

**Westwood School Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
January 11, 2018**

**Present:**

Carol Lewis, Chairperson  
Brian Kelly, Vice Chairperson  
Charlie Donahue, Clerk  
Tony Mullin, Committee Member  
Josepha Jowdy, Committee Member  
Danielle Sutrich, WHS Student Representative

Emily Parks, Superintendent  
Allison Borchers, Assistant Superintendent  
Heath Petracca, Director of Business and Finance  
Abby Hanscom, Director of Student Services

**Meeting called to order 7:05pm  
Pledge of Allegiance**

*Meeting was recorded by Westwood Media Center*

**Superintendent's Report (7:05-7:16)**

Student Recognition: Noah Stone, All-National Honor Ensemble

Ms. Parks recognized junior Noah Stone as being a member of the All-National Honor Ensemble. In order to participate, Noah auditioned for the Eastern Massachusetts conference on Bass Clarinet. He scored high enough to successfully make the All-State Massachusetts Ensemble. This ensemble performed at Symphony Hall. Noah then auditioned for All-National Honor Ensemble and was selected as first chair in Bass Clarinet. Noah is only the third student ever to participate in All-National Honor Ensemble from Westwood High School and has been selected to participate with this group for two years in a row. Noah received a certificate of recognition for this achievement.

Q2 Financial Report

Mr. Petracca reported that the Q2 finances are right on track. There were no questions from the Committee.

Middle School Principal Search Update

Ms. Parks reported that the Middle School Principal position was posted in December. There have been a couple of sitting principals who have reached out about the position. A consultant has been hired to reach out to potential candidates. A request for people to join the search committee has been sent to Middle School faculty/staff, and later this week a request will be sent to

Middle School parents, including those who have current 5th grade students. The posting closes on January 22. Interviews will be taking place in February leading up to the break with the hope of appointing a new principal by March 1. Once the principal is in place, then the search for an assistant principal will start.

#### Building Project Community Engagement - January action steps

The School Committee has toured all of the buildings. The building project webpage has been created. Ms. Parks was recently interviewed by Westwood Media Center to promote this project. The District is currently working with a communications consultant and have a draft of the initial communication that will be mailed next week, talking about the needs and ways to engage the public. The District will be reaching out to the local press and there will be an open house in the three schools: Hanlon, Sheehan and Deerfield. There will be a two-hour block to tour the building and see what the needs are. Mr. Donahue asked if the media center could go through and create a video for those who can't attend the public tours. Ms. Parks liked that idea. Common talking points are being developed along with putting together a broad description explaining what the MSBA is.

Mr. Donahue put together some research with how we compete with surrounding communities regarding school buildings and how new they are. All the communities had their schools built in the 1950s. In the 1990s and 2000s, renovations were made or there was new construction. Westwood did renovations during that time at the Martha Jones and Downey schools. A lot of the other communities built new or had more renovations during the 1990s and 2000s.

#### **Public Participation (7:16-7:20)**

A resident noticed that the school zone speeding sign near the Sheehan School is on at the wrong time. It is on at 7:10am not on at 8:30am when kids are going to school. It is the same in the afternoon, being on at 2:10pm instead of 3:10pm. Mr. Petracca will look into this being corrected.

A resident and co-chair of SEPAC wanted to thank the School Committee for their continued support. The program next month will have therapist John Meddleman speak about mental health/dealing with crisis with your children; talking about suicide, self-harm, emotional consequences with social media, etc.

#### **Discussion Items (7:20-8:10)**

##### Presentation of Superintendent's Recommended FY'19 Operating Budget and Capital Budgets (7:20-8:10)

Ms. Parks reported on how the budget process works.

Overview: The budget is developed by cost center leaders. The district leadership team looks at all the requests. This year, Ms. Parks did "listening tours" around the district to hear from faculty and staff. She wanted input from the School Committee. She has also been working with the

Town. Through this process, the budget topped 6% increase. Choices needed to be made to come to tonight's proposed budget.

FY'19 has a 3.38% increase over FY'18, with the total request of \$44,688,335.

Some history: In FY'08, an override was needed to recover from the FY'07 layoffs, dropped programs, and very small increases after that. No override has been required since FY'08. FY'16 and FY'17 received good growth from the University Station project. Now the District can get level services and more with a responsible and sustainable number.

FY'19 budget highlights.

- 3.38% increase over FY'18
- There are no cuts to programs or services.
- Contractual salary increase of \$1,100,045.
- The addition of 8.75 Full-Time Employees has been requested district wide with 5.6 FTE in special education positions.
- This is also year 1 of a 2-year plan to eliminate the full-day kindergarten tuition fee.

Salaries are the largest budget driver, accounting for 86.5% of the total budget.

\$38,630,529 is salaries for the proposed budget.

There is a decrease in special education non salary by 1.46%

Utilities downwardly budgeted 14.08% as being more true to actual spending.

Mr. Kelly asked if gas was used in the schools. Mr. Petracca stated that, yes, gas is used in all the elementary buildings and dual gas/oil systems are in high school and middle school. Gas is primarily being used in these two buildings with oil being used once a year to make sure that the system is running accurately.

Shifting District Enrollment over the last 10 years

- There were 3044 students in 2009-2010, there are 3025 students 2018-2019.
- Elementary has been declining by 15% over the last 10 years. There are 220 fewer elementary students than there were 10 years ago. As a point of reference, that is the size of the Hanlon elementary school.
- The enrollment at the middle school had been going up and is beginning to decline and high school has been going up. The high school will peak in 2020-2021.

Reallocating staff across district due to shifting enrollment.

Reducing 2 FTE at Deerfield, will add 2 FTE positions at the high school, reduce 1 FTE at Martha Jones, add 1 FTE to Downey, reduce an aide at Hanlon and add the kindergarten assistant to the Downey. This involves a lot of movement, but has a net impact of zero on the budget.

There will be 1016 students at the high school next year and this number will continue to climb.

In 2017-2018, 20% of the classes at the high school have 25 or more students per class. Broken out by department: science: 33%, social studies: 21%, math: 25%, English: 17%, art: 5%, foreign language: 3%.

1 FTE science and 1 FTE yet-to-be-allocated position has been requested. After course selection in February, there will be a better sense as to what department to hire the additional allocated FTE. The position may be broken-up; for example: needing .4 social studies and .6 English.

Ms. Jowdy, in reference to requesting 1 FTE science, asked how that will decrease the numbers. It is not an exact number because it depends on if the class has a lab. Unallocated teacher: why not go into math instead of English? Is only allocating 2 FTE at the high school enough? Yes, the department chairs really looked at this and felt 2 FTE's is a good number.

Middle School is declining in enrollment. Thurston is well-staffed for current needs, have added programs, and continue to invest in curriculum material. No staff is needed. The District is looking at getting more materials for the science and technology program

#### Elementary

Enrollment is going down at Deerfield, up at Downey, same at Hanlon, down at Martha Jones, and down at Sheehan.

Add 1 ABA tutor district-wide. Add a part time science materials manager (10 hours/week).

#### Special Education

The budget will decrease because day tuition and transportation needs are decreasing. It is a difference of \$88,839.

#### Staffing requests

Westwood Applied Behavioral Analysis program (WABA)

Has proposed a split program into lower WABA (Pre-K-2) and upper WABA (Gr. 3-5)

This will accommodate increased numbers of students in the program.

This will provide appropriate caseloads and space.

This meets DESE regulations around age/grade spans.

Educate students in their community rather than out-of-district in an educationally sound and financially responsible model.

Add 1 FTE Intensive Special Education/BCBA teacher, 3 FTE ABA tutors, .4 FTE Augmentative Communication Speech and Language therapist, .2 FTE Occupational Therapist. The costs of these positions are partially offset by reduction in out-of-district tuition and special education transportation costs.

Unrelated to WABA:

Add .4 FTE instructional assistant (elementary) and .6 FTE Speech and Language Therapist (High School)

Non-salary:

Kindergarten tuition reduction

Currently costs \$1800, will be \$900 next year and then no cost the following year. The impact to the FY'19 budget: An \$85,000 reduction to the kindergarten tuition offset or a 0.2% increase in the operation budget.

Net change reduction of \$18,258 to non salary accounts reflecting additions, reductions and re-allocation to line items.

- Add online science technology and engineering resources for the middle school.
- Add the annual writers conference at Thurston. This was originally funded by The Foundation for Westwood Education and would like to continue this.
- Restore professional development funding. This was originally funded by a state grant which is no longer available. Want to add this to the operating budget.
- Increase special education contracted services. 1 Certified Nursing Assistant due to increase medical support needs for students with significant disabilities who are staying in district at the high school.
- A reduction in the circuit breaker offset. The state will provide reimbursement for students with high needs help, this is \$27,902.

Reduction and reallocations in several line items, i.e. advertising, textbooks, photocopier maintenance contracts, etc. based on actual spending history and/or changes in need.

Cost saving in electricity and fuel based on actual spending and reflecting initiatives such as installation of energy efficient boilers.

Adjustment to line items as transportation and maintenance which have historically been over-spent.

How Does Westwood Compare in cost per pupil?

DESE information is from FY'16. The cost per pupil in Westwood is \$16,500 and the state average is \$15,500 per pupil. Concord/Carlisle cost per pupil is over \$21,000.

What's missing? A few examples:

Funding science field trips at the high school.

A mobile science lab to serve all five elementary schools.

Additional staffing at the high school to mitigate class sizes.

Full elimination of kindergarten tuition next year.

An additional custodian at the high school.

An increase in the literacy and math specialist at the elementary schools.

A part time elementary orchestra teacher.

Mr. Mullin asked if anything that was really close to the margin to make the proposed budget? Tier 1 all agree, Tier 2 all agree, Tier 3 agree, anything below Tier 3 begin to have different opinions. Funding science field trips at the high school start to become expensive even with the help from the PTO. For example, Marine Biology goes to Woods Hole. The field trip this year was paid for completely by the families.

Mr. Donahue spoke on the MCAS presentation in November, Westwood increased in science while the other districts went down. He wanted to congratulate Ms. Parks on the accomplishment. In the report, students with disabilities do much poorly in elementary and middle school ,but get back on track with 10th grade. What is being done to help these students? Run specialized support for the students who need this additional help so they are prepared for all levels of testing. Regarding the mobile science lab, General Electric is sponsoring this in Boston. Could a grant writing committee be created at the high school? Could use this as a way to start some funding of programs on the wish list before they can be fully funded? Could we look at resources of residents who could volunteer to help with the positions?

Mr. Mullin has concerns about space at Downey with the growing student population. Need to look at that now to know what the options might be to add additional classrooms. That is being looked at. What do we do with the specials and where they are located in the building? This was not a part of the class size policy. Need to remember that changing those locations could be an option for additional classroom space.

#### Capital Budget Summary

Mr. Petracca reported level funded at \$867,000. This used to be \$406,000 in FY'15.

Technology: \$225,000, expansion of the 1-to-1 computer program going down to 3rd and 4th grade and continuing with all the current 1-to-1 grades.

\$129,500 furniture, fixtures, and equipment, which includes final phase of middle school furniture.

HVAC: \$96,000 includes phase 1 of air conditioning on the second floor of the middle school, upgrade HVAC system at Downey and High School, and replace a heating pump at the Sheehan.

Roofing: putting \$100,000 aside to use another year.

Repair and Maintenance: \$256,500. Includes 14 projects including carpeting and flooring upgrades district wide.

Copiers: \$60,000 replace about 4 copiers per year.

What was not included in the budget was the elevator at the middle school. The town will fund \$170,000 outside of this budget to upgrade the elevator at the middle school.

Mr. Mullin asked if there was enough water filtration systems throughout the district and if that was included in the budget? Yes, it is included in the budget.

Ms. Parks will send the Executive Summary to all parents and all documents will be on the website for public view.

The February 15th meeting will be the budget hearing meeting.

Feedback is welcome regarding the proposed budget and everyone is happy to answer any questions.

### **Action Items (8:10-8:20)**

#### **Approval of Minutes: December 14, 2017**

A motion to approve the December 14, 2017 minutes was made by Ms. Jowdy. Seconded by Mr. Donahue.

Official Vote: Unanimous approval

#### **Acceptance of donation from MEDITECH**

A motion to accept the donation of \$15,000 from MEDITECH to be used at the discretion of Westwood Public Schools for the advancement of technology and technology instruction was made by Mr. Donahue. Seconded by Mr Mullin.

Official Vote: Unanimous approval

Mr. Donahue asked if an article could be placed in the local newspaper to thank MEDITECH. This might encourage other businesses to support the school system.

Ms. Jowdy would like to thank Howard Messing, from MEDITECH, who is a Westwood resident and on FinCom, for all of his support for the Westwood schools.

#### **Approval of out-of-state trip - Yale Interscholastic Track Classic (girls track)**

A motion was made to approve the out-of-state trip to the Yale Interscholastic Track classic was made by Ms. Jowdy. Seconded by Mr. Donahue.

Official Vote: Unanimous approval

### **New Business (8:26-8:29)**

#### Liaison Reports

Mr. Kelly asked since the Boston Public Schools is not planning to change their start times if Westwood would not pursue this? Mr. Mullin said it is still very important to the health of students and would need to be addressed at a different meeting.

Mr. Donahue went to the SEPAC meeting. He was very interested in learning about the federal and state law requirements for special education programs and how parents are legally notified. It is a privilege to attend these meetings.

Adjourn to Executive Session

A motion to adjourn to Executive Session was made by Mr. Mullin, Seconded by Ms. Jowdy.

Official Vote: Unanimous approval

**Executive Session (8:29-9:00)**

The School Committee went into Executive Session to discuss issues related to personnel matters which would have a detrimental effect on the position of the governing body if the discussion was in open session and for review of executive session minutes from 11/16/17 and 12/14/17 per Chapter 30A, Sub Section 22 (g). The Committee did not return to public session.

**Adjournment**