

SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Regular Meeting – January 6, 2021

A Regular Meeting of the Wayland School Committee was held remotely on Wednesday, January 6, 2021, at 5:00 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 (arrived at 5:05 p.m.)

Also participating remotely:

Arthur Unobskey
Superintendent

Parry Graham
Assistant Superintendent

Richard Whitehead
Director of Student Services

Susan Bottan
Director of Finance & Operations

Also:

Leisha Simon, Director of Technology & Digital Learning

Chair Jeanne Downs convened the open session at 5:02 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>	<u>Absent</u>
Jeanne Downs, Chair	X		
Ellen Grieco, Vice Chair	X		
Kim Reichelt	X		
Chris Ryan	X		
Kathie Steinberg			X

1. Superintendent Search:

(a) Update on Process and Search Committee:

Similar to the hiring process in 2017, Ellen described the entire search process, including the formation of the search and screening committee and the surveys. Led by Future Management Systems, the search and screening committee reviewed 37 applications and chose 10 semi-finalists, two of which dropped out of the process. After interviewing 8 semi-finalists, the search and screening committee put forth 3 finalists to the School Committee to interview.

Kathie arrived at 5:05 p.m.

The School Committee discussed the finalists' "Day in Wayland" either virtually, in-person or both, including a tour of the schools. The potential dates are January 14, January 15, and January 19 and will be finalized after Future Management Systems speaks to the finalists. Sessions would only be recorded if there was a School Committee quorum. Developing a matrix for rating the finalists was discussed. The School Committee reviewed the draft "visit" schedule and a discussion ensued about the logistics for each day. Finally, Ellen may invite Robin Sklar, Chair of the Search and Screening Committee, to the next meeting.

The School Committee reviewed the document that summarizes the search process and made suggestions.

2. Comments and Written Statements from the Public:

Jeanne acknowledged the events going on at the Capital Building in Washington, D.C.

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There were no comments and written statements from the public.

3. **Financial Matters:**

(a) Discussion of FY22 Recommended Budget – Information Technology:

Leisha Simon reported that the focus this year has been on personalized and blended learning with the use of technology and, given the unprecedented year, the growth and creativity facilitated by the teachers has been amazing. Leisha participates in a leadership program entitled MAPLE, the Massachusetts Personalized Learning for Equity and Excellence Consortium, in which they discuss the way education will continue to evolve and change based on the past year.

Leisha spoke to the first two budget requests, which address a goal to move technology, such as the 1:1 devices and the outdated A/V equipment, into a sustainable operating budget. In addition, the use of added software applications is growing as a means to support remote learning, and the district will continue to use these resources going forward. Leisha stressed the importance of continuing the sustained integration for personalized and blended learning, thus, the need for additional technology support. This is particularly true for integration support for the elementary teachers. Leisha explained the need for another technical support FTE, adding that two tech staff moved over to the town side.

The School Committee asked questions about the responsibilities of the additional support position, the amount requested in the budget as addressed in the Q&A, the continued use of the Genius Bar, the shift of school technology staff to the town side, and the functions, capability, and possible limitations of the outdated A/V equipment. The A/V equipment is ten years old and parts cannot be replaced; Leisha explained.

Ellen left the meeting at 6:08 p.m. and returned at 6:11 p.m.

(b) Continued review of Capital Requests and Five-Year Capital Plan:

Richard commented that the capital request for the elementary voice lifts would be beneficial for special education students, particularly those who need additional support to hear more clearly in class. Leisha added her support for the voice lifts in all schools as a benefit for all students in the classroom.

The School Committee discussed the capital budget priorities, funding for the voice lifts or the elementary storage units, and the elementary space needs. Due to health and safety concerns, the elementary principals prefer the storage units over the voice lifts in the amount of \$155,000 for the three elementary schools. The School Committee agreed to postpone the voice lifts for another year and add the storage units to the capital budget request for FY22. The cost for the space needs is not known at this time.

The space needs request has evolved even more as a result of the pandemic. Arthur confirmed that there are significant space needs and the delivery of education will be limited, and he recommended the need for the space study moving forward to accommodate the next few years. Susan addressed the prior Feasibility Study done for Loker and Claypit and feels that an additional utilization/capacity study could be done before Town Meeting. However, additional information is needed for Happy Hollow. The Feasibility Study includes a capacity and utilization review, a demographic study and enrollment forecasts.

Upon a motion duly made by Kathie Steinberg, seconded by Chris Ryan, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to pursue all tools available to request funding in the FY22 capital budget to reasonably address the identified space needs at the elementary schools. 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	

(c) Discussion of Possible Warrant Articles:

Town Meeting warrants are due on January 15 and the School Committee plans to submit two that will address space needs and additional budget funds to bring students back into school. A discussion ensued about an alternative process, which could include a possible override to fund full day kindergarten and a possible petitioner's article.

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(d) Review of Budget Calendar:

The School Committee discussed the virtual community budget session on Thursday, January 14, at 7:30 and a community conversation about race on Tuesday, January 19, at 7:00 p.m.

4. Superintendent Update:

(a) Hybrid Mode Update:

Arthur acknowledged the unfortunate events that took place in Washington, D.C. today that only emphasizes the district's work around equity and diversity. He confirmed that the children are safe and can process their concerns with the appropriate school staff.

Arthur met with elementary principals in preparation for the Kindergarten shift on February 22, as well as town officials regarding the necessary moves in this process. He also spoke with Julia Junghanns and Ruth Mori of the Health Department about the challenges of contact tracing following the holiday break and to find ways to support the nurses.

Lastly, Arthur spoke with Matt Denninger of DESE, the chief strategy and research officer, about the ventilation issues in the classrooms. Mr. Denninger recommended a Harvard professor of exposure and assessment science who will assist with the work of the Facilities Department in terms of classroom evaluations, measures to increase mitigation of risk, and communication to families and staff in this regard. Susan shared Mr. Denninger's comments during the meeting and thanked Arthur for all of his efforts in this regard.

Kim reported that the Covid positive cases have doubled this week (64) and have tripled since Thanksgiving. Given the data, she asked the School Committee if the shift for Kindergarten should proceed and the possibility of canceling February vacation. Parry noted that the next entry point for WRAP is February 1. Arthur addressed a timetable for which funds and resources will be devoted to the Kindergartners coming into school four days a week, such as supplies and materials, hiring, and the move that totals about \$114,000.

The School Committee will discuss February vacation week on January 11 or 13.

5. COVID-19 Response:

(a) Discussion and Review of Planning for Remainder of School Year, including Kindergarten and Synchronous Augmentation:

This agenda topic was discussed in the Superintendent's update.

(b) Surveillance Testing Program Update and Possible Vote to Approve Fee:

Ellen described the process thus far with \$36,000 raised currently for the testing gift fund. Bids were due on December 28, were opened on January 4, and the bidders were interviewed. The RFP process being followed is one established by the Town.

(c) Special Education Update:

No update.

(d) Ongoing Review Groups: Remote and Hybrid Learning Progress Committee and COVID Learning and Safety Committee:

RHLCP:

The Committee is reviewing elementary student data and Friday is the deadline for staff and family surveys.

COVID Learning and Safety Committee:

The Committee discussed the ventilation updates, such as the installation of ERV's in some Happy Hollow classrooms, which are currently being wired, the subject of pivoting, travel information and how to handle it, as well as better collaboration. Jeanne asked for this week's attendance and travel data for which Arthur will report on January 11.

(e) Transportation Update:

No update.

(f) Ventilation Update:

No update.

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- (g) Next Steps:
Next steps were addressed earlier in the meeting.

6. **Administrative/Procedural Matters:**

- (a) Discussion of Upcoming Meeting Schedule:
The schedule was discussed earlier in the meeting.

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

Kathie raised the issue of MCAS as updated by DESE. Arthur shared this update noting that MCAS will move forward.

9. **Executive Session:**

Upon a motion duly made by Jeanne Downs, seconded by Ellen Grieco, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to enter Executive Session at 7:08 p.m. for the purposes of (a) discussing strategy with respect to collective bargaining with custodial union, 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; (b) the School Committee was pass over discussing strategy with respect to collective bargaining with WESA, as permitted by M.G.L. c.30A, §21(a)(3); and (c) the approval of the following executive session minutes, as permitted by M.G.L. c.30A, §22: December 18, 2020.

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 and will not reconvene in open 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	
Kim Reichelt	X	
Chris Ryan	X	
Kathie Steinberg	X	

10. **Adjournment:**

Upon a motion duly made by Jeanne Downs, seconded by Kathie Steinberg, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to adjourn at 7:16 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
2. Public Comments
3. 2020 Superintendent Finalist Site Visit Schedule
4. Capital Accounts Financial Summary
5. Capital Memo to Finance Committee
6. Revised FY22 Recommended Budget Q&A
7. Executive Session Motion