

MINUTES – WAYLAND SCHOOL COMMITTEE Public Forum/Regular Session – January 7, 2013

A Public Forum/Regular Session of the Wayland School Committee was held on Monday, January 7, 2013, at 7:00 P.M. in the Large Hearing Room of the Wayland Town Building.

Present were:

Barb Fletcher, Chair
Beth Butler, Vice Chair
Malcolm Astley
Ellen Grieco (arrived at 7:16 p.m.)
Shawn Kinney

Also:

Paul Stein
Superintendent of Schools

Brad J. Crozier
Assistant Superintendent

Marlene M. Dodyk
Director of Student Services

Geoffrey S. MacDonald
Business Administrator

Also:

Brian Jones, Loker Principal & WSCP Director
Mabel Reid Wallace, METCO Director

Chair Barb Fletcher convened the Public Forum/Regular Session at 7:08 P.M.

1. **Public Forum:**

Paul Stein presented an overview of the three budgets (without reviewing the cuts that are built into them) that he presented on December 17, 2012. They are the Superintendent's Recommended Budget, the FinCom Allocation Budget, and the 10% Reduction Budget, which are all based from the Maintenance of Effort Budget. He invited the public to access his Power Point Presentation, the Budget Book, the FY10-FY12 actuals, and the Munis Budgets on the Wayland Public Schools website.

Barb Fletcher reviewed the School Committee Budget Schedule and the discussion topics for the next few weeks.

Public Comments re: the Budget:

- Jeff Dieffenbach commented that it was important to talk about the Maintenance of Effort Budget, as well as a budget that might expand our program. He stated that this year, in a non-override year, the town's finances are very good, even when residents are facing different financial challenges. He commented that there has been a great deal of support for the school budget, and there is not a lot of movement to support the proposed cuts in the budget. Jeff recommended ways to expand the program, and also asked the School Committee to advocate for more.
- Donna Bouchard asked the School Committee to consider looking into areas that do not directly impact the students. She recommended that the Committee look into the consolidation of the town's facilities and finances to find some efficiencies in the budget. She commented that teachers should not be cut, as well as the WHS Business Program.
- Tom Sciacca commented that there is very little actual data correlating class sizes with educational outcomes. In one study, he said the earliest grades are most important and asked why two elementary teachers' positions were proposed to be cut. Paul Stein responded to Mr. Sciacca.
- Louis Jurist thanked Paul Stein and the administrators for the clear, concise presentation of the budget and the budget booklet. He stated that the School Committee has done a good job containing expenses and maintaining excellence over the past 6 or 7 years since the last override. He also commented on the cost per student in Wayland compared to peer districts, and that the quality and value of the schools must be maintained, as most town residents would agree. Louis asked the Committee to add items back into the

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budget and reconsider cutting teaching positions and other personnel items. Louis also commented on the athletic program in terms of raising athletic fees rather than cutting some sports programs.

- Annette Lewis commented on the cost per student in terms of not paying for field maintenance, nurses, and benefits. Barb Fletcher responded. Annette also commented that it is important to keep the education system strong, important to have classroom teachers for the students, but it is also important not to overtax the elderly residents. She commended Dr. Stein for his first two budget proposals, but asked the School Committee not to consider the Maintenance of Effort budget.

2. **Comments and Written Statements from the Public:**

Tom Sciacca commented on union negotiations, specifically the COLA and referenced an article that reported the average national median income dropped 4.1% in 2009 and 1.5% last year. He pointed out that, depending on union negotiations, the union could be asking for more than the workforce in general.

3. **Receive Results of Student Activity Accounts Audit:**

Geoff MacDonald reviewed with the School Committee the audit done for the FY11 and FY12 student activity accounts conducted by Melanson & Heath. They were done based upon the agreed upon procedures as outlined in their report. There were three major components: 1) reconciliation of cash balances in checkbook and bank statements, 2) review of compliance with the School Committee's adopted procedures, and 3) review of supporting documentation for a randomly selected sample of payments.

Geoff noted that the Principals' Discretionary Accounts were closed in FY11, and the Student Activity Accounts, which are legally authorized, continue to operate under the approved School Committee guidelines that were in place for ten years until they could be revised and implemented this past summer for FY13.

Geoff gave a brief overview of the report, in which areas covered included Maintain Complete Accounting Systems, Account Reconciliations, Receipts Documentation, Support for Disbursements, Activities with Deficit Spending and Valid Student Activity Accounts.

Geoff also noted that Melanson & Heath has not provided the specific degree of transaction detail that they tested, but would if requested. Thus, Geoff has requested this information. Geoff also recommended to the School Committee that they consider having the Student Activity Accounts included in the forensic audit.

Geoff answered questions from the School Committee. They also discussed additional workloads for staff as a result of the new procedures in place.

4. **Operating Budget Work Session:**

The School Committee discussed the revolving accounts and offsets. Barb also referred to a list of questions pertaining to the revolving accounts that the School Committee members developed and answered by Geoff MacDonald.

Mabel Reid Wallace, METCO Director, and Brian Jones, WSCP Director and Loker School principal, were available to answer any questions from the School Committee.

The Committee discussed the instrumental music program in terms of lowering the offset, given the revenue that has been received this year and prior years.

As a follow up, the Committee also discussed voting the appropriate statute for seven revolving accounts. Geoff will seek legal counsel in terms of applying each account to the correct statute. Barb will also send to the School Committee the link for the Conflict of Interest form for their completion.

The School Committee also discussed fees, as there will be no changes in fees as noted in the Superintendent's Recommended Budget. Paul, however, noted that the School Committee previously approved changes in building use fees.

Shawn Kinney agreed with a previous public comment in terms of going up on athletic fees, rather than cutting coaches or a particular sport. Barb noted that she has asked Justice Smith for a spreadsheet in which costs are defined by sport for Thursday's meeting.

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Transportation fees were discussed and will be explored further. Paul commented that transportation has been the biggest unexpected cost increase in the Maintenance of Effort budget.

Malcolm Astley reminded Committee members of an upcoming Suburban Coalition where these issues will be discussed in light of reduced state aid.

Barb reviewed the schedule of topics for budget work sessions moving forward. A discussion ensued regarding the cuts having the least impact in the classroom that were recommended by the Superintendent from the Maintenance of Effort Budget. Ellen asked if these cuts could be prioritized and discussed within the budget schedule going forward. Paul suggested that the School Committee, while going through deliberations, produce a list of priorities that are being considered for reinstatement within one of the budgets, which would be followed by a discussion nearing the end of the process. The Committee discussed preparation for the next meeting on January 10.

Barb has drafted an article regarding the budget for the Town Crier, which she will bring to the next meeting for the Committee's input.

5. **Consent Agenda:**

- (a) Approval of Accounts Payables & Payroll Warrants
 - Wayland Public Schools Accounts Payable warrant, dated 1/7/2013, in the amount of \$416,872.59
 - Wayland Public Schools Payroll warrant, dated 12/27/2012, in the amount of \$1,174,966.38
- (b) Approval of Minutes
 - Regular Session of December 17, 2012, as amended
- (c) Acceptance of Gifts
 - Donations to the METCO Program (Appeal Letter)
 - 1 in the amount of \$3,800
 - 1 in the amount of \$1,000
 - 1 in the amount of \$500
 - 1 in the amount of \$450
 - 1 in the amount of \$400
 - 1 in the amount of \$300
 - 2 in the amount of \$250
 - A donation in the amount of \$2,000 from The Katie Lynch Foundation to the Just Like Me Program for the purpose of further educating K-12 Wayland students about people with disabilities.

Upon a motion duly made by Malcolm Astley, seconded by Beth Butler, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to approve the Consent Agenda, but not including the Regular Session minutes.

Upon a motion duly made by Malcolm Astley, seconded by Beth Butler, the School Committee voted (4-1) (Shawn Kinney abstained) to approve the Regular Session minutes of December 17, 2012, as amended.

6. **Superintendent's Report:**

Paul Stein commented that he is continuing to work on security issues in the schools, as John Moynihan is consulting with public safety officials and industry experts to discuss security cameras, locks, etc. John Moynihan will present his recommendations to the School Committee at a future meeting. Paul also stated that Administrative Council will be discussing other security issues at their meetings.

Paul acknowledged Geoff MacDonald's work, particularly with the transportation system, and acknowledged that several adjustments resulted in improvements in bus routes.

Paul commented on the high energy at the schools, which included holiday concerts before the holiday break and the current art project at Loker School.

Paul informed the School Committee that he will be asking for their approval at Thursday's meeting to use funds from the Gossels Fund for Academic Excellence for the prospect of online learning at the high school.

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7. **Follow-up and Future Agenda Items:**

(a) Update re: Audit/Review of School Accounts:

The School Committee received the draft RFP from Powers & Sullivan. They will discuss this RFP at a future meeting. The School Committee discussed what the next steps are and how to move forward in the process.

Shawn Kinney will contact Rebecca Chasen to ask her to review the report and advise the School Committee. Chris Riley also received the report and will also report back to the School Committee.

(b) Superintendent Evaluation Procedure:

Beth Butler asked that this topic be put on a future meeting agenda prior to the next meeting of the Superintendent Evaluation Subcommittee.

Paul commented that in consulting with other superintendents and his administrators, it has become clear that not every element or every indicator has to contain evidence. However, Paul stated that much discussion continues to take place on this subject.

Malcolm Astley commented that the Subcommittee has settled on 7 elements that relate well to Paul's goals.

(c) Year-End Commentary for Town Crier:

At the editor's request to all Boards and the Superintendent, Barb wrote a year-end commentary for the Town Crier. She handed out the article to the School Committee.

8. **Comments from the Public:**

Cecily Kiefer commented that if changes to fees are being considered in an effort to avoid cuts to programs, the impact on families based on the number of children be considered, too.

Louis Jurist commented on the sports program and the athletic fees and suggested ways to approach this issue. In his opinion, he stated that it is not equitable to place a value on one student's participation on a team vs. another team, as the measurement used is not accurate and cited those areas. Louis commented on what he called "tiered" fees. He asked the School Committee to increase the athletic fees before recommending cutting sports programs.

Tom Sciacca disagreed with the previous comments, as he feels that different sports have different teaching values. He commented on the elements that make up the difference between the Superintendent's Recommended Budget and the FinCom Budget and feels that there should be more emphasis on the fundamentals in the elementary schools. Tom referred to an article in which it states that American children are falling behind because elementary children have not been taught to write, resulting in the lack of critical thinking once they reach high school.

Malcolm Astley commented that if studies in terms of American children falling behind are available, he would be interested in reading them, although he disagrees with the reference.

9. **Executive Session:**

Upon a motion duly made by Shawn Kinney, seconded by Ellen Grieco, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to convene in Executive Session at 9:00 P.M. to discuss strategy with respect to Collective Bargaining for all school unions (WTA, WESA, Custodial and Food Service), as set forth in M.G.L. Chapter 30A, Section 21 (a) (3), as such a discussion in open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the School Committee and an Executive Session is necessary to protect the bargaining position of the School Committee. The Chair announced that the School Committee will reconvene in Open Session following Executive Session for adjournment purposes only. A roll call vote was taken as follows:

<u>Roll Call</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
Barb Fletcher, Chair	X	
Beth Butler, Vice Chair	X	
Malcolm Astley	X	
Ellen Grieco	X	
Shawn Kinney	X	

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10. **Adjournment:**

Upon a motion duly made by Ellen Grieco, seconded by Malcolm Astley, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to adjourn the Regular Session at 10:35 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Paul Stein, Clerk
Wayland School Committee

Observers:

See attached list.

Corresponding Documentation:

1. Regular Session Minutes of December 17, 2012
2. Payroll and Accounts Payable Warrants
3. Report from Melanson Heath & Company re: Student Activity Accounts
4. Handout re: Barb Fletcher's response to Town Crier Editor for an Article
5. Q & A re: School Fees