

# MINUTES – WAYLAND SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Regular Meeting – March 26, 2018

A Regular Meeting of the Wayland School Committee was held on Monday, March 26, 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:*

Jim Mullane, Director of WayCAM  
Allyson Mizoguchi, WHS Principal  
Marybeth Sacramone, WHS Director of Guidance  
Betsy Gavron, WMS Principal  
Klaus Shigley, Finance Committee

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

**1. Special Matters:**

(a) Update regarding WayCAM and Its Programs:

Director of WayCAM Jim Mullane updated the School Committee on the WayCAM studio upgrade and expansion and how the enlarged studio will benefit the high school students and residents – where the programs began and the vision for programs moving forward. Since Jim joined WayCAM in 1998, 779 programs have been produced by students, and a total of \$14,000 in scholarships have been awarded to 17 students who furthered their education in the media industry.

Jim presented a diagram/layout of the current studio and a layout of the new design/expansion. The new space will provide more storage, a larger editing room, and a conference room for students and the community. The renovations may be done in two parts, and the funds will be provided by the cable providers – Verizon and Comcast.

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

Gordon Cliff read a statement regarding his high school rank and related his high school experiences in terms of the Weighted GPA. He does not support the proposed change in the Weighted GPA.

Beth Cliff commented that the primary purpose of the high school is its academics, and students should be encouraged to go for the top bar. In her opinion, if the Weighted GPA was dropped, it would perpetuate a falsehood. Ms. Cliff also noted that this is not the solution to the elective course selections as noted in the presentation.

Kim Cook is the parent of two students at the high school and an 8<sup>th</sup> grader, and she is surprised at the drastic change being proposed to the educational process. Ms. Cook commented that the information related to the Weighted GPA proposal has not been published, is not being shared, is not an accurate representation, and believes that the students do not support this change. Ms. Cook presented her own research and data on the college admissions process for several colleges, adding that the admissions experts feel that a Weighted GPA is needed.

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Sejal Srinivasan asked for some clarification, as she did not see a lot of pros to maintain the Weighted GPA. Although there were some negatives, she did not see many benefits to keep it. Ms. Srinivasan added that the high school she attended did not have a Weighted GPA.

*Jeanne left the meeting at 7:36 p.m. to attend the Warrant Hearing.*

Alexia Obar supports keeping the Weighted GPA, as she believes that dropping the Weighted GPA would not have a positive outcome for students. She spoke about her children's high school experience in selecting classes and their athletics and music awards. Ms. Obar commented that the honor roll is not published; however, Wayland High School has a good system, which is what most all other schools use. She believes that students should shine in those areas in which they work hard. Ms. Obar also thanked the School Committee for postponing the change in school start times.

Win Treese, a member of the WHS School Council from 2015-2017, provided the School Committee with a memo that he submitted to the School Council in March 2017 regarding his own summation of discussions at the School Council meetings about the Weighted GPA. The memo also includes his research and his own thoughts about the value of the Weighted GPA. Mr. Treese reviewed this information with the School Committee, such as the uses of the Weighted GPA and the disadvantages of computing the Weighted GPA. In his opinion, the number is not the most important or driving factor; it is the student's records. Class rank is used when choosing the class valedictorian and believes that students should be recognized for academic achievement and other areas of achievement. Mr. Treese supports the proposal to change the current system.

Ellen asked three questions as a result of public comment.

- To what extent do we survey students to get their input?
- Do the colleges recalculate?
- Do we publish the honor roll and, if so, how is it published?

### 3. **Special Matters (continued):**

#### (a) Open Discussion regarding the Change in Use of Weighted GPA at Wayland High School and Possible Vote to Authorize the Change in Use of Weighted GPA:

Allyson commented that the Weighted GPA has been a concern for some time and a very thoughtful process was followed before developing the proposal. Although a student survey was not conducted, two students served on the School Council, and WSPN staff has written articles on this matter, including asking the administrators not to move forward with the proposal. In addition, information was pulled from the adolescent health survey. Among many issues, the council learned about stress and anxiety among students, and if the proposal moves forward, there will be a need for further understanding and education. Allyson stated that 110 colleges responded to the survey, which the administrators considered to be powerful data. Allyson shared some of the data received from the colleges, including recalculation of Weighted GPA, and she described the counselors' relationship and interaction with many colleges on behalf of the students. In terms of the non-publication of the honor roll, that determination was made before Allyson became the principal of Wayland High School. She added that many high schools do not publish the honor roll, as it can mitigate the stress levels of students

Marybeth added that she takes pride in her guidance staff and the 120 years of experience that is represented. In her opinion, data is data and then there is interpretation of the data. The process was very thoughtful over a period of time, and the results of the study were consistent each time. They are very confident that the change in the Weighted GPA will not affect the students' admissions process, as also confirmed by all of the colleges surveyed. The staff cares very deeply for each student and wants to present them in a positive and equitable way.

Wayland Middle School principal, Betsy Gavron, expressed her support of the proposal, as the conversation will become more about students' passions and less about points. She added there is a paradigm shift in the grading system, as it is leaning more towards standard based learning.

Arthur thanked those who expressed concern about this proposal and, in his opinion, students will need a strong sense of themselves in ways that will help them fight obstacles and be prepared for those things that we can't anticipate. As a resident of Lexington, Arthur commented that Lexington High School has an Unweighted GPA and there has been no significant change in terms of where students attend college. He noted the importance of the School Committee's vote to approve the proposal.

A discussion continued with the members of the audience about the pros and cons of this proposal.

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*Jeanne returned to the meeting at 8:23 p.m.*

The School Committee discussed this proposal and shared their opinions, thoughts, and conclusions. Unanimous among the committee members was that they trust the high school professional staff to make this important decision and trust and value their work.

Upon a motion duly made by Kathie Steinberg, seconded by Kim Reichelt, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to approve the recommendation to change the use of the Weighted GPA, as presented by Allyson Mizoguchi, and beginning with the Class of 2022.

**4. Financial Matters:**

(a) Preparation for Town Meeting, including Review of Budget Slide Presentation (out of order):

The School Committee reviewed the budget draft comments for content and language. A discussion ensued about the language referring to unclassified expenses and the reductions to the budget, as requested by the Finance Committee.

Jeanne reported on the warrant hearing that she attended this evening. Via an email, a resident asked for the scope of the plan for the IT Middle School wiring CIP. Arthur will follow up with a response. Jeanne distributed two slides that she prepared for Town Meeting regarding Articles #25 and #26 for the Committee's review. Jeanne answered questions regarding the bleachers, restrooms, construction costs, and the bid timeline.

*Ellen left the meeting at 9:03 p.m.*

(b) Continued Review and Discussion of School Budgets, Articles for Town Meeting and Related Comments for the Warrant, Debt Exclusion, Funding Sources, CIP for Network Improvements at the Middle School, CIP for the Wastewater Treatment Plant, and Requests for Information:

Jeanne reported on the recent tour given by the town engineer of the high school wastewater treatment plant. Arthur, Jeanne, Ben Keefe, other town employees and a few residents were in attendance. The purpose of the tour was to clarify the details of the CIP, such as costs, operational issues, and the cost sharing by the town and schools for the manager to oversee the contracted service to care for the facility. Susan added that there is a goal to try to find ways to lower costs.

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

Klaus Shigley answered questions from the School Committee regarding OPEB, including the cost increase from last year. He explained the change in the funding method, as prescribed by GASB which contributed to the increase in the accrued liability going toward the year 2038.

A discussion ensued regarding the cost of parody payments from the fee-based programs and OPEB calculations for eligible employees vs. FTEs.

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

Susan explained the difference between the FY2018 and FY2019 special revenue funds budgets and fees for the METCO after school transportation, the Pegasus summer program, and the BASE after school Kindergarten Extended Program.

Upon a motion duly made by Jeanne Downs, seconded by Kathie Steinberg, the School Committee voted unanimously (4-0) to approve the FY2019 fees and tuitions as presented without the Kindergarten Extended Program.

Upon a motion duly made by Jeanne Downs, seconded by Kim Reichelt, the School Committee voted (3-1) (Kathie opposed) to approve the Kindergarten fees and tuitions as presented.

Kathie commented before the final vote to approve the Kindergarten fees and tuitions that she would be opposed because the fees and tuition include items, such as custodial costs, heat expenses, and employee benefits, which are not program expenses, but taxpayer expenses. In terms of special revenue funds, Kathie recommended that the School Committee identify those costs that are not program related, as consistency is needed in the administration of these programs. Kathie explained further and volunteered to get this process in place. A discussion ensued in this regard.

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Upon a motion duly made by Jeanne Downs, seconded by Kim Reichelt, the School Committee voted (3-1) (Kathie opposed) to approve the FY19 special revenue funds as presented.

(e) Update on School Bus Parking:

Susan updated the School Committee about school bus parking. Town Counsel has advised the Board of Selectmen to decline from entering a contract for bus parking with HDR Holdings, as the time needed for parking has significantly decreased down to a period of 12 to 15 months. There is a distinct possibility that the buses can remain at the River's Edge property through March 2019. A new bidding process may be implemented for the new timetable.

The old dump is still being reviewed for development of the property, which may be shared with the DPW and used for bus parking. In addition, the town planner has identified a parcel of property in Sudbury that is owned by the Massachusetts State Highway Division, an evaluation of the property is underway. Susan noted that if this property was used for bus parking, there could be additional operating costs because the contract only allows a daily travel allowance of 50 miles.

(f) High School Master Athletic Plan:

- Design Update
- 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

This agenda item was passed over.

(g) Finance Subcommittee Update:

- Operating Budget & Town Meeting Preparation
- Ongoing Audits

There were no updates, as the Finance Subcommittee has not met recently.

### 5. **Educational Matters:**

(a) Hear Superintendent's Report:

- School Visits

Arthur visited two classrooms that have introduced the Foundations reading program, and he described the techniques that were introduced.

### 6. **Administrative/Procedural Matters:**

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

Jeanne updated the School Committee about a public records request the Committee received asking for all minutes from 2015 in which grants were approved and copies of all canceled checks for grants approved by the School Committee. Jeanne asked the requestor for some clarification of the request. A discussion ensued regarding the responsibility of the School Committee to produce the minutes and copies of canceled checks. Jeanne will consult with the school attorney and review school policy.

(b) Review and Discussion of any Outstanding Open Meeting Law Matters:

There are no outstanding Open Meeting Law matters.

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

Article assignments and schedules were discussed. Jeanne will send the list of topics to Kim.

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

Arthur updated the School Committee about the search process for an Assistant Superintendent. He distributed a search timeline.

8. **Consent Agenda:**

(a) Approval of Accounts Payables & Payroll Warrants:

- Wayland Public Schools Payroll Warrant, dated March 28, 2018, in the amount of \$1,412,031.66
- Wayland Public Schools Accounts Payables Warrant, dated March 26, 2018, in the amount of \$1,412,031.66

Upon a motion duly made by Kathie Steinberg, seconded by Jeanne Downs, the School Committee voted unanimously (4-0) to approve the accounts payables and payroll warrants as presented tonight.

9. **Executive Session:**

Upon a motion duly made by Jeanne Downs, seconded by Kathie Steinberg, the School Committee voted unanimously (4-0) to enter into Executive Session at 10:02 p.m. for the purposes of 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: March 19, 2018. A roll call vote was taken as follows:

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

10. **Adjournment:**

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

Respectfully submitted,

Arthur Unobskey, Clerk  
Wayland School Committee

**Observers:**

Gordon Cliff, Wayland  
Beth Cliff, Wayland  
Wynn Treese, Wayland  
Kim Cook, Wayland  
Alexia Obar, Wayland  
Sejal Srinivasan, Wayland  
Tom Sciacca, WVN

**Corresponding Documentation:**

1. Agenda and Backup Information
2. Win Treese's Statement re: Weighted GPA
3. Town Meeting Budget Slide Presentation
4. Town Meeting Fast Facts
5. FY2018 and FY2019 Fees and Tuitions
6. Remarks on Articles 25 and 26
7. Diagram of MA Highway Site for Bus Parking
8. Questions regarding OPEB
9. GASB 45 Actuarial Valuation as of 12/31/2016
10. Diagrams of Proposed High School Athletic Facility
11. Assistant Superintendent Search Timeline
12. Executive Session Motion