

MINUTES – WAYLAND SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Regular Meeting – September 20, 2023

A Regular Meeting of the Wayland School Committee was held on Wednesday, September 20, 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 6:05 p.m. and announced that the meeting was being recorded by WayCAM.

Erin Gibbons shared some highlights about the WHS Back-to-School night and picture day. As school liaisons, Jeanne Downs and Ellen Grieco shared their visits to Happy Hollow and the High School, respectively. In addition, Erin Gibbons referred to an email to Happy Hollow families about the traffic patterns and the need to slow down and be cognizant of the traffic rules.

2. Public Comment:

There was no public comment.

3. Acting Superintendent Update:

3.1 Presentation and Discussion of Goals/District Improvement Plan:

David Fleishman presented the proposed draft of the District Improvement Plan and the district goals for 2023-2024, adding that the preparation was a collaborative effort and the focus of the Administrative Council retreat goals. One takeaway was the consensus that the goals should be developed with new categories based on the needs of Wayland Public Schools and the current trends in education. Some of the goals will not be accomplished in just one year but over the next several years and with a focus of where time will be spent, whether on professional development or with students, families, and adults. The goals will also guide the budget process.

The Educational Goals include the following categories: Academic Achievement, Belonging and Equity, and Social-emotional Learning and Wellness which all have specific actions applied to them, but the actions could change from year to year depending on the focus in the district.

In addition, there are three fairly new goals, such as Student Services, Community, and Operational. David described the focus of these three goals, as well as an overview of each.

Christina Rodrigo left the meeting at 6:17 p.m.; returned at 6:20 p.m.

David noted that the Bridges K-5 elementary math program is up and running after two years of planning district-wide, as well as a new K-5 elementary Empowering Writers program. He stressed the importance of communicating to families exactly what is happening in the district around literacy screening, academics and programs, including the announcement that the Spanish Immersion Program will move up to the Middle School next year. In the realm of technology, the district is beginning to discuss “AI” in an effort to create a more adaptive, efficient and inclusive

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learning environment. Finally, there is a plan to expand academic pathways for freshman and sophomores.

The School Committee asked questions about the Academic Achievement goal regarding the class registration process at the secondary levels and what happens to those students who are not in challenging courses and are not receiving services. A discussion ensued.

As one ongoing goal in Wayland, Belonging and Equity will reinforce the need to focus on an inclusive culture of belonging and opportunity for students and staff in an effort to allow them to feel recognized and valued in addition to hiring and retaining diverse staff as well as offering professional development. A discussion ensued about administering staff surveys supported by base-line data.

The second ongoing goal is about Social Emotional Learning and Wellness for which most of the SEL curriculum is for Pre-K-5 such as Open Circle. However, teachers would like to research an alternate curriculum, one that can be used both in school and at home. Other issues where social emotional support is necessary are school attendance and school refusal, anxiety, depression and self-harm, all of which seem to have increased since the pandemic, particularly at the secondary level. David described the professional development and training for staff. The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) has developed new recommended health education frameworks for four levels: Grades K-2, 3-5 and Middle and High School which will be one focus of our K-12 Wellness Director and new health teacher, particularly for grades 4 and 5; David described further. A discussion ensued about the middle school students in terms of social emotional wellness curriculum.

Erin Gibbons left the meeting at 6:54 p.m.; returned at 6:56 p.m.

There are three newer goals that address Student Services processes and procedures around continuation of services and staffing and alignment structures. The next is Community where it is important to ensure that family and staff communication is engaging, timely, responsive, and collaborative. Finally, Operational will focus on developing a plan to improve existing buildings in order to provide sustainable and up-to-date learning environments, including updating the website and improving human resources systems. Debbie Dixson commented on the Student Services department and staff around the Student Services goal, including the willingness and eagerness to move forward in implementing this goal.

Goal reporting will be periodically reviewed with the School Committee.

Upon a motion duly made by Ellen Grieco, seconded by Christina Rodrigo, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to approve the district goals with Jeanne Down's edits to one section.

There was a brief pause at 7:12 p.m. The meeting resumed at 7:15 p.m.

4. Youth Advisory Committee (YAC) Candidate Interviews for Two (2) Appointments:

Erin Mueller expressed appreciation to the candidates for their interest in this appointment and thanked Malcolm Astley and Pam Cerne for serving on the Youth Advisory Committee over the past several years. She read the focus and mission of Wayland Youth and Family Services.

The School Committee asked residents at a prior meeting to submit statements of interest for two vacancies on the Youth Advisory Committee as part of Wayland Youth Services in collaboration with the school district. In all, there were seven statements received, two withdrew and five remained interested. They are Pam Cerne, Heidi Ellis, Lisa Goodman, Amruta Mudambi, and Caroline Hanlon.

Due to calendar conflicts, Ms. Mudambi and Ms. Hanlon submitted their statements, qualifications and answers to two questions as provided by the School Committee. Present at the meeting were Pam Cerne, Heidi Ellis and Lisa Goodman, all of whom shared why they are interested in this appointment and how their professional backgrounds and work experiences can be an asset in this regard.

Lisa Goodman is a parent of high school students and a school psychologist and feels this position would be good continuation of her work. She noted the pressures that students are facing, some of which are pandemic related and some which are not. Heidi Ellis is a parent of three children and a clinical child psychologist. She is eager to work on issues, including mental health, DEI/racism, and social media. Pam Cerne has served on the Youth Advisory Committee as the School Committee appointment for the past few years. She has two children at the high school, is a clinical social worker,

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and would like to follow through on current YAC initiatives.

The School Committee discussed the candidates noting that all five candidates are very qualified.

Upon a motion duly made by Jeanne Downs, seconded by Erin Mueller, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) appoint Pam Cerne to fill one of the open positions on the Youth Advisory Committee.

The discussion continued about the remaining candidates regarding personal highlights and experiences for each. Erin Gibbons will pass along to the Select Board the names of those not selected by the School Committee.

Upon a motion duly made by Christina Rodrigo, seconded by Jeanne Downs, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to appoint Heidi Ellis to the Youth Advisory Committee.

5. Administrative Matters:

5.1 *Announcement of WESA Contract Settlement:*

Erin Gibbons announced that the WESA contract settlement for the next three years was approved by the School Committee at the last meeting. Both the WTA and WESA agreements will be posted on the website.

5.2 *Review of Draft Annual Report:*

Jeanne provided a draft of the Annual Report to be submitted by September 30. The School Committee reviewed the draft for content, as it focuses on the previous school year. Changes were made as suggested.

Upon a motion duly made by Erin Mueller, seconded by Ellen Grieco, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to approve the draft Annual Report with the suggested changes that were made by the Committee.

5.3 *High School Turf Field Status Update:*

The town is under contract with a third party to review Weston & Sampson's proposal to install a piece of equipment to remove the screen (the pipe where the water comes out) to determine if it is the reason the field is floating. Discussions around payment are ongoing. Moving forward, follow-up meetings will take place regarding roles, maintenance and the management of the process within departments town-wide. Susan added that the Town Manager was given the existing Memorandum of Understanding dated back to 2016.

5.4 *Announcement of Release with Redactions to the Following Executive Session Minutes: January 4, 2021, January 6, 2021, January 11, 2021, January 13, 2021, January 20, 2021, January 27, 2021, January 29, 2021, February 3, 2021, February 10, 2021, February 16, 2021, March 1, 2023:*

Erin Gibbons announced that the following Executive Session minutes were released with redactions: January 4, 2021, January 6, 2021, January 11, 2021, January 13, 2021, January 20, 2021, January 27, 2021, January 29, 2021, February 3, 2021, February 10, 2021, February 16, 2021, and March 1, 2023.

5.5 *Announcement of Release of Previously Redacted Content of the following Executive Session Minutes: December 15, 2021, January 5, 2022, August 24, 2022, September 7, 2022, October 4, 2022 and Confirmation of Continued Non-Disclosure of Remaining Executive Session Minutes for Calendar Years 2021 and 2022:*

Erin Gibbons announced the release of previously redacted content for the following Executive Session minutes: December 15, 2021, January 5, 2022, August 24, 2022, September 7, 2022, October 4, 2022 and also confirmed the continued non-disclosure of redacted portions of remaining Executive Session minutes for calendar years 2021 and 2022. These minutes are available online for the public's edification from 2014 to present, as well as all being available in hard copy in the Superintendent's Office, Town Building, 2nd Floor.

6. Financial Matters:

6.1 *Finance Subcommittee Update:*

- Propose Plan for Regular Financial Reporting:

There is a proposed plan by which the School Committee will receive quarterly financial reports: Q1 in early November, Q2 in early February, Q3 in early May and Q4 and the EOY Report in September. There will also be regular reporting around Special Education, and possibly including financial settlements that are ending. A discussion ensued about the special education reporting.

- FY24 Capital Plan Timeline

Susan Bottan plans to meet with the principals about their building's capital needs, and she will prepare a

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capital budget by the end of October. She will also review all open capital projects with the Public Buildings Director Ben Keefe and Facilities Manager Pat Morris. A discussion ensued about long-term maintenance in the school buildings and on the grass fields in terms of transparency for the community.

- Long-Term School Building Project:
The Finance Subcommittee will move the elementary building project forward that began a few years ago. It will be necessary to update the schools’ capacity and enrollment projections, as well as a needs assessment and facility study.

Guidelines and instructions for capital budget planning will be provided by the Town by the end of September.

7. **Consent Agenda:**

- 7.1 Wayland Middle School Geology Trip
- 7.2 Wayland High School Drama Trip
- 7.3 Wayland Middle School Gym Equipment Donation/Grant
- 7.4 Approval and Declaration of Surplus Items to be Recycled
- 7.5 Approval of Accounts Payables & Payroll Warrants:
 - Wayland Public Schools Accounts Payables Warrant, dated September 20, 2023, in the amount of \$409,029.87
- 7.6 Approval of Minutes: September 6, 2023

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

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

None.

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 8:15 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) discussing strategy with respect to preparation for negotiations with non-union personnel (Dr. Omar X. Easy), pursuant to M.G.L. c.30A, §21(a)(2), as an open session may have a detrimental effect on the negotiating position of the School Committee; (c) approving executive session minutes, as permitted by M.G.L. c.30A, §22: September 6, 2023 with the intent to withhold said minutes. 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 not be joined by any others.

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 8:15 p.m.

10. **Adjournment:**

Upon a motion made by Erin Gibbons, seconded by Christina Rodrigo, the School Committee voted unanimously (4-0) to adjourn at 9:11 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	absent	

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Erin Mueller	X
Christina Rodrigo	X

Respectfully submitted,

Erin Gibbons, Chair
Wayland School Committee

Corresponding Documentation:

1. Agenda
2. Youth Advisory Committee Statements of Interest
3. Youth Advisory Committee Candidate Questions
4. Draft Annual Report
5. FY24 Quarterly Reporting Schedule
6. Eighth Grade New York Geology Trip Proposal 2023
7. WHS Fine Arts Trip Proposal 2024
8. Middle School Monetary Gift for Basketball Hoops
9. IT Recycle Memo/List
10. Accounts Payables & Payroll Warrants
11. School Committee Minutes of September 6, 2023
12. Executive Session Motion