

WESTWOOD SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Westwood, Massachusetts

MEETING MINUTES
January 16, 2025

Attendance and Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:30pm by Amanda Phillips. Also present was Maya Plotkin, Dori Parmelee, JoAnna French, and Anthony Mullin. Superintendent Piwowar, Assistant Superintendent Ahern and Director of Finance and Operations Lemma Jn-baptiste were present on behalf of the district.

Harley Pease recorded the minutes.

Superintendent's Report

Preschool Tuition Discussion

Superintendent Piwowar discussed the Integrated Preschool Structure and Tuition. Discussion involved an increase in tuition, as well as feedback from the Committee about program structure, given the physical space constraints. Discussion will continue at the February meeting of the Committee.

Public Participation

Stacey Theofilou, 10 Longmeadow Dr., spoke in support of the mandarin program at the high school. Ms. Theofilou asked for there not to be any cuts to the program.

Sarah Herlihy, 67 Morgan Farm Rd., spoke in support of the mandarin program at the high school. Ms. Herlihy asked for there not to be any cuts to the program.

April Heppelmann, 9 Appleseed Ln., spoke in support of the mandarin program at the high school. Ms. Heppelmann asked for there not to be any cuts to the program.

Ali Ricketson, 172 Stanford Dr., recommended to the Committee to engage in dialogue with the teachers, staff, and families at the Integrated Preschool in order to maintain the rich culture at the Integrated Preschool.

Bill Theofilou, 10 Longmeadow Dr., spoke in support of the mandarin program at the high school. Ms. Theofilou asked for there not to be any cuts to the program.

Kelly Donegan, 101 Washington St., spoke about how implementing the new Preschool structure in September seems rushed, and to hopefully implement changes later down the road.

Liaison Reports

JoAnna French spoke about how great the last school committee round table was. Topics included cell phone usage, TMS facilities issues, as well as class leveling at WHS.

Tony Mullin echoed how great of an opportunity it is for residents to engage with the Committee.

Chair Phillips announced the next one will be in the evening, and will be in the Spring.

Kevin Bai, Student Rep. to the Committee, said the Legislative Council said there seemed to be some disconnect between the students and WHS administration in the WHS student cell phone task force.

Discussion Items

FY26 Budget Update

Superintendent Piwowar provided an update to the Committee on the FY26 budget. Supt. Piwowar noted some important budget drivers, including special education tuition costs, inflationary impacts, salary obligations, class size goals, and educational goals. The recommended budget for FY26 is \$58,761,682. This is slightly under a \$2 million dollar increase from last year. Expenditures and revenues were reviewed with the Committee. Differences between the capital budget and the operating budget were discussed. Future priorities included increased data usage, an additional Prek classroom, additional student mental health support, enrollment driven increase in classroom teachers, and utility costs.

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TMS Facilities Challenges

Superintendent Piwowar provided the Committee with an update on TMS facility issues. Issues included a power outage and issues with Bunsen burner gas output in conjunction with power outages.

Action Items

MOTION made by Maya Plotkin to approve the December 17 meeting minutes. Motion seconded by Dori Parmelee.

Roll-call vote:

Amanda Phillips: Yes
Maya Plotkin: Yes
Dorothy Parmelee: Yes
JoAnna French: Yes
Anthony Mullin: Yes

Result: 5-0-0 (Approved)

MOTION made by Maya Plotkin to waive the third reading of policy IKFA: Graduation Requirements and accept the proposed changes to the policy. Motion seconded by Dori Parmelee.

Roll-call vote:

Amanda Phillips: Yes
Maya Plotkin: Yes
Dorothy Parmelee: Yes
JoAnna French: Yes
Anthony Mullin: Yes

Result: 5-0-0 (Approved)

MOTION made by Maya Plotkin to approve the proposed 3% tuition increase at the Integrated Preschool for 2025-2026. Motion seconded by Dori Parmelee.

Roll-call vote:

Amanda Phillips: Yes
Maya Plotkin: Yes
Dorothy Parmelee: Yes
JoAnna French: Yes
Anthony Mullin: Yes

Result: 5-0-0 (Approved)

MOTION made by Tony Mullin to approve the Michael J. Frucci Athletic Scholarship. Motion seconded by Maya Plotkin.

Roll-call vote:

Amanda Phillips: Yes
Maya Plotkin: Yes
Dorothy Parmelee: Yes
JoAnna French: Yes
Anthony Mullin: Yes

Result: 5-0-0 (Approved)

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MOTION made by Tony Mullin to approve the proposed international travel in 2026. Motion seconded by Maya Plotkin.

Roll-call vote:

Amanda Phillips: Yes
Maya Plotkin: Yes
Dorothy Parmelee: Yes
JoAnna French: Yes
Anthony Mullin: Yes

Result: 5-0-0 (Approved)

MOTION made by Tony Mullin to approve the revisions to the TEC Collaborative Agreement. Motion seconded by Dori Parmelee.

Roll-call vote:

Amanda Phillips: Yes
Maya Plotkin: Yes
Dorothy Parmelee: Yes
JoAnna French: Yes
Anthony Mullin: Yes

Result: 5-0-0 (Approved)

New Business

There was no new business.

Adjournment

MOTION made by Maya Plotkin to adjourn the meeting. Motion seconded by Dori Parmelee.

Roll-call vote:

Amanda Phillips: Yes
Maya Plotkin: Yes
Dorothy Parmelee: Yes
JoAnna French: Yes
Anthony Mullin: Yes

Result: 5-0-0 (Approved)

The meeting adjourned at 8:32pm.