

# MINUTES – WAYLAND SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Regular Meeting – October 4, 2023

A Regular Meeting of the Wayland School Committee was held on Wednesday, October 4, 2023, at 6:00 P.M. at the Wayland Town Building

*Present:*

Erin Gibbons, Chair  
Jeanne Downs, Vice Chair  
Ellen Grieco  
Erin Mueller  
Christina Rodrigo

*Also present:*

David Fleishman  
Acting Superintendent

Betsy Gavron  
Interim Assistant Superintendent

Susan Bottan  
Director of Finance & Operations

Debbie Dixson  
Interim Director of Student Services

**1. Welcome & Call to Order:**

Interim Chair Erin Gibbons called the meeting to order at 6:10 p.m. and announced that the meeting was being recorded by WayCAM.

School Committee members highlighted some of the recent school events and new programs, such as Loker Curriculum Night and the new wellness curriculum for 4<sup>th</sup> graders as well as a poster created by Loker 5<sup>th</sup> graders – “We are all Up-standers”. Also mentioned was the new Bridges Elementary Math and the Claypit Hill core values that support SEL for all: ppractice empathy, act responsibly, work hard, and spread kindness (PAWS). In honor of Breast Cancer Awareness Month, the girls’ high school soccer team is wearing pink, and Erin Gibbons acknowledged and thanked the Wayland Youth Basketball Association and President Donny Guerinoni for its fundraising efforts in the amount of \$50,000 to replace the basketball hoops at the Middle School, which was appreciatively accepted by the School Committee at its last meeting.

David reported that during today’s Super Wednesday professional development, the elementary teachers focused on Bridges Math. He also thanked Donnie Guerinoni for the monetary donation as well as the successful effort to improve the Middle School gym floor. David shared his classroom experience with 40 journalism students who were being taught by two teachers for which David reflected on their journalism backgrounds, adding that there is also a new elective class for sports broadcasting.

**2. Public Comment:**

There was no public comment.

**3. Acting Superintendent Update:**

**3.1 Budget Planning and Calendar:**

Susan Bottan presented an overview around the process, timeline and approach for developing the capital and operating budgets for FY25. This includes planning for a five-year capital budget, developing the FY25 operating budget with an approach to prioritizing investments, and taking into consideration the FY24 district goals and the School Committee budget goal.

The capital budget includes equipment and building needs/projects exceeding \$25,000 and have a 5+ year life span. The principals, district leaders and facilities staff spent time reviewing the current five-year plan as well as walking the buildings to possibly discover other needs that are not yet identified. Existing projects were reviewed for the purpose of possibly closing out these projects and reallocating funds. The School Committee will receive the five-year capital plan on October 18, and the Town Manager will receive it on October 31.

Susan described the next steps for the principals in terms of the 5-year capital plan, as well as completing a capital

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needs survey. The communication amongst principals, head custodians, facilities leadership, and Susan is ongoing. Susan referred to the OnSite/InSite capital assessment from a few years ago, which is being referenced for the current plan.

The School Committee reviewed the FY25 budget development calendar that includes budget guidelines from the Town Manager in October, district-wide discussions and presentations that are collaborative and student-focused, the Acting Superintendent's FY25 Recommended Budget presentation on December 14, and a School Committee vote on the budget on January 31.

Susan reviewed the district's approach to prioritizing investments for the FY25 operating budget development. One of the tools will be to ask a series of questions, as recited by Susan that will ultimately result in improved outcomes for students while ensuring that existing resources are examined, maximized, and aligned with the goals before the need for new investments is identified. She also presented a summary of the FY24 district goals as well as the School Committee Budget Goal. A discussion ensued about the processes, specifically for the capital budget and the necessary/imminent capital projects moving forward.

### 3.2 *Safety Care and Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) Update:*

Debbie Dixon provided the School Committee with an update about Safety Care and Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT). Safety Care replaces Crisis Prevention Intervention and a portion of School Committee Policy JKAA (Physical Restraint of Students) requires that the district provides training to ensure preparedness and proper administration of physical restraint, noting that these situations are low in the Wayland schools. The new program is research based, is more user-friendly for schools, and is updated often. Most of the training focus of Safety Care is de-escalation without restraint, whenever possible, by understanding how and why crisis events happen. The training is a total of 16 hours, includes re-certification and was offered to 17 staff members in September with more training planned for October. Three district staff members received training to become Safety Care trainers.

DBT training is in line with this year's district goals, is evidence based, and is the gold standard in schools for treatment for individuals who exhibit social emotional needs and experience emotion dysregulation. DBT replaces ineffective/problematic behaviors with skillful behaviors consistent with the person's longer term goals, self-respect, and values. The district partners with and consults with McLean Hospital Outreach in this regard. Debbie described pervasive emotional behavior whereby the baseline of emotions starts at a level of 5 and then raises to 10 when a situation is escalated. She provided examples of how the escalation can take place in one's current environment and situation at hand. Mindfulness is the most important aspect of controlling and regulating one's emotions and behavior. Those 18 staff members being trained, as noted by Debbie, will use the book "DBT in Schools" that provides curriculum and steps that will be taught to students. A discussion ensued about the training and any follow-up processes necessary to continue training in this regard.

### 3.3 *Community Conversations Schedule and Update:*

David presented the community conversations schedule at each school with the first being at The Children's Way on October 6. The other schools are as follows: Loker School on October 18, the High School on October 19, Claypit Hill on October 26, the Middle School on October 30, and Happy Hollow on November 2. They are in-person but can be virtual for those who cannot attend. David noted that the presentation segment will be recorded and posted.

David added that there will be an upcoming presentation on the health curriculum, particularly for Grades 4 and 5, noting that the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) has not updated this curriculum since 1999.

## 4. **Administrative Matters:**

### 4.1 *High School Turf Field Status Update:*

Jeanne provided an update about the status of the high school turf field. A third party engineer was hired by the Town to review Weston & Sampson's proposal who also walked the field and did an assessment of what is necessary to improve the existing condition and the water flow. A temporary solution was put in place for now; Jeanne described. Field maintenance was also discussed with the Recreation Director and the DPW Director. Erin Gibbons noted that the current moratorium for no turf fields runs to January 2025, and there is a group in town who may present a warrant article at the next Town Meeting prohibiting all turf fields moving forward. Erin noted her concern about the irregular maintenance of the turf and grass fields. Jeanne and Ellen shared the information they received as School Committee members when the turf field was being proposed and discussed. The remaining life expectancy of this turf field expires in about six years, but the town would need six additional grass fields to replace one turf field.

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Wayland lacks the outdoor space for more grass fields. A discussion ensued about potential and available land, including the disadvantages and health-related issues from turf fields.

## 5. Policy Matters:

### 5.1 *Discuss Items for Review by Subcommittee:*

In preparation for Policy Subcommittee meetings, Erin Gibbons suggested that the Subcommittee reviews the policy pertaining to use of the school facilities in terms of access from either the School Department or the Recreation Department. The President of the Wayland Youth Basketball Association has made suggestions around this policy. Erin also referred the Subcommittee to the recent MASC policy updates which could be helpful in this regard, as well as reviewing the policy for returning to school from COVID to be sure it is in line with the CDC regulations. In addition, the Policy Subcommittee will review the policy for approving minutes and the HR policies in regard to non-union staff.

## 6. Financial Matters:

### 6.1 *Finance Subcommittee Update:*

Jeanne conveyed to the Committee that she and David met recently to discuss past School Committee budget processes.

## 7. Consent Agenda:

7.1 Boston UN Model Overnight Trip

7.2 Approval of Accounts Payables & Payroll Warrants:

- Wayland Public Schools Accounts Payables Warrant, dated October 4, 2023, in the amount of \$613,657.06

7.3 Approval of Minutes: September 20 and 27, 2023

Ellen Grieco moved to approve the consent agenda. A discussion ensued and Jeanne suggested adding more verbiage in the September 20 minutes about the YAC candidates.

Upon a motion duly made by Ellen Grieco, seconded by Christina Rodrigo, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to approve the consent agenda with the caveat that Jeanne will add additional language to the minutes of September 20; the minutes will be re-approved.

## 8. Matters Not Reasonably Anticipated by the Chair:

Ellen Grieco reported that Heather Pineault, a member of the Human Rights, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee (HRDEIC) contacted her about having a School Committee representative to the Select Board on this advisory committee. Erin Mueller volunteered. Ellen also attends the HRDEIC meetings.

## 9. Executive Session:

Upon a motion duly made by Erin Gibbons, seconded by Jeanne Downs, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to enter Executive Session at 7:31 p.m. for the purposes of (a) discussing strategy with respect to the following litigation matters where an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the litigating position of the School Committee: Easy v. Wayland Public Schools, et al (MCAD Complaint), pursuant to M.G.L. c.30A, §21(a)(3); (b) approving executive session minutes, as permitted by M.G.L. c.30A, §22: September 20, 2023 with the intent to withhold said minutes; and (c) discussing strategy in preparation for negotiation with non-union personnel (Acting Superintendent), as a discussion in open session may have a detrimental effect on the negotiating position of the School Committee and as permitted by M.G.L. c.30A, §21(a)(2). A roll call vote was taken as follows:

<u>Roll Call</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
Erin Gibbons, Chair	X	
Jeanne Downs, Vice Chair	X	
Ellen Grieco	X	
Erin Mueller	X	
Christina Rodrigo	X	

The School Committee will be joined by Attorneys Kevin Bresnahan, Courtney Mayo and Andrew Weiner.

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

*The administrators and the recording secretary left the meeting at 7:32 p.m.*

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10. **Adjournment:**

Upon a motion made by Ellen Grieco, seconded by Erin Gibbons, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to adjourn at 9:40 pm. A roll call vote was taken:

<u>Roll Call</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
Erin Gibbons, Chair	X	
Jeanne Downs, Vice Chair	X	
Ellen Grieco	X	
Erin Mueller	X	
Christina Rodrigo	X	

Respectfully submitted,

Erin Gibbons, Chair  
Wayland School Committee

***Corresponding Documentation:***

1. Agenda
2. Presentation regarding the FY25 Budget Process
3. Spreadsheet of Approved FY24 to FY29 Capital Projects
4. FY25 Budget Calendar
5. Presentation regarding Dialectical Behavior Therapy Training
6. 2024 Boston Model UN Overnight Trip Proposal
7. Accounts Payables & Payroll Warrants
8. School Committee Minutes of September 20, 2023
9. School Committee Minutes of September 27, 2023
10. Executive Session Motion