in detail the litigation matter being discussed in Executive Session.

Alan Catrina, a long standing teacher, commented that this issue has occurred in school systems in which he has taught. He applauded the residents for wanting transparency; however, he encouraged everyone to look at the facts on both sides and work together to find a solution that will impact everyone in a positive way. He praised Mr. Parseghian's dedication to the schools and the students, despite the allegations brought forward.

Dorothy Dunlay commented that good people can do wrong things. She did not support the Northeastern Study because she feels the money should be spent on possible litigation going forward.

Margo Melnicove asked how much the litigation and settlement cost regarding Martha Jamieson. She is also concerned about the allegations that have surfaced since May 19th, and asked if all updated information since then has been sent to the appropriate agencies.

Mike Henley commented that he runs a golf tournament every year in his brother's memory. He was responding to false statements made in the newspaper. He listed items that he has purchased for athletes, including sheds to hold team equipment. In all of his years involved in Wayland athletics, he has never been approached by Mr. Parseghian to purchase athletic apparel from the company in question.

Marty Nichols, a 46-year resident whose 3 children graduated from Wayland, commented that he has always supported the schools, but now questions the trust of the administration and School Committee. He would like an update and clarification of the pending METCO matter.

Cindy Boyd's son was a 2014 graduate and captain of the baseball and soccer teams. She asked if there was a system in place to file complaints associated with the athletics program. She referred to a situation involving the baseball team. Although she had expressed her concerns to the Athletic Director and Principal, there was never any follow through.

Alice Boelter commented that mistrust is growing out of control and some should consider resigning, as these problems are hurting students and staff.

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Maureen Deselli referred to the Wayland Public Schools Mission Statements in terms of treating each other with respect. She believes there is too much negativity everywhere about certain staff members and administrators and the students are also hearing and seeing what is being said. She urged everyone to follow a process to improve the system in a respectful and thoughtful manner. She also supported the Northeastern Study because it will provide valuable feedback.

Linda Segal also noted that she is a retired teacher who taught in 6 states and has never witnessed these type of circumstances as they are being described. She believes that the former Athletic Director did not receive due process.

Judy Kennedy has coached sports and she wrote a letter to the Town Crier about the inequities and allegations being made. She understands the processes school systems follow in terms of evaluations and addressing certain situations. She also supports the Northeastern Study and believes it would be money well spent.

Ellen addressed George Harris's comments made to the School Committee about his Open Meeting Law Complaint, and she made the decision not to convene in Executive Session. The Committee will meet again the following week to address this matter.

Kathie left the meeting by remote at 3:09 p.m.

Debra Goldman, a columnist for the Wayland Town Crier, stated that this issue involves real people, real lives, and people's careers. She commented on the timing issue of the allegations brought forward and the non-renewal of the Athletic Director's contract. As a taxpayer, she is concerned about the use of tax dollars. She stated that she would like to give the Committee a list of questions.

John Flaherty asked for clarification that the Northeastern Study is not an investigation.

Ellen thanked the audience for attending.

7. **Adjournment:**

Upon a motion duly made by Barb Fletcher, seconded by Ellen Grieco, the School Committee voted unanimously (3-0) to adjourn the Special Session at 3:12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Paul Stein, Clerk
Wayland School Committee

Observers:
See attached list.

Corresponding Documentation:

1. Agenda
2. Regular Session Minutes of June 8, 2015
3. Executive Session Motion