



Weymouth

PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Weymouth School Committee

ZOOM Meeting

February 25, 2021

MEETING MINUTES

(approved 3/11/21)

Members In Attendance: Lisa Belmarsh, Chair; Tracey Nardone, Vice Chair; John Sullivan, Secretary; Kathy Curran; Rebecca Sherlock-Shangraw; Carrie Palazzo; Mayor Hedlund (tardy 9:11pm)

Also Present: Kathleen Smith, Superintendent; Brian Smith, Assistant Superintendent; Robert Wargo, Assistant Superintendent, HR Director Foley, Attorney Brunt

The Meeting Came to Order At 7:01pm.

Chair Belmarsh led in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Consent Agenda:

The Consent agenda included:

- Warrant 34-2021 in the amount of \$948,996.04. Dated February 22, 2021.
- Regular Minutes: 2/4/21, 2/18/21
- Budget Sub-Committee Minutes: 2/10/21

Mrs. Curran noted that the 2/4/21 minutes be changed to the correct spelling of Aherne (not O'Hearn) and that for minutes of 2/18/21 page 4, 2nd paragraph, 'in open session' be added to Mrs. Currans comment on interview questions, also page 5, correct deadline is 2/19.

Motion by Mrs. Nardone to accept the consent agenda. Seconded by Dr. Sullivan. Roll Call vote. Motion passed unanimously.

Student Advisory

Chair Belmarsh advised that student advisory will be at the next meeting and that other students would be speaking later on for public comment as well as presenting later on in the meeting.

Public Comment

The Chair reminded that public comment be in accordance with Policy BED, items on the agenda and kept to 3 minutes; if members wish to speak-name and address should be added in the chat.

-Carmel McBride, 18 Mary Rose Rd

As a mother of 4th grade triplet, boys at Academy Ave shared her support for expanding return to school days for all grades at all schools stating that all residents pay the same taxes. She raised the point that it is unfair she has to pay babysitting and childcare for the remote days while other families are back in school 4 days per week. She suggested opening more facilities to accommodate the students.

-Bodie Kolwaite, 50 Hollis St.

As a student at WHS spoke on behalf of student petitions and counter petitions; keep the thin blue line symbolism at WHS. Mr. Goldthwaite cited the handbook where students are not to wear images of language that create a hostile and intimidating environment. In speaking with other students of color, he requested that thin blue line flags be removed from classrooms, sporting events, masks, google classroom profile pictures and the school as it does create a hostile threatening school environment. He read the names of people who passed in 2020 in officer involved shootings. Mr. Goldthwaite further stated that the flag was used by protesters during the insurrection and thanked the committee for the opportunity to speak.

-Emily Jackson DaRosa, 20 Ashmont St.

Spoke in support of the original petition to remove the thin blue line flags and memorabilia from school grounds as they create a school environment where students of color feel unsafe and targeted. She further stated that the flag has been co opted for nefarious purposes and suggested that there be another way to memorialize Officer Chesna.

-Gianna DaRosa, 20 Ashmont St.

As a biracial student expressed her discomfort and feelings of being unsafe at seeing the thin blue line flag. She also echoed Mr. Goldthwaite that the flag was used and displayed during the January 6, 2020 insurrection. Ms. DaRosa stated that the flag is flown in counter protest to black lives matter and that there are better ways to memorialize Officer Chesna. She thanked the committee for the opportunity to speak.

-Alicia Lyons, 90 Taft Rd.

As a mom of a Kindergartner and 4th grader at Academy Ave. expressed her support for expanding return to school days district wide so that it is equitable for all students. She reiterated that all residents pay the same taxes.

Report of the Superintendent:

The Superintendent reported on the following

Overview from School Committee Retreat

The retreat was over the weekend (abiding social distance guidelines). Dorothy Presser from MASC (Massachusetts Association of School Committees) spoke on governing and managing schools. Creating protocols and norms as well as hopes, agreements and obstacles were discussed. Agreed upon goals included:

- Return to School planning
- Addressing Unfinished Learning
- FY22 Budget
- Collaborative communications,
 - both internal and external
 - meeting with the community and different stakeholders to ensure parents choose WPS for their students
 - Sharing accomplishments with the community
- Checklist for the new Superintendent

The Chair shared that the retreat was helpful to go over return to school plans as well as they budget. She reminded that the public hearing for the budget is March 11, 2021 and encouraged community members to attend.

Student Petitions at Weymouth High School

Superintendent Smith recognized that these conversations are difficult however there is an obligation to confront these issues while creating and maintaining a safe environment for students, families and staff.

She gave a history of the thin blue flag that it was displayed in honor and support to those who kept the community safe and the sacrifices that they made. Further stating that symbol has been deeply politicized. Around town there are blue ribbons and blue porch lights to honor Officer Chesna who was killed while on duty to his community. There have been many meetings of collaborative, and positive conversations with Police Chief Fuller, football staff, and WHS administration and staff to determine actions steps. Superintendent Smith urged patience and open mindedness during the presentation.

Superintendent Smith spoke of first amendment rights, right to free speech, that sometimes may be uncomfortable to hear however there be an acceptance that there is a right to speak, and cited the 'tinker Case' of 1965, wearing of black armbands in Iowa.

The flag with Sgt. Chesna's badge number being truly a hero's tribute was spoken about as well as meeting with Mr. and Mrs. Chesna and football coach, TJ Burn. Sgt. Chesna was a former football player and graduate of WHS and Northeastern University.

The Superintendent advised that situations of discomfort and safety will be addressed on an individual basis as to not disrupt the educational setting. The district is recognizing and

addressing the issue of social justice. Professional development beginning with a presentation in September by Jamal Adams is already underway. Opportunities to join the Human Rights Coalition Group is available to students.

Superintendent Smith conveyed her pride in the student leadership collaboratively working with administrators and staff, and law enforcement on action steps going forward sharing that students are the next generation of leaders. Principal Monahan coined 'Weymouth shows the Way.'

Principals Strass expressed that the intentions were pure in having the flag at football games and that the flag has since been co opted and assured that work is being done and had started prior to covid regarding social justice, such as a black student union. There will be a new social justice class, 'Voices' emphasizing humanity and empathy and understanding activism, that will be offered for the 2021-22 school year.

The relationship with SRO Hammacher and the WPD has always been collaborative and positive. The goal is to create and maintain safe space for students. He expressed his thanks to Mr. Galusha, Ms. LoPorto and Ms. Bonner and his pride in the phenomenal students expressing their voice.

Principal Monahan advised that the goal is to strive to create a safe place for students for learning and dialogue. Social justice is difficult dialogue however with mutual respect and tolerance informed dialogue can be exchanged. 'Weymouth shows the way.' She advised that the cultural responsive student citizens are part of the human rights coalition.

Student Brian Cox advised that the mission of HRC is a division of the WHS Student Government that aims to make all Weymouth students feel safe, equal and heard with the objective of inclusivity and equity.

Student Raya Sibungha summarized how the HRC was formed. 7 hours of communications and meetings of over 40 students of class officers and members of student voice met and had honest conversations. It was decided that to amplify the student voice the HRC was needed.

Student Chloe Burke summarized the group representatives from black student union, the 5 class councils, captains council, gay straight alliance, multicultural, rotary interact, student advisory and voice, and volunteers in practice will be part of the HRC. Members are welcome anytime.

Student Kyla Wheeler quoted Amanda Gorman's inauguration poem, The Hill We Climb, '...witness a nation that isn't broken but unfinished.' She shared that 9 positions are unanimously felt by the HRC surrounding the petitions.

Student Josephine Burke and Pierrinsky Pierre-Louis summarized the groups convictions; equality of all regardless of race, gender, or sexual orientation, acknowledgement of systemic

racism, rejection of hateful speech, honoring service and dignity of first responders while advocating for the end of systemic racism, and affirm to care about the dignity all human lives. Discussions are underway about how to best honor Sgt. Chesna that might not include the recently politicized Thin Blue Line Flag.

Student Christelle Joseph summarized action items:

- Create and promote scholarships
 - student of color
 - advocacy for social justice
 - law enforcement advocating for social just
- Art installation-racial diversity
- Promote education on systemic racism
- Explore ways to honor first responders

Principal Strauss advised that conversations with Chief Fuller on pathways to social justice and activism, collaboration with other districts are commencing. He reiterated the Voices class will be offered Fall of 2021 and ongoing talks of possible ROTC at WHS as well. He advised that T-shirts with 'Weymouth shows the way' will be available. He reiterated thanks for WISE (Weymouth for Inclusion, Solidarity, Equity) and his excitement for the honest conversations continuing with all stakeholders.

Chair Belmarsh applauded the students for speaking and shared that their voices are essential for a more just society. She advised that the racial equity has been part of the return to school plans and acknowledge the need to keep students safe.

Dr. Sherlock-Shangraw inquired how interested students can join and Ms. LoPorta advised that all members are welcome and can fill out a google form with their name and reason for wanting to join.

Dr. Sullivan expressed his, appreciation for the student leadership and outstanding facilitation resulting the offered solutions. Dr. Sullivan remembered the evening Sgt. Chesna passed and acknowledged that America has problems; the wonderful symbol originally adopted to honor a hero has been co opted.

Superintendent Smith reiterated compassionate, knowledgeable and patient dialogue and listening is needed. She also expressed her thanks to the courageous students.

Expanding Access for Return to School as all grade levels

Superintendent Smith advised that principals have forwarded to parents/guardians surveys regarding expanding return to school days. She reiterated the work done and being done is with keeping staff and students safety at the forefront.

Task forces will be created at each school. Members will consist of staff members; nurses, custodians, school adjustment counselors, and building and central office administrators. Issues of spacing, staff, transportation, food service, etc., will be discussed. Superintendent Smith advised that expanding return to school plans will not be equal across the district for a variety of reasons. The disbursement of students from Chapman is of consideration as well.

Assistant Superintendent Smith gave an overview of the update advising that the return to school plan began with working groups in the summer and the approach for the multiple plans presented in August were measured, slow and steady.

A big difference in discussing expanding the return to school plan is transportation. Some restrictions (capacity limitations on a vehicle) have been lifted. With warmer weather conditions coming, windows on vehicles and classrooms will be open. Outdoor spaces can be used when appropriate as well.

Elaine Lane advised that working in conjunction with town hall and the department of health, nurses participated in a vaccine clinic where 175 vaccines were administered. She advised that numbers are on the decline and that following masking, social distancing and hand hygiene should still be practiced.

Thanks were expressed for Assistant Superintendent Wargo and the Curriculum team for the training and support in teaching hybrid. Thanks also was expressed for HR, who is handling staff leaves and accommodations with a mindful approach with individual staff members.

The next hybrid phasing date can begin as early as 3/1/21 in returning students as safely as possible as space allows.

Human Resources Director Foley advised that all is being done to recruit staff and that DESE has extended license expiration dates. Leaves and accommodations are being handled one on one with staff members.

Building based task force teams will meet on a regular basis outside of the school day through the end of the year. The team will troubleshoot issues and provide recommendations. Teams will use a template to help in making recommendations.

Assistant Superintendent Wargo summarized the steps to address 'Unfinished Learning': prioritizing, content knowledge and skills, assess diagnosis of unfinished learning, adapt scope and sequence, train and support staff, especially during Monday afternoon PLC's, and through regular monitoring. He expressed his thanks to Teri Fleming, Terry Marculitis, Dennis Jones, Lara Saracino, and the curriculum, math and literacy coaching team.

Superintendent Smith reiterated her confidence in the executive team and expressed her thanks to the nursing team. She advised that she will advocate where she can for space and personnel

regarding vaccine site. Each school will be looked at individually, class enrollment and space will be considered.

Chair Belmarsh shared her appreciation for the metrics team and its collaboration of school, town and DPH officials. She agrees with the changing factors to expand access to all grades.

Dr. Sherlock-Shangraw inquired if this presentation was still part of the Superintendent Update of if the return to school plan was taken out of order. She also expressed her hope that information would be transparent and current as decisions are being made so that parents will be informed by the school/district and not facebook.

Mrs. Curran requested more information regarding Unfinished learning at the March 11 meeting. She supports outside tenting and getting students back to school safely.

Ms. Palazzo inquired whether neighboring districts are doing a building by building approach

Motion by Dr. Sullivan to take Return to School Plan (b. Old business) out of order. Seconded by Dr. Sherlock-Shangraw. Roll call vote. Passed unanimously.

It was confirmed that task forces will be making recommendations and the Principal will be presenting them to the Superintendent.

It was reiterated that communication be transparent, specific and expedient so that all families will be informed not just specific school families. Having info be available on the homepage banner was suggested. The need for redistricting was mentioned. All spaces are being considered and creative measures are being taken. The North Library is also being used as additional space.

Motion by Mrs. Nardone to approve the Return to School Plan. Seconded by Mrs. Curran. Roll call vote. Passed unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

a. Report of the Budget Subcommittee: 2/10/21 (action requested)

Dr. Sullivan read his report of the February 10, 2021 meeting into the record. Meeting was recorded and available on Weymouth.tv. Topics included a meeting date change to March 1, 2021 to accommodate the permanent screening subcommittee meeting dates; FY22 Proposed budgets for Special Education, Curriculum, Professional Development, and Athletics (a proposed increase of 5K); FY22 Needs and Compliance List; and the FY22 Draft Operating Budget. The proposed FY22 Draft budget is \$78,615,625 which 80% accounts for personnel costs.

Motion by Mrs. Curran to accept the budget subcommittee report. Seconded by Dr. Sherlock-Shangraw. Roll call vote. Motion passed.

It was reiterated that the public hearing for the budget will be March 11, 2021.

b. Report out of Executive Minutes 1/30/19, 2/28/19, 3/14/19, 4/25/19, 5/9/19, 6/20/19, 7/25/19, 12/11/19, 12/12/19, 1/16/20, 3/31/20, 6/18/20, 7/23/20, 8/20/20, 8/25/20, 12/10/20

Executive minutes are reviewed on a regular basis and are retained or released depending on content. Dr. Sullivan advised that under MGL 30A Section 21, there are controlled reasons for retainment; protection of negotiation position, deployment of security, right to privacy protection. The following minutes have been examined to see if the reason for secrecy is moot and no longer regarded:

1/30/19-partial retainment of minutes
2/28/19-partial retainment of minutes
3/14/19-full retainment of minutes
4/25/19, 5/9/19-release of minutes
6/20/19-partial retainment of minutes
12/11/19-release of minutes
12/12/19-full retainment of minutes
1/16/20-waiting for confirmation
3/31/20, 6/18/20, 7/23/21-release of minutes
8/20/20-partial release of minutes
8/25/20-release of minutes

The Chair thanked Dr. Sullivan, Eileen Pitts and Amy Mohr for their efforts and assistance with this task.

OLD BUSINESS

a. Policies for Third Reading

i. EBC-S: Policy on Covid Related issues

Public feedback was not received regarding this policy.

Mrs. Curran advised that this policy allowed the Superintendent to make decisions regarding return to school plans and stated her hope that the policy was approved earlier and is now moot.

Dr. Sherlock-Shangraw expressed her disagreement with Mrs. Curran's statement. She suggested a vote be taken with a language change from 'Until the Governor ends the State of Emergency' to 'Revisit date of August 2021.'

The Chair and Vice Chair agreed with Dr. Sherlock-Shangraw with the addition of a new Superintendent it would be prudent to review 8/31/21.

Motion by Mrs. Nardon to accept policy EBC-S, Covid Related issues with a review date of 8/31/21 unless reauthorized by the committee. Seconded by Dr. Sullivan. Roll call vote. Passed unanimously,

ii. IHBHE-Remote Learning

Public feedback was not received regarding this policy.

Motion by Mrs. Nardone to accept policy IHBHE, Remote Learning. Seconded by Dr. Sullivan. Roll call vote. Passed unanimously.

iii: IHBHE-E Remote Learning Addendum

Public feedback was not received regarding this policy.

Motion by Mrs. Nardone to accept policy IHBHE-E, Remote Learning addendum. Seconded by Dr. Sullivan. Roll call vote. Passed unanimously.

b. Chapman School Building Update, Adams Renovation and Transportation Building Update (Town Measure 20 072 - Amend Measure 19 017)

Assistant Superintendent Smith advised that Superintendent Curtis-Whipple, John Barker, Myra Jones and himself had a walk through and that it is impressive to see the work.

Transportation building Requests for Proposal are scheduled for March and currently storm water analysis is being conducted.

Updates can be found at: <http://anewchapman.org/>

c. Superintendent Search Update

Ms. Palazzo shared on behalf of Delrose Newman and herself that there have been 2 meetings and that guidelines are being met. She expressed her thanks for the great communication of the screening committee. There are currently 40 districts looking for a Superintendent. Interviews will begin next week. She will share more information at the March 11 meeting.

Dr. Sullivan expressed his thanks to Ms. Palazzo for her professionalism, sensitivity and respect in leading the meetings.

d. Review of status of Joint Committee on Community Host Agreement between Weymouth and Algonquin Gas Transmission regarding North Weymouth Compressor Station

Ms. Fleming met with Mr. Mulveyhill, Police and Fire Department, and town officials in updating safety plans. Teri Fleming advised that tabletop exercises are scheduled for the following Tuesday at Johnson and Pingree.

The Federal Regulatory Energy Commission issued February 18 a notice that they would further examine the application to operate the compressor station from the perspective of public safety.

The committee requested an update on safety plans at the next meeting.

This Item will be kept on the agenda.

The committee reiterated its thanks for the empowering and positive student presentation.

Announcements:

Budget Subcommittee-March 1, 2021-6:00pm,
Weymouth Market-March 3, 2021-3:30pm-WHS Gold Cafeteria in a drive thru manner
Town Wide Parent Council-March 9, 2021, 7:00pm-ZOOM
Public Hearing RE: School Choice-March 11, 2021, 7:00pm-ZOOM
Public Hearing RE: FY22 School Budget-March 11, 2021, 7:00pm-ZOOM

Next School Committee Meeting:

Regular Meeting: Thursday, March 11, 2021 - 7:00pm

The Meeting adjourned at 9:51pm on the motion of Mrs. Nardone, seconded by Dr. Sullivan. Roll call vote - passed unanimously.

Documents Attached to These Minutes:

- Return to School Plan
- Report of the Budget Subcommittee

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John P. Sullivan", is written over a light gray dotted rectangular background.

John Sullivan
Secretary