

SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Special Meeting – December 7, 2020

A Regular Meeting of the Wayland School Committee was held remotely on Monday, December 7, 2020, at 3:00 P.M. broadcast by WayCAM in the Wayland Town Building.

Present and participating remotely were:

Jeanne Downs, Chair
Ellen Grieco, Vice Chair
Kim Reichelt
Chris Ryan
Kathie Steinberg

Also participating remotely:

Arthur Unobskey
Superintendent

Parry Graham
Assistant Superintendent

Susan Botta
Director of Finance and Operations

Chair Jeanne Downs convened the open session at 3:05 p.m. WayCAM recorded the meeting and it was livestreamed via ZOOM. The meeting was conducted remotely due to the COVID-19 health pandemic and according to the revised open meeting law that allows remote participation. A roll call was taken:

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

Jeanne acknowledged all of the emails and communications that the School Committee received from both teachers and parents regarding planning for additional in-school learning for students. She explained the School Committee's sincere efforts to make the best decision possible and to balance the academic, social and emotional needs of the students. The School Committee is also aware of the added stress during this difficult time for staff and families.

Ellen added that the School Committee is planning for additional in-school learning, but there are many variables that need to be in place, including the funding. She and Chris prepared a presentation that shows the planning through the end of June, particularly when it comes to financial decisions and the possible long-term effects.

Kathie acknowledged the School Committee's extreme efforts during this difficult period and that they have considered all of the information received and researched.

1. Continued Discussion and Review of Planning for Remainder of School Year, including Additional Kindergarten In-Person Days, All-In Model, Reallocated Resources, Financial Implications and Possible Vote:

The presentation encompasses the winter/spring of 2021 and the proposed planning for a return to in-person schooling for Kindergartners and the augmentation of synchronous learning for Grades 1 to 6, as well as the considerations and estimated costs on a monthly basis. The proposed plan includes two phases – January 25 to March 31 and then April 1 to June 18.

Phase 1 would bring kindergartners into school at between 5 and 6 feet (if recommended by BOH) and offer augmented synchronous learning in Grades 1 to 5 with all of the safety precautions still in place and the possibility of testing. The Middle and High School students would continue in the current hybrid mode. Phase 2 would bring all students into school at between 3 and 6 feet (subject to BOH and WSC decisions) and with all safety precautions in place.

Ellen and Chris reviewed and explained the monthly costs for Phase 1 and Phase 2, including the March transitional costs of \$234,000, such as projected furniture costs, projected moving costs, PPE, and ERV. The total cost to implement Phase 1 is \$212,000 that includes new staffing costs and Phase 2 costs are \$301,023. The entire cost of the 2021 RTS plan is

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estimated to be \$747,020. A discussion ensued in terms of savings from the possibility of not installing a modular classroom, as well as the possibility of a skewed proposal because of ventilation issues.

Arthur spoke to the successes of the current hybrid model resulting from the hard work of the teachers, administrators, and the student body. He emphasized that the staff would like to have the Kindergartners in person more often and described what that would look like in the classroom, adding that there will be challenges, such as the possibility of the lack of a significant change in the curriculum coverage and a lesser degree of attention by the teachers to the students. Arthur acknowledged the social distancing in the classrooms and noted that some could be tighter, as well as the continued ventilation work and the continued logistics in terms of a possible Happy Hollow modular second grade classroom.

Arthur expressed his concerns about the costs to bring in Grades 1 to 5, such as the staffing issues, as his proposal addressed Grades 1 and 2. He added that he researched unemployment costs, given the shorter employment period. Susan addressed transportation costs and benefit packages. She noted that additional transportation would be needed for Grades 1 to 6, but not Kindergarten. Parry addressed staffing and the impact to building schedules and moving logistics.

There are possible additional funding sources, such as Federal/State COVID related aid, a request for additional funding at the Annual Town Meeting in April, a request for spending through a COVID expense revolving account (DOR approved), and the possibility of fundraising and gifts. Ellen and Jeanne elaborated further on these funding possibilities.

Kim addressed the inaccurate and understated data from the State and DESE, including Wayland's data. However, the data being reported from the School Department and the Wayland BOH is accurate. Ellen noted her concern that the testing timeline may be pushed out about a week toward the third week of January, given the proposals in front of the Committee. A discussion ensued about the need to plan moving forward despite all the challenges, including the need to consult with the teachers.

Arthur commented on the planning to bring the Kindergartners in school on January 25, such as restructuring schedules especially for specials, lunch periods, recess, and dismissal and arrival times. Teachers will need to reorganize their rooms, move materials out, and work with the school custodians in a timely manner. This could be done on January 20, 21, and 22. In addition, there is work to be done in terms of staffing, ventilation, installation of portable sinks, and the purchase and movement of furniture. Special education schedules are an important consideration as well.

The School Committee discussed the timing of its vote based on unknown variables at this time, and the members' acknowledgment, as well as the concerns, of the importance of moving forward with a plan even if it changes. The School Committee agreed to move forward with planning for augmented synchronous learning. Arthur addressed the cohorts and the possible risks.

Upon a motion duly made by Ellen Grieco, seconded by Kathie Steinberg, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to acknowledge that it is supportive of having a long-term plan in terms of what model school will be conducted between now and the end of the year and the financial consequences of that. That the School Committee acknowledges that it is supportive of bringing the Kindergarten classes in person provided that there are answers to the questions that were identified as outstanding here, as well as a recommendation from the Department of Health and the Board of Health that it is being done in a safe way, that the trajectory of the virus is such that it justifies to move forward in making that decision, that there is a School Committee vote that supports that as well, and that the School Committee is supportive of the notion of planning to augment synchronous learning for the elementary students on their at-home days. The current goal would be January 25, but is dependent on the responses to the questions and also the trajectory of the virus. 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	
Kim Reichelt	X	
Chris Ryan	X	
Kathie Steinberg	X	

Kim clarified her vote, saying that if the School Committee received all the information that it wanted and the virus was as it is now, then as far as implementation goes, she would vote No.

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Jeanne reviewed the questions to be answered and the information needed in order to move forward. A discussion followed in this regard in terms of clarification.

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

None.

3. **Adjournment:**

Upon a motion duly made by Jeanne Downs, seconded by Ellen Grieco, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to adjourn at 5:01 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	X	
Kim Reichelt	X	
Chris Ryan	X	
Kathie Steinberg	X	

Respectfully submitted,

Arthur Unobskey, Clerk
Wayland School Committee

Corresponding Documentation:

1. Agenda