

MINUTES – WAYLAND SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Regular Meeting – January 19, 2016

A Regular Meeting of the Wayland School Committee was held on Tuesday, January 19, 2016, 7:00 P.M. in the School Committee Room of the Wayland Town Building.

Present were:

Ellen Grieco, Chair
Barb Fletcher, Vice Chair
Donna Bouchard
Jeanne Downs
Kathie Steinberg

Also:

Paul Stein
Superintendent

Brad Crozier
Assistant Superintendent

Susan Botta,
Business Administrator

Marlene Dodyk
Director of Student Services

Chair Ellen Grieco convened the Regular Session at 7:01 P.M. and noted that the meeting is being recorded by WayCAM.

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

Related to the budget discussions this evening, Tom Sciacca commented that the recession may be over for working people, but it is not over for those who are retired and are on fixed incomes. Tom added income rates for bonds and CD's remain at zero, however, equity rates are rising this year, and social security is flat again this year. The financial outlook is not the same for everyone.

2. **Financial Matters:**

(a) Continued Discussion of FY2017 Budget, including Information Received During Budget Work Sessions and Discussion of Possible Cost Savings/Efficiency Opportunities, in the Following Areas Among Others:

Based on previous discussions and in preparation for the Committee's budget discussions, Barb prepared a spreadsheet showing Paul's recommended budget. The Committee members will have the opportunity to discuss their preferred changes, if any, and it will be reflected on the spreadsheet in order to work towards the School Committee's recommended budget.

Barb noted changes in Special Education tuition as a result of increased fees for The Children's Way and Pegasus. Marlene added that this also includes approximate projected increases of 13% in private school tuitions that were applied after the budget was presented. The total tuition increase for the Wayland programs and private schools is projected to be about \$40,000, with TCW and Pegasus at about \$24,000.

Barb explained how she arrived at the total budget on the spreadsheet, including Errata differences and unmet needs. The percentage increases were also noted. As the members noted their changes and/or additions, Barb adjusted the spreadsheet. Jeanne's preferences included the 0.6 FTE for the high school, 0.5 FTE assistant principal, Health and Wellness coordinator, and supplies for the new Kindergarten class for a 2.8% budget increase. She elaborated further on some potential additions that she considered. Ellen's preferences included a 0.4 FTE middle school writing specialist, 0.6 FTE at high school, and Kindergarten supplies. She included a 0.6 FTE middle school writing specialist or an additional 0.5 FTE assistant principal, if she were to prioritize additional budget items. Kathie added the 0.5 assistant principal, the 0.6 FTE for the high school and middle school, the Health and Wellness coordinator, Kindergarten teacher's aide and Kindergarten supplies.

Rather than noting her preferences, Donna asked questions and discussions ensued regarding a 0.5 FTE for a lunch supervisor at the middle school, the METCO late bus for high school students, and possibly hiring someone to support students with emotional disabilities vs. hiring another administrator for Special Education.

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Donna requested the Boosters budget for this year before adding \$20,000 for uniforms, and suggested using surplus Student Services funds, if any, to have a baseline inventory done for equipment and uniforms now. She advocated for an athletic equipment manager. Paul suggested that once the third quarter financial report is presented, there would be a clearer picture of where money can be reallocated. Donna was unsure at this time to add the custodial night supervisor position. She would add back the 0.6 FTEs for the high school and middle school vs. hiring an assistant principal, questioned the possibility of adding a computer science course for next year, strengthening the writing curriculum for the high school and middle school as an interdisciplinary English/History unit, a budget for the ramp-up courses, and a MUNIS consultant vs. a data analyst for the Business Office. A discussion ensued in terms of analyzing the additions/changes provided by the Committee.

The Committee discussed FTEs from FY11 to FY16. Donna noted that according to the Staff Deployment and Class Size Report, 67 FTEs were added during this period, 45 paid from the operational budget, and 6.5 FTEs are projected to be added for FY17, even though K-12 enrollment will decrease by 29 students. Funding the classrooms vs. unmet needs and staffing was compared in this discussion. It was noted that the use of Circuit Breaker funds is in the recommended budget at \$125,000.

Brad referred to the Staff Deployment and Class Size Reports and commented there was a big drop in FTEs from FY10 to FY11 totaling 17.5 positions. Since that time, positions were added back, including 11 positions due to the elementary reconfiguration, plus others due to mandated services. For example, 8.5 additional FTEs are a result of ELL and Special Education. Paul added that it is important to decide how the present staffing levels are computed in order to reach a number for the Finance Committee.

The Committee continued its discussion of the recommended budget. Each member provided an explanation/rationale in terms of what to include and where to allocate the funds. Paul reminded the Committee why the Health and Wellness coordinator position is important to the district, given the dramatic change in the needs of the students starting at the elementary level. Paul noted the programs and changes that have occurred this year alone and added that, if given a choice, he supports a full time assistant principal. Marlene addressed the social and emotional needs of the students in terms of the clinical staff on hand for all levels and the attempt to keep those students in district whenever possible. She added that a new 0.5 FTE Special Education assistant director would take on some of the responsibility in this regard. Susan will provide the salaries for a 0.6 FTE middle school social worker and a 0.5 FTE business analyst.

In preparation for another budget meeting this week, Donna suggested that the Committee consider the highest priorities based on tonight's discussions even if they outweigh something that is currently in the budget, as well as keeping in mind the 2.5% goal set by the FinCom, given the different financial means of the working and non-working taxpayers. It is about the ability to service the needs of the students but within the limits. Jeanne noted that after tonight's discussion, the percentage falls within a 2.5% to 3.0% budget increase for the time being.

As a part of this process, Barb recommended that the fees for music, transportation, athletics, etc. not be increased for FY17. Donna advocated for a small shelter/enclosure for the parking lot supervisor from possible surplus funds from the parking fees. Barb will provide the Committee with last year's FinCom Budget Presentation in order to reach a decision about this year's presentation. Barb suggested having a discussion about what type of Budget Booklet to provide the public prior to the Budget Hearing. In terms of the School Committee's message, a discussion ensued regarding Paul's budget theme/message of "Thriving in Place" in regard to public perception and what it means to some. Ellen suggested that upon completion of the budget process, the Committee should have a discussion about priorities going forward, such as foreign language and school start times.

- (b) Discussion of Budget Process and Schedule, including Timing of Budget Hearing and Content of School Committee Budget Booklet:

These topics were addressed by the Committee in the prior discussions.

3. **Educational Matters:**

Hear Superintendent's Report, including Curriculum Spotlight #8:

Paul invited the public to attend the MLK Dinner and celebration coming up on Friday evening, noting that there will be student performances and will be a fun event for all. Paul acknowledged and thanked the administrative staff regarding their hard work with the budget, including answering over 150 questions from the School Committee.

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This spotlight and the next spotlight are focused on music curriculum. Paul described this lesson taught in the third grade at Claypit Hill by Bernadette Vanaria.

Anatomy of an Elementary Music Unit:

Paul noted the National Standards for Music Education include, among others, singing, performing on instruments, composing and arranging music, and reading and notating music. Paul added that although there are more up to date standards, these were used when the district developed a more broad music program. Paul displayed a chart that encompasses music categories that corresponds with the National Standards and also provides a large scope of what the teachers want to accomplish with the students.

This unit focused on Martin Luther King, and the students first learn the song by moving a scarf to the beat of the song. This method shows the skill levels of the students in terms of being able to keep a beat. Secondly, they are paired up and continue to move their scarfs but in a new and creative way each time. Students are asked to reflect on their preference in working alone or with another student. This also informs the teacher about who is making the decisions, who is more effective, and who is proposing more ideas. Eventually the students are put into groups of four or five and are asked to make more complex and creative movements to the beat of the music. Again, the students reflect on the group assignment, personalities, leadership skills, and responsive levels to frustration are observed by the teacher. The lesson progresses to groups of 11 or 12 and more complexities.

The goals of the teacher is to build musical skills and confidence in areas of keeping a steady beat, singing, recognizing musical forms, and composing. This all ties in with social and emotional learning, encourages collaborative problem solving and creativity, and assessment.

Paul showed short videos of students during music class.

4. **Administrative/Procedural Matters:**

(a) Discussion regarding School-Owned Property at 193 Main Street and Whether to Transfer Jurisdiction of Property to the Town Library:

Ellen commented that the Board of Library Trustees filed its warrant related to 193 Main Street. As authorized by the School Committee, Ellen asked Aida Gennis to insert the words “and School Committee for school purposes.” Mark Lanza was comfortable with the language insertion, and he confirmed that 193 Main Street is owned by the schools and under the School Committee’s jurisdiction.

Kathie cited the FY15 bids to contract the parking of school buses outside of Wayland. They ranged from \$118,000 on site in Wayland to \$382,000 outside of Wayland. Thus, based on the FY15 contract, the cost would be \$264,000. There are 19 buses, 3 spare buses, and a trailer with running water and other utilities. Susan noted that 195 Main Street could accommodate this equipment, but she’s not sure about 193 Main Street. There are water runoff issues on the school side of the property, and since DPW equipment was housed at 195 Main Street, it should be okay to park the buses and trailer.

Kathie will update the School Committee’s response to the WRAP Committee, given the current status, and will include its interest in the two parcels as possible sites to park the buses. The Committee will discuss at its next Monday night meeting. Barb gave Kathie her comments to be included in the WRAP response.

(b) Discussion of Future Meeting Agenda Topics and Presentations, including the Chinese Language Program, Assessment & Testing, Use of Surveys, English and Writing Curriculum, ACE Reports, Technology Plan and Flipped/Blended Classroom:

Paul reviewed the reports/presentations with the School Committee in terms of clarity and preferences. The presentations would include the Chinese Language Program, Assessment and Testing, Use of Surveys, English and Writing Curriculum, ACE Reports, the Technology Plan, and the Flipped/Blended Classroom. Paul also provided the dates for these presentations. Paul asked the Committee for its guidance and preferences, if any, particularly for Assessment and Testing and English and Writing Curriculum.

In terms of standardized testing, Barb would like to know what assessments are given to K-12 students, and from the teachers’ perspective, is it too much, too little, or just the right amount. Paul cited all the formative and summative testing given to the students. Kathie suggested receiving an overview of the different assessments and what they are designed to measure. Ellen suggested receiving an overview of one subject covering all

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grade levels. A discussion ensued regarding more specific areas in one subject. Math assessment and testing will be presented.

Brad commented that the English and Writing Curriculum presentation would include narrative writing at each level, including showcasing student work. Donna suggested benchmarking against other districts to compare each one to Wayland in terms of the curriculum. Ellen is interested in the spectrum of writing skills among students, as well as the spectrum of the types of writing taught. Another suggestion was to ask the teachers how they would enhance the writing program if given the resources. A different view was posed in terms of how the K-12 writing curriculum would be taught if there wasn't the Common Core and standardized testing. Paul and Brad will consider these suggestions and how to integrate them into the presentations.

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

(a) Update regarding the Response to the Supervisor of Public Records related to a Public Records Request by Philip Cohen:

Ellen updated the Committee regarding her conversations with Adam Simms on January 11th related to Philip Cohen's public records request. Adam filed a request for reconsideration based on the reasons he stated in his January 11th letter to the Supervisor of Public Records, and Attorney Stephen Shorey in the office of the Supervisor of Public Records informed him that the School Committee did not have to write a response to the outstanding order since Attorney Simms has done so and it is pending. The order to produce the records was stayed pending the decision from the Supervisor of Public Records in response to Adam Simms request for reconsideration.

Today, Ellen called the office of the Supervisor of Public Records, and Stephen Shorey confirmed that they received Adam's letter and two responses from Philip Cohen. It was also confirmed that the Supervisor of Public Records will reconsider reviewing the request for reconsideration and a letter will be sent to Philip Cohen and Paul in this regard. When the request for reconsideration is decided upon, Attorney Shorey will send another time frame for response to the public records request. Ellen informed him that Adam Simms is not the School Committee's attorney now nor was the request for reconsideration filed on the School Committee's behalf. Ellen recommended drafting a response to Philip Cohen informing him of the status of this public records request and elaborated on its content.

A discussion ensued in terms of how the Committee wants to proceed. The Committee agreed not to join with Adam Simms in his request for reconsideration and to postpone its response to Philip Cohen until the request for reconsideration is decided upon by the Supervisor of Public Records. Paul confirmed that there is a cost to obtain the records from Adam Simms' office and noted Adam's belief that a precedent will be set if the records are released. Ellen will contact Adam Simms to ask if the School Committee can obtain the records. She will contact the MASC to ask if other districts have been faced with this situation and if they could shed some light on the process. Ellen will also draft a letter to the Supervisor of Public Records for the Committee's review at its next meeting on January 22nd.

6. **Consent Agenda:**

(a) Approval of Accounts Payables & Payroll Warrants:

School Department Accounts Payables Warrant, dated January 19, 2016, in the amount of \$203,478.97
School Department Accounts Payables Student Activities Warrant, dated January 19, 2016, in the amount of \$1,271.75

(b) Approval of Minutes:

- Special Session of December 11, 2015

Upon a motion duly made by Barb Fletcher, seconded by Jeanne Downs, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to approve the Consent Agenda as presented tonight.

7. **Comments from the Public:**

Tom Sciacca commented on the School Committee's thinking and rationale during its budget process. He feels that the common assumption among Committee members is that "you get what you pay for." Tom believes this to be true only when incremental changes are made. He referred to the superior elementary program in Holliston describing it as a three-track, Montessori French Immersion Program noting that this program costs no more than a conventional program such as Wayland's. Tom commented that children and children's needs are all different and they should be

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offered those things that address their individual needs. Finally, Tom said that if Wayland looked at major changes such as what he just described, it's possible that less money could be spent while achieving more effective results.

8. **Adjournment:**

Upon a motion duly made by Barb Fletcher, seconded by Donna Bouchard, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to adjourn at 10:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Paul Stein, Clerk
Wayland School Committee

Observers:

Tom Sciacca, WVN and Wayland Buzz

Corresponding Documentation:

1. Agenda & Backup Information
2. Accounts Payables Warrants
3. Draft FY17 Budget Spreadsheet
4. Special Session Minutes of December 11, 2015