

MINUTES – WAYLAND SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Public Forum/Regular Meeting – November 20, 2017

A Public Forum/Regular Meeting of the Wayland School Committee was held on Monday, November 20, 2017, at 7:00 P.M. in the Large Hearing Room of the Wayland Town Building.

Present were:

Ellen Grieco, Chair
Jeanne Downs, Vice Chair
Nate Buffum
Kim Reichelt

Absent:

Kathie Steinberg

Also:

Arthur Unobskey
Superintendent

Brad Crozier
Assistant Superintendent

Susan Bottan
School Business Administrator

Marlene Dodyk
Director of Student Services

The Chair convened the regular session at 7:02 p.m.; the meeting is being recorded by WayCAM.

1. Public Forum regarding School Start Times:

Arthur gave a brief introduction of his recommendation for school start times and how he reached this recommendation after several meetings with the school start time task force, including the data received from teacher, student, and parent surveys. He noted that the task force had met several times with his predecessor, and they have addressed the challenges and the potential impact to the school day, all of which has been considered dating back four years ago. Arthur continued to explain his recommendation.

Phase 1 (September 2018):

Elementary 9:00 a.m.
Middle School 7:55 a.m.
High School 7:50 a.m.

Phase 2 (September 3 2019):

Elementary 9:00 a.m.
Middle School 8:05 a.m.
High School 8:00 a.m.

Due to Dr. Owens' delay, Ellen took one comment out of order.

As a resident and a high school guidance counselor, Caroline Higgins supports later school start times. However, she and other elementary parents do not support even later start times for elementary students and believe that secondary students should start later than the recommended time, given the compelling research. She commented on the financial burden that would exist for elementary families, given that they comprise of about 50% of families in Wayland.

Ellen added that the School Committee has not discussed the recommendation nor has the Committee made any decisions in this regard. The Committee's goal is to gather input from staff and the community before entering into discussions.

Presentation by Dr. Judith Owens, Director of Sleep Medicine at Boston Children's Hospital and Professor of Neurology at Harvard Medical School. Dr. Owens is also the author of "The ABC's of ZZZ's": The Impact of Sleep on Student Health and Performance.

Dr. Owens reviewed the myths and misconceptions in terms of how adolescents can gain more sleep without having to change start times, such as taking away cell phones and all electronics and parents insisting they go to bed earlier. Sleep time and sleep timing are referred to as "Biological Imperatives" because it's not how much sleep one gets, but when the actual sleep time occurs. According to studies, there is a master clock in the brain that controls "circadian rhythms." Recently it was found that there are circadian clocks in every cell of the body. Dr. Owens explained what

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could happen if there is a misalignment or disruption of these cells, as well as the difference between homeostatic sleep drive and the circadian wake drive and the times of day in which these drives process within the body. However, Dr. Owens noted that there is a “forbidden zone” when adolescents just cannot fall asleep much before 11:00 p.m. For example, teens are biologically programmed to wake up at 8:00 a.m. or later from the recommended 8 to 10 hours of sleep, as REM (rapid eye movement) sleep is critical for memory consolidation and learning of new tasks and occurs during the last third of the night.

Dr. Owens cited the safety concerns for teens if they do not get the recommended amount of sleep, such as poor school attendance, car accidents, depression, suicide, risk taking, obesity and health risks, and an increase in sports injuries. All health advocacy agencies are in favor of an 8:30 a.m. start time or later for teens, but just 30 minutes can produce a significant improvement in the safety and health risks.

Dr. Owens reviewed the economic challenges of a school district and the personal family schedule adjustments when making a change to school start times. Not only is there a financial impact, but there is less time for athletics, less time for after school employment, child care challenges, potential safety issues and an impact on sleep duration for elementary students. There is the concept of “The Flip” that reverses the start times for secondary and elementary students, because elementary students are morning “larks” and are biologically environmentally and socially more flexible when it comes to changing bedtimes in order to attain 9 to 12 hours of sleep.

Since the late 1990's, 1,000 high schools in 43 states have instituted a delayed start time. Dr. Owens presented a brief history of school start times and the positive outcomes. Keeping in mind that not all students will benefit equally, it is important to have school board involvement, the support and leadership of the superintendent, and the community at large. It is as important to have input and engagement from principals, teachers, students, and parents.

The audience, made up of Wayland teachers and parents, directed several questions and comments toward Dr. Owens that encompassed the following topics:

- A possible shift in Massachusetts school athletics and a state-wide change in school start times
- Differences in 30 minute start time change vs. one hour
- Consideration of more available research related to later or earlier start times for elementary students
- A request for some urgency in the decision making process and solution from a medical standpoint
- The learning impact for all students given the current recommendation

Some parents conveyed their personal family experiences, and one resident who is an elementary teacher in another district commented that she has begun a no homework policy and replaced it with a mandatory evening reading time of twenty minutes that allows for more outdoor play time, family time, and provides more balance in schedules.

Q & A Session:

The School Committee and Dr. Unobskey addressed questions and comments made regarding the Superintendent's school start time recommendation beginning in September 2018. Many of the challenges were discussed, especially those for elementary students, including those facing the Boston families and the impact on the transportation budget, for which Susan Bottan briefly spoke about. There were varying opinions and concerns expressed, as well as personal experiences cited regarding the possible change in school start times. It was suggested by one resident to understand other potential solutions researched by other school districts. One resident noted that the community should have more involvement in the process.

In addition, a resident of Weston who serves on the Weston School Start Time Task Force and who is also a cognitive specialist described Weston's school start time proposal using the “Flip” approach and noted that Weston faces some of the same challenges facing Wayland. He also addressed the health and cognitive benefits for secondary students.

A member of the Wayland Task Force summed up the work in which the task force engaged, including its research of all data available and the philosophical changes that would occur if a new schedule was implemented. She also briefly commented on the approaches currently being taken by other communities, including Weston and Newton.

2. Comments & Written Statements from the Public (continued):

In light of the proposed athletic facility, Tom Sciacca commented on the opinions of some in Wayland and how they view Wayland athletics as promoting a world view and a political attitude as opposed to how Tom views the purpose of athletics as a means of exercise. He suggested that the School Committee take another look at the values of Wayland

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athletics.

Gretchen Schuler commented on the vote at Special Town Meeting to fund the design of athletic facilities at the High School and a Loker conservation and recreation area. Ms. Schuler asked the School Committee to resolve some pending issues, such as encroachment on wetland areas, some conservation restricted areas, and river front and water supply from the wells before spending any of the design money. Ms. Schuler is asking pertinent town boards, including the School Committee, to insist that the design company meet with the Conservation Commission to address these issues as well as basic permitting issues before the design money is spent.

After hearing all of the comments made regarding school start times, two School Committee members asked related questions, such as which districts are working through this process and if and when decisions will be made and why “The Flip” approach was rejected. The Committee discussed its timeline and the pending FY19 budget in reaching a decision about the school start time recommendation in early January.

3. **Financial Matters:**

(a) High School Master Athletic Plan Update:

- Communication with Town Boards/Committees
- Update on Owner’s Project Manager Process
- Resource Delineation
- Permanent Municipal Building Committee (PMBC) involvement
- Next steps

Jeanne updated the School Committee. Four proposals have been received for the Owner’s Project Manager and they will be opened on November 21st by Jeanne, Susan Botton, Ben Keefe, and Beth Doucette in preparation for evaluation of the proposals. Nan Balmer, Town Administrator and Procurement Officer, will make a final selection. Jeanne noted that the resource delineation is complete, and the Board of Selectmen will appoint the PMBC to oversee the project this evening. Based on a previous public comment, Ellen asked about the process moving forward and suggested that communication with the Conservation Commission take place for a better understanding of the parameters and the issues at hand. A discussion ensued in this regard.

(b) Discussion of Budget Calendar, Budget Presentations, Finance Committee Guideline and Communication with Finance Committee:

The School Committee discussed possible dates to meet with the Finance Committee regarding the budget guidelines. Ellen will reach out to FinCom member Klaus Shigley regarding a date. The Committee discussed presenting information to the FinCom regarding school staff headcount, why it changes from year to year, and information related to benefits packages. The following presentations were confirmed.

Schedule for School Budget Presentations:

High School – January 5 @ 7:45 a.m.
Council on Aging – January 5 @ 10:00 a.m.
Middle School – January 9 @ 8:00 a.m.
Elementary Schools – the week of January 8

The School Committee discussed the special revenue fund budget presentations within the context of the FY19 operating budget with Pat Keefe, Katy Merrell, and Heath Rollins. Susan recommended that these budget presentations occur during the Committee’s budget work sessions on January 4th and 8th.

(c) Presentation of FY19 Preliminary Budget Drivers:

Arthur presented the FY19 preliminary budget drivers that are being considered during the budget process keeping in mind the Finance Committee guidelines. He thanked the administrators, including the principals, for their efforts in working towards a fiscally responsible budget. The principals and central office administrators were charged with identifying the highest priorities that meet mandates and continue to improve programming within the guidelines. Arthur commented that it **may be** necessary to come in less than 3.5% over the FY18 operating budget for the town and schools while still providing the same level of services to the students. The UNITED goals continue to govern teaching and learning priorities.

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The drivers include the following:

- Contractual obligations for staff
- Enrollment changes
- Facilities

Arthur described the elements that make up the contractual obligations, such as wage increases and lane changes. It is predicted that there will be an additional 35-40 student increase next year, which will generate more staff that Arthur identified and why. The facilities budget will not change much; however, the school department will partner with the town to hire a wastewater specialist. Arthur also identified expected savings within the budget for Special Education and athletic transportation, Loker non-personnel expenses, and the recalculation of special revenue funds for indirect allocations.

Possible additions to the FY19 budget based on need will be a teaching assistant for the WHS Academic Center, an upgrade/replacement for audio-visual equipment, a Middle School long-term substitute, elementary extracurricular stipends (2 per school) to institutionalize the Green Team as a way to train global citizens, and additional transportation for the implementation of a school start time delay to create a more efficient system.

Jeanne asked for an update regarding the foreign language program. It will be added to the December 4th agenda.

4. Educational Matters:

(a) Hear Superintendent's Report regarding School Events and Ongoing Initiatives:

- Recent School Visits
- WHS Play – “Little Shop of Horrors”

Arthur reported on his school visits at which he observed the teachers' work in the classrooms, he met with the high school guidance staff, and visited with the principals. Arthur concluded that one common theme in the classroom suggests that the students are preparing for the future by using their problem solving instincts to help them integrate the real world into their studies. Arthur gave some examples.

Arthur attended the WHS play “Little Shop of Horrors and described his experience and the flawless efforts of the students.

5. Administrative/Procedural Matters:

(a) Discussion of Open Meeting Law Response Process, including Possible Review of Spreadsheet and Discussion of Complaints Filed by George Harris on August 22, 2017, August 31, 2017 and June 7, 2017 (Alleging insufficient detail of executive session minutes), July 18, 2017 (Alleging failure to timely produce minutes), September 19, 2017 (Alleging insufficient detail in agenda), September 28, 2017 (Alleging failure to produce minutes in a timely manner), and November 3, 2017 (Alleging that proper procedure was not followed in responding to a previous OML complaint):

Ellen recommended to the School Committee that this discussion take place in Executive Session.

(b) Review of Outstanding Document and/or Minute Requests:

None.

(c) Discussion regarding School Committee Schedule:

A busget forum will be on December 4, 2017 and a budget hearing on January 22, 2018.

(d) Review of Public Communications from the School Committee:

The School Committee discussed the status of the current article written by Kathie and publication of another article written by Kim about eSchool Plus. Ellen will draft an article about the increasing social and emotional needs of the elementary students for the Committee's review on December 4th.

6. Matters not Reasonably Anticipated by the Chair:

Brad informed the School Committee that the selection process for the Director of Student Services will begin the second week of December. He distributed a timeline for the process that will begin with ads placed in the Boston Globe, Education Week and other publications, the formation and makeup of the Selection Advisory Committee, the role of the Selection Advisory Committee, and the final decision by the Superintendent.

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The School Committee discussed the possibility of sending out a notice about input on the proposed change to school start times for the benefit of those who missed this evening's meeting. Links to the website should also be provided.

7. **Consent Agenda:**

(a) Approval of Accounts Payables & Payroll Warrants:

- Wayland Public Schools Accounts Payables Warrant, dated November 20, 2017, in the amount of \$501,431.16
- Wayland Public Schools Accounts Payables Student Activities Warrant, dated November 20, 2017, in the amount of \$23,104.91
- Wayland Public Schools Payroll Warrant, dated November 8, 2017, in the amount of \$1,486,176.70

(b) Approval of Minutes:

- Regular Session of October 30, 2017
- Regular Session of November 6, 2017

Upon a motion duly made by Ellen Grieco, seconded by Kim Reichelt, the School Committee voted unanimously (4-0) to approve the consent agenda.

8. **Executive Session:**

Upon a motion duly made by Ellen Grieco, seconded by Jeanne Downs, the School Committee voted unanimously (4-0) to enter Executive Session at 10:05 p.m. to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining with Food Service workers, as permitted by M.G.L. c.30A, §21(a) (3), as such discussion in open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the School Committee and an Executive Session is necessary to protect the bargaining position of the School Committee; discuss three residency matters, pursuant to M.G.L. c.30A, §21(a)(7), in order to comply with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, 20 U.S.C. §1232g and the Massachusetts Right to Privacy Law, M.G.L. c.214, §1B; discuss Open Meeting Law Complaints filed by George Harris on July 7, 2017 alleging insufficient detail in Executive Session minutes, July 18, 2017 alleging failure to produce minutes, both in violation of M.G.L. c.30A, §22, and September 19, 2017 alleging insufficient detail in agenda in violation of M.G.L., c.30A, §20, and September 28, 2017 alleging failure to produce minutes in a timely manner in violation of M.G.L. c.30A, §22, and November 3, 2017 alleging that proper procedure was not followed in responding to a previous Open Meeting Law complaint in violation of M.G.L. c.30A, §23(b); and approval of the following Executive Session minutes, as permitted by M.G.L. c.30A, §22: October 30, 2017 and November 14, 2017. A roll call vote was taken as follows:

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

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

The School Committee will reconvene in open session for adjournment purposes only.

10. **Adjournment:**

Upon a motion duly made by Ellen Grieco, seconded by Kathie Steinberg, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to adjourn at 11:01 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Arthur Unobskey, Clerk
Wayland School Committee

Observers:

See attached.

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Corresponding Documentation:

1. Agenda & Backup Information
2. Accounts Payables & Payroll Warrants
3. Public Comment by Gretchen Schuler
4. WHS Trip Request for Model UN to Boston
5. Regular Session Minutes of October 30, 2017
6. Special Session Minutes of November 6, 2017
7. Timeline for Selection of Director of Student Services
8. Executive Session Motion

Revised and Approved on 12/18/2017