

MINUTES – WAYLAND SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
Special Meeting – May 27, 2020

A Special Meeting of the Wayland School Committee was held remotely on Wednesday, May 27, 2020, at 12:00 P.M. broadcast by WayCAM in the Wayland Town Building.

*Present and participating remotely were:*

Jeanne Downs, Chair  
Ellen Grieco, Vice Chair (arrived at 12:34 p.m.)  
Nate Buffum  
Kim Reichelt  
Kathie Steinberg

*Also participating remotely:*

Arthur Unobskey  
Superintendent

Parry Graham  
Assistant Superintendent

Richard Whitehead  
Director of Student Services

Susan Bottan  
Director of Finance & Operations

*Also:*

Allyson Mizoguchi, WHS Principal  
Marybeth Sacramone, WHS Director of Guidance  
Lea Anderson, Board of Selectmen

Chair Jeanne Downs convened the open session at 12:02 p.m. The meeting was recorded by WayCAM and was conducted remotely due to the COVID-19 health pandemic and according to the revised open meeting law that allows remote participation.

The School Committee thanked our Equity and Diversity Coordinator Caroline Han and Wayland resident Rebecca Smoler of IDEAS and a Sharon English teacher for the development and facilitation of the race and equity class offered to School Committee members, some staff, and Wayland residents.

**1. Conduct School Choice Hearing and Vote to Adopt a Resolution to Participate or Withdraw from School Choice for the 2020-2021 School Year:**

Chair Jeanne Downs opened the School Choice Hearing at 12:05 p.m. and announced that the School Committee conducts this hearing each year prior to June 1. The School Committee has made the decision in past years not to participate in School Choice. Public comment was open to the public; no comments were received. The following resolution was read by the Chair.

**Resolution on School Choice**

**Whereas** the Education Reform Act of 1993 requires the enrollment of non-resident students under the School Choice provision unless the Committee votes by June 1 not to participate, and

**Whereas** the School Choice provision takes money away from the sending district and awards it to the receiving district, and

**Whereas** Wayland's per pupil expenditure is greater than the maximum allowable reimbursement, which means Wayland taxpayers would subsidize each choice student, and

**Whereas** once Wayland accepts a pupil, it must keep the pupil through graduation even though Wayland's demographic situation might change considerably, and

**Whereas** it is possible that a number of students could return to their sending districts or otherwise leave Wayland,

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thus creating a potential income loss, now hereby be it

**Resolved** that the Wayland School Committee respectfully declines to participate in the choice program with the provision that should surrounding school districts subsequently and prior to June 1 decide to accept the provisions of School Choice, the Wayland School Committee reserves the right to do likewise in order to protect its fiduciary interest in this matter.

It was noted and should be considered that if the Wayland Public Schools open up to School Choice, the district loses the flexibility to manage enrollment.

Upon a motion duly made by Jeanne Downs, seconded by Kim Reichelt, the School Committee voted unanimously (4- 0) not to participate in School Choice for the 2020-2021 school year. A roll call vote was taken as follows:

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

Upon a motion duly made by Jeanne Downs, seconded by Kathie Steinberg, the School Committee voted unanimously (4-0) to close the hearing at 12:12 p.m. A roll call vote was taken as follows:

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

**2. Discuss COVID-19 Response:**

- Phase Two Remote Learning:

*Update of Implementation:*

Arthur described the remote learning plan for Middle School students and how the staff is learning how to engage students in terms of providing resources and how and when they are provided. Remote learning can be beneficial for some students because, for some students, being in school can be somewhat of a distraction. So much of this knowledge can be valuable long term.

*High School Graduation Celebration:*

The High School administration is working on the details of a planned graduation celebration with the help of the students. Allyson Mizoguchi will be in communication with the families regarding the celebration.

*Summer Programming:*

The Pegasus summer program has been cancelled because the same experience could not be offered as in past years due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and current guidelines. Families have been notified. The elementary summer program will be offered in August to about 10% of the elementary students who need extra support before the fall opening of school. There will be morning and afternoon sessions that will primarily focus on literacy and math.

A discussion ensued regarding the ongoing discussions for school reopening in the fall, particularly at different grade levels and the possibility of some remote learning for an increased need for the elementary summer program.

*Surveys:*

Parry and Susan have had discussions in the Teaching and Learning and Operations Groups regarding what information would be helpful in reopening plan in the fall. The goal is to send a survey to staff, students and parents no later than the following Monday. A brief power point from the two working groups will be presented at the June 3 School Committee meeting. A final, but flexible, reopening plan will be presented on June 17, keeping in mind that the plan could be changed given the ongoing guidelines.

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• Discussion and Possible Vote of FDK Reimbursement

Several families have communicated about the possibility of a partial reimbursement of the total \$2,700 fee for full day Kindergarten. Jeanne reiterated that in the Committee’s prior discussions, it was noted that the full-day kindergarten curriculum is being offered in the same manner as the remote learning plan for 1<sup>st</sup> grade -12<sup>th</sup> grade students.

The School Committee reviewed the summary for full-day Kindergarten as provided by Susan. A projected balance of \$79,900 is estimated for the FDK account which represents savings from reduced expenses due to the shutdown. Susan calculated that each full-day family would be reimbursed about \$450.00 per student. However, if the calculation is pro-rated in full from March 13 moving forward, it would result in a \$945.00 reimbursement. A discussion ensued in terms of how much is being offered remotely hourly during the day for all students and what the reimbursement should be for each family - \$450 or \$945. Susan confirmed that there are 21 traditional day students and 84 full day students. Kathie offered a different calculation in terms of the pro-rated benefits of teachers that are paid by taxpayers. Susan will look into this suggestion further.

*Ellen joined the meeting at 12:34 p.m.*

Kim is in disagreement and noted that the full-day Kindergarten students are only getting three hours of instruction as compared to the six hours for which they paid and added that parents are writing an extra check for a specific service.

Upon a motion duly made by Kathie Steinberg, seconded by Ellen Grieco, the School Committee voted (4-0-1) to refund the FDK families the proportionate share of the fund balance and that may include, if possible, the additional savings from the benefit expense. A roll call vote was taken as follows:

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

Kim asked about the requirement for remote learning, particularly for kindergarten instruction. Parry believes there was no specific provision for kindergarten and will look into the district’s requirement to provide a Kindergarten program.

- Discussion of Long-Term Planning for Schools in Response to Closure:  
This topic was addressed in previous discussions.
- Next Steps:  
This topic was addressed in previous discussions.

3. **Consent Agenda (taken out of order):**

- Approval of Minutes: April 29, 2020 and May 6, 2020

Upon a motion duly made by Kathie Steinberg, seconded by Ellen Grieco, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to approve the Consent Agenda, the minutes of April 29, 2020 and May 6, 2020. A roll call vote was taken as follows:

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

4. **Comments and Written Statements from the Public:**

Kristen Sanicki, the future parent of children who will attend Happy Hollow, commented on the Happy Hollow playground

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renovation. She does not support the use of crumb rubber as the surface, as it is currently under Federal investigation in terms of its safety. She described the reports of it being unsafe and asked the School Committee to recommend to the Recreation Commission that it postpone the use of crumb rubber and install cork instead, noting that it should be available for use within the next few months. Ms. Sanicki advocated that the safety for teachers, staff and children should not be at risk.

Alexia Obar, Dean Road, commented on the GPA issue and how it will impact the junior class students. She suggested that the families be surveyed in this regard and that, in her opinion, a different approach should be taken for the juniors.

Rebecca Smoler, 77 East Plain Street, is a Happy Hollow parent and asked the School Committee to support and vote the replacement of Columbus Day with Indigenous Peoples' Day on the Wayland school calendar. She explained the reasons for this request, adding that the notion that Columbus discovered America is a myth, and he should not be portrayed as a hero. Many in the State have asked for this change, including the Indigenous People's Association, as many cities and states have already done so.

A statement read by Ellen Grieco from the Stephanie Brandeleone, Spencer Circle. She commented on the college process for her high school junior, adding that the colleges were taking a holistic approach for student applicants. Ms. Brandeleone noted that a holistic approach can show the students in their best light and that Wayland is currently taking a different and negative approach from other school districts. She made suggestions regarding the transcripts that would reflect a positive light for students, noting that Wayland students have been through many changes this school year. Ms. Brandeleone encourages discussions in this regard that will put our students in a competitive position.

### 5. Financial Matters:

- Review of Q3 Financial Report:

The School Committee reviewed the Q3 Financial Report and related documents that projects a year-end balance of \$400,000. Susan explained the savings, including some shortfalls, in the Personnel and Non-Personnel Budgets and noted that these funds will be reallocated in an effort to alleviate some of the financial burden anticipated for next year in the following areas: 1) increase the tuition prepay for Special Education services by \$100,000, 2) use \$200,000 of this year's surplus to increase the amount of our Circuit Breaker revolving fund to pay tuitions for next year, and 3) pre-buy curriculum and instructional materials during the month of June for the 2020-2021 school year, as allowed by Massachusetts General Laws .

Given that there has not been a Town Meeting vote for an FY21 budget appropriation, the plan is to operate with a level-funded budget for about the next four months. Susan added that the \$1.1M funding increase to the FY21 budget and approved by the School Committee will not be available despite the need of increased expenses for FY21 that include contractual obligations, transportation, and utilities, as well as the newly identified service needs next year for students.

Susan answered questions from the School Committee regarding the level funded budget for FY21, the recommended prepayments and pre-purchasing of materials, the status of the capital budget funds, and the necessary purchase of maintenance equipment and supplies should school reopen in the fall, some of which CARES funding will be allocated. A discussion ensued in this regard.

### 6. Discussion and Possible Vote of High School GPA Calculation (taken out of order):

Allyson Mizoguchi confirmed that there is high unanimity amongst the WHS department leadership team after so much discussion and research, including following the guiding principles laid out in the proposal not to count the students' grades in the cumulative GPA for this school year. The FY21 school year will be considered moving forward, given the continuous changes. She noted that there have been questions of how the first semester grades will be reported on the students' transcripts and the messaging has been consistent in addressing families' concerns.

The School Committee members conveyed their opinions regarding this issue. Given the current situation, Ellen puts her trust in the WHS leadership team and feels that this is the best resolution right now while a different approach may be taken in the fall. She acknowledged the concerns of families and asked that the junior class is considered moving forward.

Kim's biggest concern is for those students who have dropped down from Honors to College, particularly in math and science, and based on student data. She advocates that students should have a fair shot and to address what appears to be a gap. Kim asked that the grades from the third quarter be considered in terms of adjusting scores and to continue the research process moving forward.

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Kathie added that in terms of the junior class, this will give them the opportunity to have a holistic approach, as it is the entire application that is evaluated by college admissions and this message should be reinforced, particularly to the colleges. She believes that this approach is consistent with the past approach and philosophy moving forward. Ellen agreed.

Jeanne thanked the WHS leadership team for their thoughtful process and she, too, trusts this process moving forward.

Upon a motion duly made by Kathie Steinberg, seconded by Nate Buffum, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to approve the Wayland High School GPA proposal. A roll call vote was taken as follows:

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

**7. Financial Matters (continued):**

- Discussion of FY21 Budget: First Four Months:  
Susan described the plan to move forward with a “one-twelfth” budget, as recommended by the Department of Revenue in collaboration with the Town of Wayland that resembles the spending for the 2019 months of July, August, September, and October (FY20) in the amount of \$9,784,000. Susan included any additional contractual expenditures that could be over and above what was spent last year which she calculates to be about \$102,000. Susan addressed the question of what this all breaks down to per month, adding that it varies from month to month and includes the WTA balloon payment in June. Susan also addressed the possible shift in expenses for the next four months keeping in mind that no more than \$9,784,000 can be spent. Susan added that the Administrative Council is still identifying its needs for the FY21 school year.
- Loker Roof Update:  
Jeanne updated the School Committee regarding the Loker School roof project. The design plan is moving forward with 60% of the design completed. The goal is to put the project out for bid by June 1; however, the debt exclusion has to pass with a Town Meeting vote, and the logistics of Town Meeting are still being discussed by the Board of Selectmen. The School Committee discussed the remote possibility of falling out of line in the MSBA process and/or losing MSBA funding given the current situation or the possibility of a deadline during this process.
- Playground Accessibility Project Update:  
Jeanne provided an update regarding the playground accessibility project and its planning. The playground equipment will be purchased from a State grant and the bid to install the equipment was put out. However, the bid was pulled because more information is necessary related to the RFP, and a contract cannot be awarded without a Town Meeting article vote. The Recreation Commission cannot determine the surface, as it will depend on what the laws allow. Given the public comments in this regard and the fact that a contract cannot be awarded until after Town Meeting, the School Committee could delay its decision, as there may be more information on the use of cork before Town Meeting. A discussion ensued and Kathie reminded the Committee of the discussions and decisions made regarding the High School athletic stadium field. The School Committee agreed to postpone its recommendation for the Happy Hollow playground surface.

**8. Review and Possible Vote to Approve 2021-2022 School Calendar, including Discussion of Columbus Day:**

Jeanne informed the School Committee that there is a change to the usual Wayland Public Schools schedule in the 2021-2022 calendar. There will be school on the Friday before Labor Day because Rosh Hashanah falls on September 7, the day after Labor Day which is a day that schools are closed. The WTA has reviewed the calendar. A discussion ensued about changing Columbus Day to Indigenous Peoples’ Day. The School Committee agreed to change Columbus Day to Indigenous Peoples’ Day. Nate added that he hoped this change would be town wide.

*Nate left the meeting at 1:53 p.m.*

Upon a motion duly made by Ellen Grieco, seconded by Kim Reichelt, the School Committee voted unanimously (4-0) to approve the 2021-2022 calendar and switching from Columbus Day to Indigenous Peoples’ Day and to adjust the 2020-2021 calendar with the same change from Columbus Day to Indigenous Peoples’ Day. A roll call vote was taken as follows:

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

9. **Policy Matters:**

- Review of Policies to Put Out for Public Comment:
  - JFABE – Educational Opportunities for Military Children
  - JFABD – Homeless Students: Enrollment Rights and Services
  - JFABF – Educational Opportunities for Children in Foster Care

Kim commented that Policies JFABE, JFABD, and JFABF are about the educational opportunities for military children, children in foster care, and homeless children. These MASC policies are new as of October 2019. It was confirmed that Richard Whitehead, Director of Student Services, is the district’s homeless liaison.

Upon a motion duly made by Kathie Steinberg, seconded by Ellen Grieco, the School Committee voted unanimously (4-0) to put Policies JFABE, JFABD, and JFABF out for public comment. A roll call vote was taken as follows:

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

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

None.

11. **Executive Session:**

Upon a motion duly made by Jeanne Downs, seconded by Ellen Grieco, the School Committee voted unanimously (4-0) to enter Executive Session at 1:58 p.m. for the purposes of a) discussing strategy with respect to collective bargaining with the Wayland Teachers Association (WTA), as permitted by M.G.L. c.30A, §21(a)(3), as a discussion in open session may have a detrimental effect on the negotiating position of the School Committee; and b) approving the following Executive Session Minutes, as permitted by M.G.L. Chapter 30A, Section 22: May 6, 2020. The School Committee will not come back into open session, but will adjourn in Executive Session. A roll call vote was taken as follows:

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

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

The School Committee will adjourn in Executive Session.

12. **Adjournment from Executive Session:**

Upon a motion duly made by Jeanne Downs, seconded by Kim Reichelt, the School Committee voted unanimously (4-0) to adjourn at 2:07 p.m. A roll call vote was taken as follows:

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

Respectfully submitted,

Arthur Unobskey, Clerk  
Wayland School Committee

***Corresponding Documentation:***

1. Agenda
2. School Choice Resolution
3. FDK Fee Reimbursement Summary
4. FDK Fund Balance Summary
5. FY20 Q3 Financial Report
6. Policies JFABD, JFABE, JFABF
7. Special Session Minutes of April 29, 2020
8. Special Session Minutes of May 6, 2020
9. 2021-2022 School Calendar
10. Executive Session Motion