

# MINUTES – WAYLAND SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Regular Meeting – March 19, 2018

A Regular Meeting of the Wayland School Committee was held on Monday, March 19, 2018, at 7:00 P.M. in the School Committee Room of the Wayland Town Building.

*Present were:*

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

*Also:*

Arthur Unobskey  
Superintendent

Brad Crozier  
Assistant Superintendent

Marlene Dodyk  
Director of Student Services

Susan Bottan  
School Business Administrator

*Also:*

Richard Whitehead, FY2019 Director of Student Services  
Henry Stafford, WHS Student and Eagle Scout  
Allyson Mizoguchi, WHS Principal  
Marybeth Sacramone, WHS Director of Guidance  
Ben Keefe, Public Buildings Director

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

**1. Special Matters:**

(a) Introduction of Richard Whitehead, Director of Student Services, as of July 1, 2018:

Arthur introduced Richard Whitehead as the new Director of Student Services who will replace Marlene Dodyk who is retiring as of June 30, 2018. Arthur elaborated on Richard's contributions in Dracut as the current Director of Student Services. Richard thanked all those participated in the interview/search process. He is excited and, with Marlene's assistance, looks forward to a smooth transition.

(b) Presentation and Possible Approval of an Eagle Scout Project at Happy Hollow School:

WHS student and Eagle Scout Henry Stafford presented a proposal to the School Committee regarding his Eagle Scout project. He would like to construct a Gaga pit at Happy Hollow sometime in mid-April. Henry described the mechanics and the design of the pit, and he will work with the DPW in terms of the types of materials that he will use. The pit will also have a door making it easier for those students who can't climb over the wall. Henry noted that he plans to work with some volunteers and the cost will be funded by the scouts.

A discussion ensued and it was suggested that Henry consult with Public Buildings Director Ben Keefe and Park and Recreation in terms of compliance issues.

Upon a motion duly made by Ellen Grieco, seconded by Nate Buffum, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to approve Henry's Eagle Scout project to build a dodge ball pit at Happy Hollow conditioned on approval by the Facilities Department.

(c) Discussion and Possible Vote on Change in Use of Weighted GPA at Wayland High School:

WHS Principal Allyson Mizoguchi and WHS Guidance Director Marybeth Sacramone presented the Weighted GPA proposal to the School Committee. Currently, students earn a "weighted" and "unweighted" GPA and both are reported on their transcripts. Allyson described the difference both and noted those courses that contribute to either one – weighted or unweighted.

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The concern, which goes as far back as 15 years ago, is that the weighted GPA is doing a disservice to the students, as it is one more way that students measure themselves and results in a great deal of stress. Allyson explained course selection, especially for college level electives, and how it could impact the students' Weighted GPA. It may prevent students from making good choices about their academic interests, strengths, and weaknesses. There are an increasing number of electives at WHS, and it is creating an inequitable system among students.

The 2016-2017 School Council researched this issue and drafted a recommendation to drop the Weighted GPA. As part of this research, Wayland High School hosted a summit in February 2017 of area high schools who have done away with the Weighted GPA and those who are thinking about this change. Dr. Paul Stein and Dr. Arthur Unobskey, past and present superintendents, were consulted, and an extensive survey of colleges regarding their admissions practices and attitudes about the Weighted GPA was conducted. This issue was also discussed with department leaders and all faculty.

Marybeth reviewed the 109 responses she received as a result of college survey between July 2017 and now. The colleges were chosen as those that WHS students consistently apply. The overall result was that the majority of colleges are re-calculating GPA as part of their admissions process, and our students will not be disadvantaged during the admissions process by making this change. Transcripts matter the most in determining "rigor" and the level of each course will still appear on the WHS transcript. Marybeth described the School Profile, the information it contains, and how it relates to college admissions.

The proposal is to do away with the Weighted GPA starting with the 2018 incoming freshmen (class of 2022). Those attending WHS now will continue to have both Weighted and Unweighted GPA. In terms of a class Valedictorian, other ways to honor students will be reviewed by the administration.

A discussion ensued about removing the Weighted GPA, including the advantages/benefits and disadvantages and how it could affect merit scholarships. The timeline for the School Committee's vote was discussed.

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

Katy Walsh, a pediatric health professional, commented on the Weighted GPA proposal, as she and other parents who live on her street know nothing about this proposal. She asked the School Committee to postpone its decision until parents can be informed and educated in this regard. In terms of pediatric mental health, it is Ms. Walsh's opinion that children need more sleep and feels that removing the Weighted GPA will not cure or help with stress and/or anxiety, as she noted that pediatric mental health issues have increased greatly since 1988 (the year she graduated from high school). Mrs. Walsh related some of her experiences with her own high school children and commented on what some of her perspective is if the Weighted GPA is eliminated.

Andy Walsh asked if other research, aside from the School Council's and administrators, was considered.

Win Treese was a member of the School Council in 2016 when this topic was first discussed. He replied that they found little research and data on this topic. Mr. Treese is in support of the proposal, as it addresses a problem but does not solve it; he explained. He added that the Weighted GPA gives students a number to stress about – a focal point. It also becomes a direct point of comparison, and he wonders if the Weighted GPA did not exist, would it be implemented at some point.

Tom Sciacca commented on the Weighted GPA and referenced stories he heard from a Tufts college admissions officer similar to what was discussed this evening; these stories were not about a number. In Tom's opinion, colleges also try to balance the student body and create a synergy. Finally, Tom referred to the article he wrote for the Town Crier about environmental problems that exist as a result of artificial turf fields. He went on to mention a few of these concerns, and added that, in his opinion, it will not increase playing time. Tom stated that he does not support artificial turf fields.

WHS sophomore Kevin Wang and WSPN journalist expressed his opinion regarding the Weighted GPA. He takes all honors classes and spoke about his experiences in choosing electives. Kevin feels that as long as grades exist and as long as colleges accept students in the same way, the culture will remain the same in school. He added that competitiveness is a major part of a student's life and it determines how they aspire in school.

Ellen asked Allyson and Marybeth if there had been any feedback from students. Allyson responded on the process and those with whom she discussed this issue. The School Committee discussed the Weighted GPA proposal based

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on the research that was presented by Allyson and Marybeth. Some members had concerns that not enough parents are aware of this proposal and parent feedback is always welcome. Arthur conveyed his college admission experience with his own children and confirmed that colleges don't use the Weighted GPA, but recalculate the WGPA and ask for a translation of the individual transcripts. Colleges are more likely to look at the student's "story" and how they have broadened their goals aside from concentrating on grades and GPA only. An open discussion for this topic will be scheduled at the March 26<sup>th</sup> School Committee meeting. The format of the meeting was discussed. A communication will be sent providing the link to tonight's presentation inviting the public to attend the next meeting.

3. **Financial Matters:**

(a) Discussion and Possible Vote on Field Surface for WHS Stadium Complex Renovation Project (out of order):

To clarify, Jeanne commented that the School Committee's vote in October 2017 was to support the design of a new stadium that included a synthetic turf field. The Committee will vote this evening for either a natural grass field or a synthetic turf field. Kathie noted that if the town chose a synthetic turf field, Weston and Sampson is recommending a crumb rubber carpet and a crumb rubber infill – a replacement of what is there now. Although this is not a final recommendation and the design process will not be complete by Town Meeting, Kathie described the laying down process and the materials used for the shock pad. Jeanne described the process in terms of the different in-fill options, as recommended by Weston and Sampson, once the School Committee votes.

Kim expressed her concern about putting a second artificial turf field in Wayland if the Loker artificial turf field is approved. She is also concerned about the environmental impact to the water supply at the High School, although in support of the athletic facilities. Jeanne commented that given the many problems that occurred ten years ago, Weston and Sampson is committed to having better oversight this time. A discussion ensued in this regard.

Tom Sciacca added that the new stadium design should protect the wells, even though there are many issues with the wastewater treatment plant. Also, the wells were not addressed when the high school was built in the 1960's.

Upon a motion duly made by Jeanne Downs, seconded by Kathie Steinberg, the School Committee voted (4-1) (Kim opposed) to approve the installation of the synthetic turf system in conjunction with the stadium renovation project at the high school.

Sheila Brown of Boosters commented that the Loker turf field will not be large enough to accommodate the football program/games, but will provide space for soccer and lacrosse.

(b) Receive Status Review of Capital and Operational Wastewater Treatment Plant Projects, including Possible Vote to Authorize the Director of the Town Department of Public Works to Provide Managerial Oversight of the Town and School Wastewater Treatment Facilities (out of order):

Ben Keefe updated the School Committee on the status of the capital and operational wastewater treatment plant projects. The following issues, as noted in the DEP inspection letter, at the high school wastewater treatment plant will be addressed: 1) storage and operation of chemicals; 2) sampling of the final discharge; and 3) ventilation. The CIP, in the amount of \$285,000 will address these issues; however, if it is possible, the cost could be lower. Ben commented that it is possible that a 10 x 25 foot addition may have to be constructed to address the storage of the chemicals. Ben will soon meet with Whitewater, Inc. to discuss the operational issues, adding that the plant is currently down because the membranes are damaged and new ones will be ordered once he receives the pertinent information from the supplier. Ben updated the Committee about the pumping out of the plant by Whitewater, Inc.

Ben addressed the managerial position for the wastewater plant. A licensed individual will be hired full time to oversee the town plant and high school plant, which could decrease the need for an outside contractor resulting in a cost savings. This person would report to Tom Holder of the DPW and the salary structure is 60% from the town and 40% from the school department. Mr. Holder will update the School Committee periodically regarding the issues of the High School plant, as the jurisdiction of the operation of the plant is the responsibility of the school department. A discussion ensued in this regard.

Upon a motion duly made by Ellen Grieco, seconded by Kathie Steinberg, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to authorize the Director of the Town Department of Public Works to provide managerial oversight of the town and school wastewater treatment facilities.

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(c) Preparation for Town Meeting; Review of Presentations and Slides for Town Meeting:

The School Committee received Jeanne's slides that will be presented at Town Meeting. Ellen will bring her slides to the March 26<sup>th</sup> meeting. The School Committee reviewed an article that Jeanne wrote for the Town Crier regarding Articles 25 and 26. The Committee also perused the draft Fast Facts for content. Two areas were touched upon by the School Committee – new hires and the capacity of Loker.

(d) Continued Review and Discussion of School Budgets, Articles for Town Meeting and Related Comments for the Warrant, Debt Exclusion, Funding Sources and CIPs:

This agenda item was passed over.

(e) Review, Discussion, and Possible Vote to Support and/or Co-sponsor Article D (OPEB) for Annual Town Meeting:

The School Committee will invite Klaus Shigley of the Finance Committee to the March 26<sup>th</sup> meeting to discuss and answer any questions that the Committee may have about Article D regarding OPEB.

(f) Discussion and Possible Vote to Approve FY2019 Special Revenue Funds Budgets and Fees:

This vote will be postponed until March 26<sup>th</sup>, as two School Committee members did not fill out the waiver form.

(g) Receive Quarterly Financial Report:

Susan presented a brief update of the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter financial report. The year-end balance is projected to be about \$41,000. However, that could change given how expenditures can be unpredictable. This projection is lower from the Q1 report due to the postponement of the use of the entire funding in the Circuit Breaker.

The personnel expenditures budget is higher due to unanticipated retirement and unissued lane changes. There is a lower balance for custodial expenditures. In addition, there is an increase in the available balance for textbooks and educational materials, a slight surplus in medical therapeutic services, transportation, heat and electricity. The pace is running about the same for Q3, but overall the budget is very tight and is being monitored very carefully with staff.

(h) High School Master Athletic Plan:

- Communication with other Town Boards and Committees
- Resolution of Outstanding Order of Conditions
- Update on Owner's Project Manager and Architect Selection Process
- Conservation Commission's Permit Requirements
- Draft Warrants for Annual Town Meeting
- Review of Project Timeline
- Next Steps

There was no update; postponed until March 26<sup>th</sup>.

(i) Discussion on Issues Relating to School Safety:

This agenda item was passed over.

(j) Discussion of Budget Calendar, Calendar for Town Meeting Articles:

This agenda item was passed over.

(k) Finance Subcommittee Update:

- OPEB Update
- Communication with Finance Committee

Jeanne updated the Committee on the upcoming MUNIS project and the ongoing audits.

#### 4. **Educational Matters:**

(a) Hear Superintendent's Report:

- School Visits

Arthur attended the Senior Show and was impressed by the students' talents and the team work displayed to put on such a production.

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5. **Administrative/Procedural Matters:**

(a) Discussion of Process for Evaluation of Superintendent:

The School Committee discussed the timeline and process for evaluating the superintendent by June 18<sup>th</sup>.

(b) Review and Discussion of any Outstanding Document and/or Minutes Requests:

There were no outstanding document and/or minutes requests.

(c) Collins Center Report on Local Government:

There was no discussion.

(d) Discussion of Open Meeting Law Response Process, including Possible Review of Spreadsheet and Discussion of Open Meeting Law Complaints Filed by George Harris on November 3, 2017 (Alleging that Proper Procedure was not Followed in Responding to a Previous OML Complaint.) and September 28, 2017 (Alleging Failure to Produce Minutes in a Timely Manner):

This agenda item was passed over.

(e) Review of Public Communications from the School Committee: Article on National School Walkout and Student Response:

The School Committee reviewed the article written by Ellen regarding the National School Walkout and Student Response. It will be published in the Town Crier.

*Ellen left the meeting at 10:05 p.m.; returned at 10:08 p.m.*

6. **Matters not Reasonably Anticipated by the Chair:**

Jeanne asked if there was a plan to replace Brad Crozier. Arthur responded that he will have a process in the very near future.

7. **Consent Agenda:**

(a) Approval of Accounts Payables & Payroll Warrants:

- Wayland Public Schools Payroll Warrant, dated February 28, 2018, in the amount of \$1,424,803.90
- Wayland Public School Payroll Warrant, dated March 14, 2018, in the amount of \$1,498,434.23
- Wayland Public Schools Accounts Payables Warrant, dated March 12, 2018, in the amount of \$686,415.27
- Wayland Public Schools Accounts Payables Student Activities Warrant, dated March 19, 2018, in the amount of \$43,180.69

(b) Approval of Minutes:

- Regular Session of February 13, 2018
- Regular Session of February 26, 2018

Upon a motion duly made by Kathie Steinberg, seconded by Kim Reichelt, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) 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 (5-0) to enter into Executive Session at 10:17 p.m. for the purposes of discussing strategy with respect to WTA stipend negotiations, as permitted by M.G.L. c.30A, §21(a)(3); reviewing a draft settlement agreement to resolve an Open Meeting Law complaint dated July 18, 2017, as permitted by M.G.L. c.30A, §21(a)(7); reviewing Executive Session minutes regarding the Committee's March 27, 2017 Executive Session, as permitted by M.G.L. c.30A, §22(f) and (g); and approving the following Executive Session minutes, as permitted by M.G.L. c.30A, §22: February 26, 2018. 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	X	

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### 9. **Adjournment:**

Upon a motion duly made by Ellen Grieco, seconded by Kathie Steinberg, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to adjourn at 10:42 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Arthur Unobskey, Clerk  
Wayland School Committee

### **Observers:**

Tom Sciacca, WVN  
Sheila Brown, Wayland Boosters  
Katy Walsh, Wayland  
Andy Walsh, Wayland  
Win Treese, Wayland  
Kevin Wang, WHS student and WSPN journalist

### **Corresponding Documentation:**

1. Agenda and Backup Information
2. Eagle Scout Proposal at Happy Hollow School
3. Memo re: Request for Vote to Authorize Director of DPW to Oversee the Wastewater Treatment Facilities
4. FY2018 and FY2019 Fees and Tuitions
5. Draft Article for Town Crier (Facts about Articles 25 and 26)
6. Remarks on Articles 25 and 26
7. WPS Demographic Profile
8. Draft Fast Facts for ATM
9. FY2018 Q2 Financial Report
10. Regular Session Minutes of February 13, 2018
11. Regular Session Minutes of February 26, 2018
12. Executive Session Motion