

MINUTES – WAYLAND SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Regular Meeting – January 18, 2023

A Regular Meeting of the Wayland School Committee was held on Wednesday, January 18, 2023, at 6:00 P.M. at Wayland High School Lecture Hall, South Building 2nd Floor.

Present:

Chris Ryan, Chair
Ellen Grieco, Vice Chair (arrived at 4:20 p.m.)
Jeanne Downs
Erin Gibbons
Jessica Polizzotti

Also present:

Dr. Omar Easy
Superintendent

Parry Graham
Assistant Superintendent

Tom Lafleur
Director of Finance & Operations

Also:

Abigail Dressler, Director of The Children’s Way
Allyson Mizoguchi, WHS Principal
Heath Rollins, Athletic Director

1. Call to Order:

Chair Chris Ryan convened the regular session at 4:05 p.m. and announced that the meeting was being recorded by WayCAM, but the School Committee will move into Executive Session.

Upon a motion duly made by Chris Ryan, seconded by Erin Gibbons, the School Committee voted unanimously (4-0) to enter Executive Session at 4:05 p.m. for the purposes of (a) discussing strategy with respect to litigation, as permitted to M.G.L. Chapter 30A, Section 21(a)(3), as an open session may have a detrimental effect on the litigating position of the committee. The School Committee will be joined by Kevin Bresnahan. The School Committee will adjourn in Executive Session and will then reconvene in open session. A roll call vote was taken as follows:

<u>Roll Call</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
Chris Ryan, Chair	X	
Ellen Grieco, Vice Chair	absent	
Jeanne Downs	X	
Erin Gibbons	X	
Jess Polizzotti	X	

2. Reconvene in Open Session:

Chair Chris Ryan re-convened the regular session at 6:08 p.m. and announced that the meeting was being recorded by WayCAM. School Committee shared their recent school related experiences. Jeanne Downs visited the Kindergarten and 4th grade Spanish Immersion classrooms and enjoyed her time with the students. Jess Polizzotti, as well as Jeanne, attended the MLK Event on January 16. Jess commented on the powerful speech given by Manuel Fernandez. Both members praised these programs.

3. Public Comment:

Mike Henrich, 192 West Plain Street, and Rob Desmond, 52 Plain Road, both represent the Wayland Hockey Association. They came before the Committee to request funding for the boys’ and girls’ hockey programs for which there has not been any funding in the past 40 years, even though they represent the school district. Currently, families pay the costs with some supplemental fundraising of about \$50,000 per year. Mr. Henrich noted that with the exception of two other sports teams, all other sports are funded by the operating budget. He raised the fairness and equity in this regard and said that any financial support would be welcome. Next year, Wayland players will pay \$2,500 each while the Watertown players will pay a \$150 athletic fee.

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Corey McGregor, 295 Concord Road, cares deeply about the schools and this community, but it has a long way to go to create an inclusive community, and the recent racial events have set Wayland back, adding that there should be a delineation between job performance and race. She expressed her leadership concerns after speaking with some Wayland educators, including principals. Ms. McGregor commented that some educators have left the district, particularly in Special Education, and there could be many others leaving before next year according to the recent WTA survey. She asked the School Committee to do their due diligence in making decisions.

Elizabeth Wuerz, 7 Mellen Lane, acknowledged the racist graffiti and expressed her concern for those who were hurt by it. She works in conflict resolution and is very much aware of the current issues, adding that much work is needed so that all can feel valued in the community. Job performance by leadership is a deep concern because of special education's ILC program, Admin Council complaints, and teachers' concerns about not feeling supported. Ms. Wuerz acknowledged that some changes have been positive for some students, but how it is done matters. She also referred to the WTA survey, adding that teachers' voices and concerns need to be understood, and referred to those who have and who may be leaving. Ms. Wuerz urged the School Committee to take quick action.

Chris Ryan read a public comment from Donna McKenzie who wrote on behalf of the Natick School Committee offering their support following the act of racism toward Dr. Easy in December. They understand the tireless work that Superintendents put forth for the success and well-being of the students, and they stand with Dr. Easy and others across the Commonwealth who are being threatened by these acts. These racist acts of any form are not tolerated, and they are committed to ensure that students and all educators feel safe, as there is more work to be done in this regard.

Chris Ryan read a public comment from Lorena Mehta, 4 Saddle Lane, expressing her support for the teachers, as they feel unsupported based on the recent WTA survey. Teachers cannot teach if they don't feel supported. She asked the School Committee to approach this situation objectively, as parents trust them to make the best decisions for the district. Ms. Mehta also expressed concerns for those who will be leaving the district at the end of the school year.

Parry Graham responded to the previous public comments saying that Dr. Easy has been very supportive of his professional decision and his candidacy in Lincoln. He believes that it is problematic for others to talk about what is a personal and professional opportunity within the context of their views and opinions, and he does not want others to connect him in the way in which these comments were made.

4. Financial Matters:

3.1 Discussion regarding FY24 Budget, including The Children's Way Tuition, Athletics, Wayland High School, and Wayland Middle School:

The Children's Way:

Tom Lafleur answered questions from the School Committee about the reasons for the total revenue decrease since 2019, the potential increase in the TA budget, the number of special education students being serviced now and the projection for FY24, and the potential of some or all of TCW salaries being brought forward into the operating budget.

Abigail Dressler joined the meeting noting that new registrations are being accepted now, as well as early intervention referrals taken from parents if they feel their child may have a disability. As required, screening and or evaluations begin just before the age of three, and special education students are expected to increase. Ms. Dressler is also required to hold spaces all during the year for unanticipated enrollments. She added that many preschools across the State have run out of space and must hire itinerant teams of specialists to service the children who attend their buildings. Ms. Dressler proposed a change in the registration fee from \$50 to \$75 to be in line with WSCP programming. The TCW tuition would remain the same.

Upon a motion duly made by Ellen Grieco, seconded by Erin Gibbons, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to approve the tuition as proposed on Page 34 of the budget book and the increase in the registration fee not counting the part that's about BASE on Page 34.

Athletics:

Tom Lafleur and Heath Rollins answered questions from the School Committee about the 60% increase in athletic memberships; police details and the cost per each event; specific line items and breakdowns for each coach per sport given the salary increases according to the budget; the increase in the cost for game officials; the 15% increase in the athletics total budget; the inequitable amount of funding for each sport and athlete; and the miscellaneous expenses in the special revenue fund for ice hockey and sailing. A discussion ensued and Heath

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Rollins addressed the lack of funding for hockey, sailing, and alpine skiing, adding that this topic has been discussed many times in the past and it has always been decided that the budget would remain status quo given that other budget items took priority. Inequity is a concern for all athletes in the district.

Erin Gibbons left the meeting at 6:58 p.m.; returned at 7:01 p.m.

Heath explained the fundraising process. He did note that although the district hires the hockey coaches, the district does not pay their salaries.

The questions continued around athletic expenses in the revolving funds vs. in the budget and the purchase of uniforms on a revolving schedule by team. Heath will review the unfunded and underfunded sports. Each year, Heath reviews the expected/anticipated expenses for each team; he explained.

Wayland High School:

Tom Lafleur reported that \$505,000 of the high school budget was moved into facilities and given to the Town; he explained further. Dr. Easy reviewed the FY24 staffing requests: 1.0 FTE school psychologist, 0.2 FTE Innovation Pathway, 0.2 FTE social studies, and 0.4 FTE business. Allyson Mizoguchi described the high school's needs in terms of these four FTE requests, the need for another school psychologist in the realm of clinical support in special education (requested before), including the role of the current school psychologist. The Innovation Pathway request was also requested before, and Dr. Mizoguchi explained this program, adding that an application for a DESE grant to fund programming was submitted.

Wayland School Press Network (WSPN) is a successful program with 40 to 50 students yearly and taught by two teachers, Mary Barber and Brian Keaney, who are retiring. Mrs. Barber took on WSPN as part of her role as an Instructional Technology Specialist. Going forward, Dr. Mizoguchi would like journalism to be taught by an English teacher and a social studies teacher who has been identified as the 0.2 FTE to move into the program. She explained further.

Ellen Grieco left the meeting at 7:23 p.m.; returned at 7:24 p.m.

Wayland Middle School:

Tom Lafleur answered questions about the Middle School budget regarding the number of clusters in all grade levels, as sent to him by Betsy Gavron, and the amount of the stipend for after school advisors. The staffing requests include a 1.0 FTE Educational Team Leader and 2.0 FTEs for the increase in the 6th grade enrollment increase. Dr. Easy explained that there is a proposed plan in place to satisfy the FTEs, but nothing has been decided.

A discussion ensued about the budget approval process at the January 25 meeting, including an understanding of the Town Manager Act and the state of the Town's financial status. Tom added that the Town deducted \$731,000 from the schools' operating budget and submitted it to the Finance Committee which brought the Town about \$500,000 from the levy limit, adding that if the Town exceeds the levy limit an override could be possible moving forward. Dr. Easy will invite someone representing the Town to attend the January 25 meeting. The School Committee will also vote on the district fees at the January 25 meeting, such as parking and transportation, athletics, etc.

American Rescue Plan Act Funding Memo:

Jeanne commented that the ARPA memo was not sent to the Select Board yet citing the reasons why, including the need to understand this request to fully fund full day kindergarten for FY24 and 50% funding for FY25 with the operating budget funding FDK in full in FY26. A discussion ensued in this regard as well as a review of the memo and the district's potential commitment.

Ellen Grieco moved to approve the ARPA memo drafted by Jeanne and Dr. Easy, and for the School Committee to support Dr. Easy to go to the ARPA Subcommittee to obtain this funding for full day kindergarten. Erin Gibbons seconded the motion. A vote was not taken.

The Committee reviewed the memo regarding certain language that addresses the history of this program around past funding in FY22 for custodial services; Dr. Easy explained. Jeanne added to the discussion.

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Upon a motion duly made by Ellen Grieco, seconded by Erin Gibbons, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to approve the ARPA memo as written and that the School Committee supports Dr. Easy to go to the ARPA Subcommittee to obtain this funding for full day kindergarten.

5. **Administrative Matters:**

4.1 *Continued Discussion of Re-visiting a Schedule of Administrator-Teacher-Facilitator Meetings:*
Chris reported that he has not been able to schedule the facilitator and asked the School Committee members if they would like him to pursue this effort. They all agreed that Chris would proceed in this regard.

6. **Consent Agenda:**

- 6.1 Acceptance of Gifts:
 - Donation to the Lerner Travelship (\$300)
 - Donation to the Lerner Travelship (\$900)
- 6.2 Accounts Payables Warrant:
Wayland Public Schools Accounts Payables Warrant, dated January 18, 2023, in the amount of \$605,728.61
- 6.3 Approval of Minutes: January 4, 2023 (passed over; not approved)

Upon a motion duly made by Ellen Grieco, seconded by Erin Gibbons, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to approve the consent agenda with the exception of the minutes.

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

None.

8. **Executive Session:**

Upon a motion duly made by Chris Ryan, seconded by Jess Polizzotti, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to enter Executive Session at 8:13 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. A roll call vote was taken as follows:

<u>Roll Call</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
Chris Ryan, Chair	X	
Ellen Grieco, Vice Chair	X	
Jeanne Downs	X	
Erin Gibbons	X	
Jess Polizzotti	X	

The School Committee will be joined by Dr. Omar Easy, Superintendent, Parry Graham, Assistant Superintendent, and Diane Marobella, recording secretary.

The School Committee will adjourn in Executive Session and will not reconvene in open session.

9. **Adjournment:**

Upon a motion duly made by Jeanne Downs, seconded by Erin Gibbons, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to adjourn at 8:53 p.m. A roll call vote was taken as follows:

<u>Roll Call</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
Chris Ryan, Chair	X	
Ellen Grieco, Vice Chair	X	
Jeanne Downs	X	
Erin Gibbons	X	
Jess Polizzotti	X	

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Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Omar Easy, Clerk
Wayland School Committee

Observers:

See sign-in sheet.

Corresponding Documentation:

1. Agenda
2. ARPA Memo
3. Donations to the Lerner Travelship
4. Accounts Payables Warrant
5. Executive Session Motion