



# Weymouth

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## PUBLIC SCHOOLS

### Weymouth School Committee

Humanities Center & Zoom

July 14, 2022

#### MEETING OF THE WHOLE MINUTES

*(approved 8/18/22)*

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**Members In Attendance:** Dr. John Sullivan, Chair; Carrie Palazzo, Secretary; Kathy Curran; Rebecca Sherlock-Shangraw; Steve Buccigross

**Members Absent:** Tracey Nardone, Vice Chair; Mayor Hedlund

**Also Present:** Robert Wargo, Superintendent

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The meeting was called to order at 4:34pm

#### **Committee and Superintendent Communication**

The Chair shared that this meeting is an opportunity to discuss the process and flow of information, categories, and patterns.

It was requested that if there is a politician or elected official invited to an event, that school committee be notified and invited. Having identified points of contact was suggested; knowing who to reach out to with what. Possible and some previous contacts mentioned were Ms. Harris, Ms. Pitts, Ms. Haggerty, Ms. Powers, and Ms. Ware.

Ms. Palazzo brought up the Generation Citizen, an 8th grade curriculum, as an example of communication and explained that part of the curriculum is having students reach out to elected officials. It was mentioned that Ms. Harris has been helpful with communication in the past. It may be of benefit to identify a point person when there are questions such as described with the example Ms. Palazzo gave. Superintendent Wargo shared that the point person should be him.

Balance of school department responsibilities for support and promotion of community engagement and events was discussed.

It was clarified that if the School Committee is contacted by a constituent and needs more information that they start with the Superintendent who will then funnel out for next steps. It was remarked that Principals have authority over their building.

Mr. Buccigross shared that communication needs to be better, that information is bottlenecked, and that there isn't enough communication amongst the school committee. He suggested that the chair touch base 1 on 1 to each member for 10 minutes each week.

The Chair inquired about the level of granularity and categories of information the committee is looking for.

Dr. Sherlock-Shangraw requested that information concerning policy, procedure and operations be shared with the committee and gave examples of when the committee was not given a heads up: 1. Executive Director of Student Services 2. Adams intended plan; MSBA letter.

It was suggested that communication from the Superintendent be filtered through the Chair to the Committee members.

Mrs. Curran commented that she was waiting for the evidence before completing the evaluation which she will be doing and remarked that it is the committee's job to evaluate the Superintendent on student achievement and expressed her disagreement with the evaluation process.

The Chair explained that the committee has a statutory responsibility of approving new job descriptions, not new people. The role of Deputy Director-Event Facilities was discussed at length. Understanding was conveyed that town money is used to pay for the position and the role is in a town facility however it was a mistake not involving the school committee as the committee is directly involved with the fee schedule and rental. It was suggested that asset management and the school department could've worked collaboratively in creating a job description. The Chair advised that he is prepared to address this in a public meeting and is figuring out a nuanced way to meet with the town to discuss the position. It was suggested to have another school committee member present during that joint meeting. Chair Sullivan expressed hope that it would be held in August.

Dual School committee and budget subcommittee chair roles were discussed. The Chair advised that he is not overwhelmed and that he can't communicate information that he isn't privy to. He advised that at the next budget subcommittee meeting that the role of Chair can be considered. It was cleared up that the Superintendent is the source of information and the committee is the receiver of information the Chair filters.

Dr. Sherlock Shangraw requested that pauses or changes in policies (field trips) or long standing (post prom) practices be communicated to the committee (a professional courtesy)

before hearing if from parents or social media. It was stated that the school committee approves out of state and overnight field trips. Mrs. Curran expressed her disappointment that post prom didn't return after the COVID shut down and also the lack of promotion. The Chair shared that having a heads up in a change of standing practice helps the school committee have an understanding in giving direction to families.

The Superintendent shared that if one member contacts him that his answer goes on the blog to the whole committee. He advised that he would communicate more however would need feedback from the committee. Common sense was reiterated in what to share out to the committee members. The Superintendent expressed his appreciation to the committee for their work in putting together the evaluation.

The position of Secretary to the Superintendent was discussed. The Superintendent shared that his organization chart mirrors the prior organizational chart since July 1, 2018 with the title of Supervisor to the Superintendent and apologized for the previous typo. Ms. Pitts' emails are signed with the title of secretary; the Superintendent prefers executive or administrative assistant. The Superintendent inquired which title the committee would like the position referred to. Dr. Sherlock-Shangraw obtained a copy of the assistant to the Superintendent job description from MASC and expressed her procedural concern that there isn't a job description for Supervisor to the Superintendent. She conveyed her worry that the person in the position wouldn't be aware of the expectations of the position for evaluation and that it would be fair that if there is an update to the title, then the description would need to go before the school committee. The Superintendent advised that there is no change in responsibilities and that Ms. Pitts is still working within the job description.

Communication via text and/or email was talked over. Increased communication between the Superintendent and Chair will help in what goes in the Friday message and what is communicated down from the Chair. Using common sense was reiterated for deciding what to communicate as well as social media not being the number source of information. Ms. Palazzo expressed her support for the Superintendent sharing his schedule as it gives her an idea on how/what the Superintendent is prioritizing what is going on in the district.

Superintendent Wargo shared that he'd like to go through the same exercises/activities as the admin retreat with the School Committee members. Mrs. Curran advised that she will do the evaluation and suggested that the Mayor might as well.

Mr. Buccigross expressed his personal preference of meeting to talk about evidence before writing the evaluation and then discussing it together. He also shared his concern for the fights and bullying happening at the middle school and emphasized accountability.

Chair Sullivan summarized the categories of communication:

Big budget changes, statutory obligations, organizational chart changes, additional job descriptions (vote), change in long standing practice (field trips, post prom, field days) within

common sense reasons, 'Nice to Know', and likely to have broad community interest or concern.

The Chair shared that if he would like a reply within 24-48hrs time that he emails the Superintendent. It was emphasized that in case of an emergency to call. Addressing rumors and support between school committee members was talked through as well as expediency of replies. The Superintendent reiterated that the committee can reach out via email, txt, or phone. If there is an overload of requests, Superintendent Wargo will work with the Chair. Knowledge of the district structure and point people for contact was requested. It was requested again that if there is an elected official invited that school committee receive an invite as well.

### **Superintendent Evaluation**

The evaluation process was debated. Consensus was reached to meet in a meeting of the whole to discuss evidence prior to members' writing their evaluation. Another meeting of the whole would be held to discuss the evaluations. The evaluation is an advisory inhouse document and available to anyone who asks. Disagreement with public evaluation as well as performing one in the first year of Mr. Wargo's superintendency was expressed.

The Chair shared that the overall evaluation rating is classified as needs improvement and explained that seasoned, experienced Superintendents typically receive a rating of proficient. Superintendent Wargo shared that he is fine with what is written in the evaluation based on the evidence supplied; it is a living document to learn from and he is ready to move forward.

It was reminded that the Superintendent's new role was during Covid.

Mrs. Curran shared dissatisfaction with this current evaluation practice as well as voting and suggested waiting till the next meeting, Mr. Buccigross agreed. It was commented that some of the communication feedback should not be in the evaluation and was reiterated that student achievement and preparedness is what the Superintendent should be evaluated on.

Detailed evidence and data from the Superintendent was requested for the next evaluation. It was recommended that the committee access the MASC evaluation tutorial.

The Superintendent reiterated his desire to learn from this opportunity and move forward.

**The Meeting adjourned at 6:54pm** on the motion of Mrs. Curran, seconded by Dr. Sherlock-Shgangraw. Motion passed.

Respectfully Submitted,



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Carrie Palazzo  
Secretary