

WESTWOOD SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Westwood, Massachusetts

MEETING MINUTES
February 9, 2023

Attendance and Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:01pm by Chair Charles Donahue. Also present were: Tony Mullin, Maya Khuri Plotkin, Amanda Phillips; and Dorothy Parmelee. Superintendent Emily Parks, Assistant Superintendent Allison Borchers, and Director of Finance and Operations Lemma Jn-baptiste were present on behalf of the District.

Westwood Media Center was recognized for providing a live-stream of the meeting.

Harley Pease recorded the minutes.

Superintendent's Report

Q2 Financial Report

Director of Finance and Operations Lemma Jn-baptiste detailed the Q2 Financial Report.

- The Student Services Department budget has been under budget.
- Facilities is over budget. They can be shifted to capital.
- Curriculum and instruction are being over-spent right now
 - Not unexpected, have budgeted for it
- Biggest non-salary expense area is tuitions (1.2 million)
 - Have reserves to take care of this
- Slowing down spending and freezing budgets after March 10.
 - Earlier than usual, usually in April.

Exploration of Bus Fleet Electrification

Director of Finance and Operations Lemma Jn-baptiste announced the exploration of a potential regional bus fleet electrification plan.

Chair Donahue: what would the time frame would be for this to be a reality?

Ms. Jn-baptiste: there would not be a change for at least five years.

Chair Donahue: are other districts are doing this?

Ms. Jn-baptiste: we are one of twenty-one districts who have teamed up on this potential project.

Director of Student Services Search Update

Assistant Superintendent Allison Borchers provided an update on the Director of Student Services search. Allison noted that the committee is down to three candidates and that visits to the District are coming soon.

Superintendent Parks announced that a three-year agreement with the Instructional Assistants has been reached.

Superintendent Parks introduced WHS senior Isabella Allen. Isabella spoke to the committee advocating for a particular budget item: period product access in WHS bathrooms.

Public Comment

Catherine Starsiak of Tamarack Rd. spoke in support of support of Westwood teachers in the collective bargaining and mediation process.

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Sarah Waterman of Pheasant Hill St. spoke in support of support of Westwood teachers in the collective bargaining and mediation process.

School Committee Chair Update/Liaison Reports

Chair's update

Chair Donahue announced that Superintendent Parks provided an ethics disclosure detailing her relationship with her next announced disclosure.

Chair Donahue provided the committee an opportunity for consideration from Wellesley Public Schools regarding strategic planning.

School building project update

Maya Plotkin provided an update for the committee on the new building project. The project is on schedule and on budget. Completion is on track and still expected to be completed by August 2024.

Maya Plotkin announced that the committee will be crowdsourcing a suggestion for a name for the new Hanlon-Deerfield school building. The school committee will decide on the name at the March school committee meeting.

Policy review subcommittee

Chair Amanda Phillips announced that the policy review subcommittee has a meeting upcoming on February 17.

Superintendent search update

Tony Mullin announced that the search committee has been established. It is made up of fifteen members. Information is on the District's website. Applications will close on March 1. Hoping to have next superintendent selected by the end of March.

Discussion Items

FY'24 Budget Deliberation

Superintendent Parks announced that Chair Donahue has moved the public deliberation for the budget to March, one month later than usual.

Superintendent Parks introduced Director of Student Services Abigail Hanscom to provide detail on the impact of the realized 14% OSD increase.

Superintendent Parks noted that this year's budget climate is especially challenging. Superintendent Parks noted that the 4.5% ask from the Town is a higher increase than usual. Even with this increase (4.5%), there will be a cut to level services.

Equity Audit Findings Overview

Superintendent Parks introduced Director of Equity, Integration & Community Partnerships Lateefah Franck to discuss the equity audit overview. Director of Equity, Integration & Community Partnerships Lateefah Franck highlighted the need for equitable outcomes for all students as well as a focus on data when evaluating student outcomes.

Assistant Superintendent Allison Borchers outlined the process of how the equity audit came to be.

Superintendent Parks began to highlight the findings of the equity audit.

Director of Equity, Integration & Community Partnerships Lateefah Franck highlighted the priority recommendations of the equity audit.

Action Items

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MOTION made by Amanda Phillips to approve the January 19th, 2022 meeting minutes. Motion seconded by Maya Plotkin.

Roll-call vote:

Charles Donahue: Yes
Anthony Mullin: Yes
Amanda Phillips: Yes
Maya Plotkin: Yes
Dorothy Parmelee: Yes

Result: 5-0-0 (Approved)

MOTION made by Maya Plotkin to approve the Instructional Assistants agreement. Motion seconded by Dori Parmelee.

Roll-call vote:

Charles Donahue: Yes
Anthony Mullin: Yes
Amanda Phillips: Yes
Maya Plotkin: Yes
Dorothy Parmelee: Yes

Result: 5-0-0 (Approved)

MOTION made by Tony Mullin to approve Section G and H of the Policy Review Subcommittee Recommendations. Motion seconded by Maya Plotkin.

Roll-call vote:

Charles Donahue: Yes
Anthony Mullin: Yes
Amanda Phillips: Yes
Maya Plotkin: Yes
Dorothy Parmelee: Yes

Result: 5-0-0 (Approved)

MOTION made by Dori Parmelee to approve the FY'24 Extended Day Rates. Motion seconded by Tony Mullin.

Roll-call vote:

Charles Donahue: Yes
Anthony Mullin: Yes
Amanda Phillips: Yes
Maya Plotkin: Yes
Dorothy Parmelee: Yes

Result: 5-0-0 (Approved)

MOTION made by Maya Plotkin to designate the school superintendent as the authorized signatory for the District to enter into a 20-year Power Purchase Agreement contingent upon the agreement satisfactorily meeting the needs of the District. Motion seconded by Amanda Phillips.

Roll-call vote:

Charles Donahue: Yes
Anthony Mullin: Yes
Amanda Phillips: Yes
Maya Plotkin: Yes
Dorothy Parmelee: Yes

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Result: 5-0-0 (Approved)

New Business

Chair Donahue noted that the Town of Westwood announced the poet laureate for the town.

Adjournment

MOTION made by Dori Parmelee to adjourn the meeting. Motion seconded by Amanda Phillips.

Roll-call vote:

Charles Donahue: **Yes**

Anthony Mullin: **Yes**

Amanda Phillips: **Yes**

Maya Plotkin: **Yes**

Dorothy Parmelee: **Yes**

Result: 5-0-0 (Approved)

The meeting was adjourned at 9:27pm.