

WESTWOOD SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Westwood, Massachusetts

MEETING MINUTES

April 7, 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

Seen Around WPS

Superintendent Piwowar shared some recent events that happened around the WPS, including highlights from Sheehan, Thurston Middle School, and Westwood High School.

Cybersecurity Update

Public Participation

Stacey Theofilou, of 10 Longmeadow Dr., presented concerns with yellow school bus transportation and noted displeasure with the administration's handling of her concerns.

Liaison Reports

Chair Phillips announced that the next School Committee roundtable on April 2 went well.

Student Representative Kevin Bai updated the Committee on a new survey going out to students from student government about food service options.

Discussion Items

Facilities Study

Superintendent Piwowar invited Michele Rogers, from Dore & Whittier, to present findings from the Facilities Study. Before Ms. Rogers started the presentation of the facilities study, Supt. Piwowar identified two goals of the study. First, to identify capital improvement needs for schools across the district, and create a prioritized list of work with estimated costs. Second, to develop options for a long-range plan that addresses the district wide educational and facilities needs for our schools, with a focus on TMS and Sheehan.

Supt. Piwowar shared that work began in spring 2024, and that the key elements of the plan included: assessment of existing conditions, educational visioning, analysis of enrollment and capacity, potential solutions, and estimated costs.

Ms. Rogers detailed how to understand the facilities study, in terms of how to understand the graphics and methodology to their findings. The two buildings in the most need are TMS and Sheehan. Both buildings have accessibility and mechanical/electrical/plumbing issues. TMS has more functional issues than Sheehan. To determine functional use, D&W used MSBA guidelines to determine the functional space and usage.

Ms. Rogers detailed 6 potential solutions. Option 1: Status quo, with repairs/maintenance. Option 2: Repairs/maintenance, modulars at Downey, MJ, Sheehan, Thurston. Option 3: Build new Thurston (6-8), modulars at Downey, Martha Jones, Sheehan. Option 4: Build new Sheehan/Martha Jones (K-5), modulars at Thurston, Downey. Option 5: Build new Thurston (6-8), redistrict elementary schools. Option 6: Build new Thurston (5-8), close Sheehan, redistrict other elementary schools.

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Ms. Rogers provided costs for the 6 options as well. Option 1: 191.5M. Option 2: 200.7M. Option 3: 298.5M. Option 4: 307.8M. Option 5: 293.2M. Option 6: 293.3M.

Ms. Rogers provided a timeline for a potential new school. The deadline for SOI submission is April of 2026. As such, identifying the school of priority should be by the end of December 2025. If accepted in the MSBA pipeline in December 2026, decisions are made by the end of feasibility in 2028-2029.

Professional Development Calendar - 2025/2026

Assistant Superintendent Caitlin Ahern provided the Committee with draft dates for professional development for next school year.

Action Items

MOTION made by Dori Parmelee to approve the March 20 meeting minutes. 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 Maya Plotkin to approve the Ameresco \$6,000 donation. 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 accept a grant in the amount of \$31,950 from MassCyberCenter. 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 Maya Plotkin to approve travel and service based learning trips. Motion seconded by Tony Mullin.

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.

Executive Session and Adjournment

MOTION made by Maya Plotkin to to consider the purchase, exchange, lease or value of real property if the chair declares that an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the negotiating position of the Committee. 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 into executive session at 8:12pm.