



# Weymouth

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## PUBLIC SCHOOLS

### Weymouth School Committee

[ZOOM Meeting](#)

July 23, 2020

#### MEETING MINUTES

(approved 8/20/20)

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**Members In Attendance:** Lisa Belmarsh, Chair; Tracey Nardone, Vice-Chair; John Sullivan, Secretary; Mayor Robert Hedlund (Arrived late), Kathy Curran; Rebecca Sherlock-Shangraw; Carrie Palazzo,

**Members Absent:**

**Also Present:** Jennifer Curtis-Whipple, Superintendent; Brian Smith, Assistant Superintendent; Robert Wargo, Assistant Superintendent.

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**The Meeting Came to Order At 7:02pm.**

Mrs. Nardone led in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Consent Agenda:**

The consent agenda included:

- Warrant 04-2021 in the amount of 372,257.76, Dated July 27, 2020
- Warrants 54-2020 in the amount of \$657,213.37, Dated 6/28/20; 55-2020 in the amount of \$92,805.46, Dated 6/30/20. presented with an assurance there is money to pay for these items.
- Regular Minutes 6/18/20
- Executive Session Minutes 6/18/20
- Budget Sub Minutes 6/24/20

Assistant Superintendent Smith advised that there were three warrants (two warrants for fiscal year (FY) 2020 and one for FY 2021)

Motion to accept the Consent Agenda by Mrs. Curran, seconded by Dr. Sullivan. Roll Call vote. Passed unanimously.

Mrs. Curran requested to see the warrant at the administration building.

### **Public Comment**

The Chair reminded that community members are allowed to speak to items on the agenda and to be mindful to keep comments to 3 minutes and that if you 'raise your hand' you will be called on.

Helen Li-inquired if there was a change in leadership at the Johnson School and stated that there is now an Asian American Parent Council in addition to the multicultural parent council. Mrs. Li can be found on facebook. Mrs. Curran added that the community member was not speaking to items on the agenda.

### **Report of the Superintendent**

#### **a. Correspondence**

The Superintendent shared:

The Department of Education notified that Weymouth has been accepted into an academy focused on a multi tiered system of support that will help for the 2020-21 school year.

Weymouth High School Principal Strauss was a finalist for the Massachusetts Principal of the Year. Dr. Curtis-Whipple shared her congratulations.

Math and Science groups have met and created an adjusted curriculum for benchmarks focusing on quality over quantity due 'COVID slide'.

SEPAC will be hosting a return to school discussion with Special Education Director, Allyson Bell and Special Education Administrators on August 11, 2020 at 6pm.

Principal Angelos hosted a virtual meet and greet with Nash students and families. The ZOOM meeting was very well received.

At WHS advanced placement assessments are in and 72% received 3 or better which is an improvement over prior years. Previously 530 AP tests had been administered and this year it was 600 (taken virtually).

The Superintendent reminded senior students to respond to Associate Principal Monahan and Principal Strauss regarding their attendance of plans and activities on August 7, 2020.

The District has been awarded a 'Vacation/Weekend Learning Program' grant totalling \$23,745. The grant will help with remediation and filling the gap caused by the COVID slide.

Superintendent Curtis-Whipple thanked Joy Mulcahy and Alyssa Bosse for their hard work and turn around time with all the grants and the application process.

Assistant Superintendent Smith also thanked the business office, Assistant Superintendent Wargo and Special Education Director Bell for all their help with grants. \$677K in ESSER (Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief) funds from the Cares Act will be received. Also submitted is a technical grant funded through the state to help with remote learning, assistive technology, chromebooks and iPads for Prek-grade 2. The offices are currently gathering paperwork to submit for the 'School reopening Grant', funds are allocated at \$225 per pupil. Hopefully 1.3 Million for Weymouth for COVID related expenses. With the help of Senator O'Connor a COVID 19 supplemental state budget was approved which will mean an additional \$250,000 for full day Kindergarten implementation.

Mrs. Curran inquired about how information was sent out regarding Graduation on August 7. Associate Principal Monahan advised that email notification was sent out on 7/23/20 for reply by 5pm on Monday 7/27/20. Senior advisors are also posting on social media for seniors to check their Weymouth emails. If students don't receive an email they can reach out to Ms. Monahan. Dr. Sherlock-Shangraw questioned if evening school students will be participating on August 7 and was assured that Ms. Prendergast reached out to the evening school students.

#### **B. Introduction of New Administrators:**

Jennifer Mendicino, WHS Dean

Jennifer Mendicino will be joining Weymouth High School's Administration Team as a Dean of Students. Jenn is coming to Weymouth with experience most recently as an Assistant Principal for the Department of Corrections. Jenn has also had experience as a school counselor, social worker and substance abuse clinician. She has previously been a Hall Director at Quinnipiac University. She is currently completing her doctoral dissertation and looks forward to sharing her findings. She will be a great asset to WHS.

Her doctoral dissertation is on educator burnout and retention.

Robert O'Leary, Athletic Director

Robert will be joining Weymouth's Administrative Team as the Weymouth Public Schools' Athletic Director. Robert will oversee all district-wide physical education programming and athletics. Robert is coming to Weymouth with extensive experience as the Athletic Co-Curricular Director for Portland Public Schools where he was responsible for 17 varsity and 23 sub-varsity teams as well as over 50 clubs and activities. He has also had experience as a physical education teacher as well administrator for the Town of Saugus and Town of Winthrop. He will be a great addition to Weymouth Public Schools.

Mr. O'Leary, married to an School administrator and father to 2 boys (ages 9 & 12) is excited to jump into Weymouth as it is a large Division I school and happy to have a couple of extra weeks to get settled with the MIAA pushing back to the sports start date of September 14th.

#### **New Business**

## **a.Update on Return to School Working Groups & DESE Requirements**

### **i. Working Groups**

The Chair reminded that these are unprecedented times and reiterated that what is presented tonight (3 preliminary plans mandated by DESE) is not the final decision of what it will look like for the return to school and encourages productive conversations. Chair Belmarsh thanked Diane Hachey for sending out the school committee agenda to the Mayor and Town Council members and thanked them for their attendance.

The Superintendent prompted community members to check the website for updated information concerning working groups and updates from the commissioner.

Dr. Curtis Whipple gave an overview of the Core Team and the 4 return to school working groups with subgroups for each.

Assistant Superintendent Wargo gave a summary of the Student Services group that he coheads with Special Education Director Allyson Bell. Mr. Wargo stated that this is work in progress and that the importance of the health and safety of staff and students is at the forefront and that the collaboration has been fantastic. The Assistant Superintendent thanked Principal Burm and Schuhwerk (Health & Safety), Teri Fleming and Terri Marculitis (Teaching & Learning), Karen Monahan, John MacLeod, Stacey Ware (Sports, Activities, Weycare), and Principals Strauss, Costello and Bransfield (Equity & Cultural Proficiency)

Olivia Pietruszewski, part of the racial equity and cultural proficiency group spoke on racial equity in regard to the racial construct within Weymouth Public Schools so that it is an emotionally safe community for students and families of color. Other subgroups created are Climate and Culture, Professional Development for faculty and staff, Family engagement and outreach, Hiring and retention, and curriculum. Teachers, Principals, School and town administrators, parents, and current students make up the sub groups.

Assistant Superintendent Smith thanked Kathy Moran, Jen Loud, John Macleod, Mark Ricci, Melissa Stapp, Annmarie Swanson, Doug Bona, Brett Lindholm, John Barker, Maura Perez, Nicole Bussa, Lisa Jennings, Mickey McGonagle, Patti Hayes, Pat Higgins and Robin Howard. The main focus was on PPE for staff and concerns with transportation and food service, and maintenance. 6 months of PPE has been procured (required to have 3.)

Human Resources Director Foley gave a summary of the HR group and team members consisting of Dr. Meg Verlicco, principals, nurses, educators, Weycare director, maintenance, custodial and food services staff. Director Foley emphasized the wonderful collaborations regarding the safety, health and social emotional health employees for reopening. Through survey responses employee questions and answers will be published for staff so that they are comfortable and safe to return to work in the buildings upon reopening.

Co-chair Interim Associate Principal Becky Paulus (gr 6-8) gave a summary for the Family and Communications group. Members include co-chair Dennis Jones, parents, administrators and staff to streamline information and communication out to the community. Every week information is thoughtfully shared out on Sunday nights. Information is also available on facebook, instagram, twitter.

Any questions can be sent to [2020Reopen@weymouthps.org](mailto:2020Reopen@weymouthps.org)

Dr. Curtis-Whipple thanked all the members of the working groups; central administration team, leadership from WEA, all department heads and administrators, the over 40 educators, and over 30 parents/guardians, students. Thanks was also expressed to all of the survey participants.

Guiding principles for the working groups are Health and Safety, Inclusivity and Dr. Curtis-Whipple emphasized flexibility.

## **ii. DESE Requirements and Timelines**

The Superintendent gave an overview of the timeline:

Planning groups were established on June 22, 2020. Initial Guidance from DESE was received June 25, 2020. A preliminary plan (mandated by DESE to have 3: Remote Learning, Hybrid, and Full in Person) needs to be submitted to DESE by July 31, 2020. A draft plan will be presented to School Committee on August 4, 2020. School Committee will then vote the plan on August 6, 2020. The Return to School Plan will be posted for the public on August 10, 2020.

The Superintendent gave an overview of the phased approach for the return to school and reminded that the plan and dates are not finalized.

Options were summarized for possible School start dates for PreK-Post Grad students:

- a. Staff return to the buildings for professional development September 1, 2020
- b. Students begin Remote Learning on September 8, 2020 (3 days of fall PD for all Staff, 180 for kids)
- c. Students begin Remote Learning on September 14, 2020 (7 days of fall PD for staff, 175 for students)

Options were summarized for possible target dates to phase into Hybrid Learning:

- a. September 14, 2020-aligns with b start date (above)
- b. October 5, 2020-aligns with b or c start dates (above)
- c. January 4, 2021-WEA leadership has proposed this as preferred start date

Dr. Curtis-Whipple reminded that each district will be different and that all auxiliary spaces (gyms, town libraries) have been considered and that the most needy students should return to school as soon as possible.

Melanie Curtin, Assistant Director for Curriculum and instruction/ELL Support gave an overview of the possible learning models being mindful of guidelines and building size. Ms. Curtin emphasized that for safety a slower approach is the better approach. Further considerations will

be discussed for PreK through grade 1 students as well as Special Education programs. Elaine Lane, Coordinator of Health Services has been included in returning to school discussions.

The Superintendent gave an overview of the data received from the various surveys sent out to Families, Teachers, Paraprofessional, and students.

A copy of the presentation is attached to these minutes.

Dr. Curtis-Whipple reiterated that students will phase in from Remote Learning to Hybrid Learning slowly and safely. Families may have the option of choosing full Remote Learning for Term 1, however DESE and the medical field recommend returning to school.

The Possible phasing target dates were repeated:

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### **iii. Schedule of School Committee Vote**

A draft plan will be presented to School Committee on August 4, 2020. School Committee will vote the plan on August 6, 2020.

Chair Belmarsh thanked the Superintendent for the thoughtful communication and feedback and for presenting more specific information.

Mrs. Nardone stated that the plan is not a '1 size fits all' and has questions that she'll forward her questions to [2020Reopen@weymouthps.org](mailto:2020Reopen@weymouthps.org).

Mrs. Curran stated that the [2020Reopen@weymouthps.org](mailto:2020Reopen@weymouthps.org) should be on the home web page for families to access and questioned if 'paper' surveys were available and commented that she felt the response rate on the surveys was low. Superintendent Curtis-Whipple advised that paper surveys were at Seach School and Adams.

Dr. Sullivan shared that a 40% return rate for surveys is good and emphasized that the plans only scratch the surface and the number of details is remarkable. Dr. Sullivan shared that with his involvement with state university and private institutions that Weymouth is ahead of other institutions in terms of figuring out what's plausible and safe and thanked the Superintendent for her leadership. As a former MTA member, Dr. Sullivan asked for teachers to share their

concerns and to tell membership leadership how they feel and that he as a teacher wouldn't want to wait to see students for the first time on January 4, 2021.

Ms. Palazzo thanked the Superintendent for the presentation and feels the proposed dates and timelines are helpful. Ms. Palazzo stated that the return to school affects the whole community and inquired if feedback has been received from Town Council or the Mayor's office.

The Superintendent advised that discussions have been had with Steve Riley (WeyRec) concerning after school hours in the fall to help families and that every effort is being made to leverage every possible opportunity. WeyRec adheres to different guidelines. She also expressed her thanks to John MacLeod for all his help with the facilities piece concerning safety.

The Chair reminded that public comment will be held at the August 4 and 6 meeting.

Dr. Sherlock-Shangraw thanked the Superintendent and team for the in depth presentation and looks forward to the August 4th and 6th meeting and is leaning toward a slower approach., for health and safety and transportation to provide all the services mandated to provide will take longer than the time period before school starts. Creative ways have been formulated to go back to school and Dr. Sherlock Shangraw stated that she doesn't see the value in rushing to get back if the plan is not perfect. Return to school will impact the whole town and communication with town council is paramount and hopes that they can partner together.

Assistant Superintendent Smith thanked Melanie Curtin, Assistant Director for Curriculum and instruction for all of her hard and invaluable work concerning Chapman and returning to school.

Mike Murphy addressed Dr. Sullivan's comments saying that they were disparaging, unprofessional and disrespectful and clarified that Dr. Sullivan was not at the meeting with the Superintendent and Dr. Sherlock-Shangraw. The offer of the January 4 date considers the upcoming flu season and possible second wave of covid so that there is an option to come back safely. He feels the board and officer leadership, and himself, need an apology.

Dr. Sullivan apologized for not being at the meeting and his intention was never to disparage Mr. Murphy with his words; it was to request the members communicate whatever they think. Dr. Sullivan wasn't indicating that anyone is failing in their responsibility or not doing a good job and the desire is to have as many teachers share their opinion as possible.

The Chair thanked Mr. Murphy for his comments and Dr. Sullivan for clarifying. The plan will be submitted to DESE on July 31, 2020 which will be presented to School Committee on August 4th to be voted on August 6.

Mayor recognized by the Chair at 8:55pm (not sure what time he 'arrived')

Mayor Hedlund echoed the cooperation between the department heads and reiterated that guidelines differ from activity to activity and department to department. The goal is to keep the cooperation in place.

**b. Budget Sub-Committee Report: 6/24/20**

Dr. Sullivan gave an overview of the meeting. Highlighting topics of the next fiscal year schedule, FY21 budget update where Senator O'Connor's work has secured additional funding, and the transportation building.

Motion by Mrs. Nardone to accept budget sub committee report of 6/24/20. Seconded by Dr. Sullivan. Roll Call vote-passed unanimously.

**c. Policy Sub-Committee Report: 6/10/20**

Mrs. Nardone gave an overview of the meeting. Topics included policy review of section J, decided to table as there is still work to do. Sections K and J were tabled as the meeting met for so long.

Motion by Mrs. Nardone to accept the policy sub committee report of 6/10/20. Seconded by Mrs. Curran. Roll Call vote-passed unanimously.

**d. Policy Section I - First Reading**

Due to the lateness of the hour, motion of Mrs. Nardone to table Policy I to the August meeting. Seconded by Dr. Sullivan. Roll Call vote-passed unanimously.

**Old Business**

No Public Comment for Section E, F, G, and H.

- a. Policy Section E - Second Reading**
- b. Policy Section F - Second Reading**
- c. Policy Section G - Second Reading**
- d. Policy Section H - Second Reading**

Mrs. Curran suggested reading the titles of the policies.

E-Support Services, F-Facilities Development, G-Personnel, H-Negotiations

Motion by Mrs. Nardone to combine 2nd and 3rd readings of policy section E, F, G and H. Seconded by Dr. Sullivan. Roll call vote. Passed unanimously.

Motion by Mrs. Nardone to approve policy sections E, F, G and H. Seconded by Dr. Sullivan. Roll call vote. Passed unanimously.

- e. Update on Adams Renovation and Transportation Building (Town Measure 20 072 - Amend Measure 19-017)**



The Superintendent gave an overview of the presentation from John MacLeod. A transportation building is needed so that vans can be undercover before inclement weather comes. The building will hold 34 vans and be located at the athletics field next to Abigail Adams. The size of the building will be 64ft x 165ft. The estimated cost is \$979K.

A copy of the presentation is attached to these minutes.

- **Transportation Building (Action Requested)**

Mrs. Curran inquired if there is room for additional vans if needed. Assistant Superintendent Smith advised routes were evaluated and there is cushion for a couple of extra vans. Mrs Curran shared her concern of having enough room for vans if more are needed due to redistricting. Chair Belmarsh added that this is the recommended size based on the number of vans needed over the previous years. It was reiterated that the transportation building is part of the \$3 million package from Town Council to make changes to Adams and the measure was revised to use funds towards the transportation building and that is what is being voted on tonight. Additional funding may be needed for additional updates to Adams. Construction and bidding can start and be completed before inclement weather.

Motion by Mrs. Nardone to approve scheme 3 construction plan for the transportation building on the Abigail Adams school property. Seconded by Dr. Sullivan. Roll Call vote. Passed unanimously. (Mayor not present)

- **Adamas Renovations**

Dr. Curtis-Whipple gave an overview of Abigail Adams becoming the 9th primary school. An ADA (American Disability Act) entrance and parking will need to be completed (Academy Ave side). A summary of the Kindergarten Suite and bathrooms which could be classified as a water conservation green project was given. Thanks to the carpenters, maintenance, painters and custodial staff much of the work has already been completed due to the school closure; library floor replacement, ceiling tiles and auditorium work.

The Chair expressed her thanks for the Town Council members and the Mayor for attending the meeting as the renovation has funding implications. More funding will be required for Adams to be completed as \$1.5M will be used for the transportation building and the ADA updates. Meeting with the town CFO prior to the August 20 meeting will be helpful.

- **Timeline**

The Adams renovation was originally scheduled for summer work however work has proven to be more extensive so there will be a change and the building may be closed for 1 year. This would also enable cost savings. The building would be closed as an educational setting but still be open as a school department building, housing offices for the school department. Closing the building for 1 year would also delay redistricting by a year which give families another year of support and stability.

Ms. Palazzo supports the delay in redistricting.

The Adams project will remain on the agenda.

**f. Chapman School Building Update**

The Mayor shared that the groundbreaking was a success and the time capsule from 1962 was uncovered.

**Announcements:**

Weymouth Market-August 5, 2020-NEW time-2:30pm-4:30pm-WHS Gold Cafeteria: Market will occur in a drive thru manner

**Next School Committee Meeting:**

Special Meeting: Tuesday, August 4, 2020 - 6:00pm

Special Meeting: Thursday, August 6, 2020 - 6:00pm

Regular Meeting: Thursday, August 20, 2020 - 7:00pm

**The Meeting adjourned at 9:36pm** on the motion of Mrs. Nardone, seconded by Dr. Sullivan. Roll call vote - passed unanimously.

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**Documents Attached to These Minutes:**

- Update of the Return to School presentation
- Budget Sub Report
- Policy Sub Report
- Policy I??
- Transportation Building Scheme
- Abigail Adams Renovation plan

Respectfully Submitted,



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John Sullivan  
Secretary