

**Westwood School Committee
Meeting Minutes
June 14, 2018**

Present:

Charlie Donahue, Chairperson
Tony Mullin, Vice Chairperson
Josepha Jowdy, Clerk
Carol Lewis, Committee Member
Maya Plotkin, Committee Member
Chris Bezdedeanu, 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 7:00 pm
Pledge of Allegiance**

Meeting was recorded by Westwood Media Center

Superintendent's Report (7:00-7:50)

Reorganization of School Committee

A motion was made to nominate Mr. Donahue as Chair of the School Committee by Ms. Jowdy. Seconded by Ms. Lewis.

Official Vote: Unanimous approval

Mr. Donahue wanted to thank Ms. Lewis for her term as Chairperson.

A motion was made to nominate Mr. Mullin as Vice Chairperson of the School Committee by Ms. Lewis. Seconded by Ms. Jowdy.

Official Vote: Unanimous approval

A motion was made to nominate Ms. Jowdy as Clerk of the School Committee by Mr. Mullin. Seconded by Ms. Lewis.

Official Vote: Unanimous approval

Student Recognition- Elementary Math League and Middle School Scholar Leaders

Ms. Parks wanted to recognize the Math League program. She wanted to recognize Mark Plecinoga for organizing this program and helping to run the program for ten years. This program is run by parent volunteers. The Grade 3 team winner was from the Martha Jones School; Grade 4 team winner was from the Downey School; Grade 5 team winner was from the Martha Jones School. Landon Bayer and Emily Ma were the overall winners in the 5th grade written essay contest.

Middle School Scholar Leaders. Mr. Gianetti wanted to recognize four student scholars. These students are selected by the faculty based on academic achievement, exemplary leadership around the school, and overall core value (students who represent what is great about Thurston Middle School). The students are Owen Dunton, Sofia Roberts, Eddie Rogers, and Isabelle Rands.

Introduction of new High School Student Liaison and new School Committee member

Ms. Parks welcomed Maya Plotkin as the newly elected School Committee member.

Mr. Bevan introduced Chris Bezdedeau as the new high school student liaison. Chris is completing his junior year at Westwood High. He is a wonderful leader in the high school. He has been on the Legislative Council, is a State advisory member, will represent Westwood at Boy's State this year, and is also a member of the football team.

Building Project Update

The vote passed at Town Meeting. Thank you to all the residents who came out to support this.

Next Steps: Completion of the initial compliance certificate by July 2, 2018. Formation of the school building committee by July 31, 2018. Completion of the educational profile questionnaire by August 30, 2018. Online submission of enrollment information by August 30, 2018. Enrollment/certification executed by November 28, 2018. Online submission of the current routine and capital maintenance plan by November 28, 2018. Secure funding for the feasibility study by February 26, 2019. Feasibility study agreement executed with MSBA by February 26, 2019.

The School Committee will need to move ahead on the formation of the school building committee. There are certain requirements as to who can serve on the committee: One school committee member, the Superintendent, the Director of Business and Finance, one Selectman, a community member with expertise in architectural, engineering, building construction experience, and a community member knowledgeable with the educational mission. Ms. Lewis suggested that an announcement be put out to see who would be interested in serving on the committee. Candidates need to submit letter of interest by end of June so there will be time to determine who will be on this committee. The names of the committee members need to be submitted by July 31, 2018. It was suggested to solicit for the two community member who will be on this Committee. Ms. Parks will put together a draft of the committee member requirement to be placed in the paper, etc.

Cell Phone Tower Lease

Mr. Petracca wanted to talk about the cell tower lease. It is currently with AT&T. The lease will expire July 2020. Prior to this date, the Committee needs to determine to extend this lease or just let it expire. It was installed in the year 2000. It was inspected and tested by AT&T as well as an independent contractor and found to be well within safety standards. It was tested again in 2012 and found to be well within the safety standards for both state and federal standards.

A resident has expressed some concerns about recent studies regarding RFR, Radio Frequency Radiation and concerns about potential health effects with cancer. This concern was brought up in 2012 and was then tested at that time and was well below the safety standards.

A total of \$34,000 is received each year to have the cell tower. If we don't pursue the lease, the cell phone coverage would be affected on the middle school/high school site. Ms. Jowdy asked if the towers could be placed on the lights on the high school fields? That might be a possibility but would still have concern with the exposure on the school grounds. The Baptist Church is the adjacent property that has a cell tower. Wanted to bring this to the Committee's attention now so they know the lease will expire in July 2020 and can be prepared if they want to renew or look into not renewing. Mr. Mullin requested the Committee needs to understand more legal and medical information about this before a final decision is made.

J-Term Update

J-Term begins next week. Students are enthusiastic to start this program. Thirty-six courses are being offered. There was something for everyone. A lot of logistics are being worked out. There was a steering committee who have worked through all of this. Westwood Media Center will be on-site to film the courses and an Instagram account was set-up too. The last day of school will be the debriefing of the program, watch the media center film, and prizes. There are only 15 of the 750 students who will not participate in the program.

SIPP Update

Senior Independent Project Program. List of this year's projects ranged from sports management, nursing, video game design, writing and publishing an original book. Wanted to thank all of the community members who served as mentors for these program. Next year, 16-18 students will be in the class.

Other Updates

The STAR program will be moved to the Sheehan School from the Downey School. This program is for students K-5. There are fewer than 10 students who are in this program.

Westwood Media Center has filmed the 3rd grade Fisher School program. 24 volunteers ran this program.

Mr. Bevan reported the Dale Carnegie cohort in the spring had 20 students enrolled. Another cohort will take place in July.

Public Participation (7:50-8:06)

Resident wanted to respond about the cell phone tower. It was well within the safety limits. That is thermal limits, not non-thermal effects. Read the report that was provided by the independent review in 2012. That report said the Needham TV tower was the cause for higher levels. When she tested the levels it was high in front the middle school, not high at Starbucks, or Sheehan so the TV towers can't be the cause. Other school districts have been working on this. The adjacent tower was measured. It wouldn't be ideal, but better than being on the middle school. RFR is a class 2B carcinogen by the World Medical Association. Where to place them? Not on a school site.

Resident wanted to talk about student travel. Student was interested in going on an exchange to China. The French trip is also the same week as the China trip and requested that in future years the trips are on separate weeks.

Resident wanted to talk about the STAR program and concerned about having this program moved to Sheehan. Are more students from this STAR program going to be moving into the already large class sizes? Are the teachers trained to handle these students? Will there be aides? Ms. Hanscom feels that the support will be there for all students in the Sheehan School.

Resident wanted to know what the number of students would be in the 3rd grade with the class size already large. Enrollment has been looked at and is within the guidelines.

Discussion Items (8:06-9:10)

Superintendent's Evaluation (8:06-8:20)

Ms. Lewis presented the evaluation in the public setting. This is mandated by the State. Ms. Parks provided a self evaluation.

Review Goals:

- Developing skills in the 1st year superintendent course - proficient.

- Student learning goal - proficient.

- District improvement goal: engage the community around the school buildings' needs - exemplary.

- Developing supporting practices and diversity of students - proficient .

- Review standards: Instructional leadership - proficient.

- Management and operations - proficient.

- Family and community engagement - exemplary.

- Professional culture - proficient.

College Admissions Update (L. Medsker) (8:20-8:42)

Ms. Medsker presented.

Class of 2018:

249 graduated 46% male 54% female.
96% continuing their education.
94% going to 4-year college,
2% going to a 2-year college,
4% will go prep gap year, career education employment.

71% applied early decision or early action.
67% early decision applicants accepted,
90% early action applicants accepted.

42% will attend public colleges
58% will attend private colleges.
20 students going to UMASS.
55% class applied, 57% were accepted.
10 of the students received Adams or Koplik tuition scholarships.
7 students going to UMass Lowell
5 students going to UMass Boston
3 students going to UMass Dartmouth

Other State Universities,
2 students going to Westfield State,
2 students going to Framingham State,
2 students going to Mass Maritime,
3 students going to Bridgewater State.
Other New England State Universities,
13 students going to UNH,
2 students going to UMaine,
3 students going to URI,
5 students going to UVM.

Private Schools in New England: 9 students going to Boston College, 6 students going to Providence, 8 students going to Northeastern University, 6 students going to Wentworth, 4 students going to Suffolk, 3 students going to Fairfield, 3 students going to Quinnipiac, 3 students going to Colby, 3 students going to Curry, 2 students going to Clark, 2 students going to Brown, 2 students going to Bates, 2 students going to Endicott.

Students identified the following as the most important factor in selecting a college: 76% fit or vibe, 68% location distance from home, 56% size, 55% major/program, 45% affordability, 42% internship opportunities. Did collect private e-mail addresses from the seniors to follow up with them during their college experiences.

Class of 2017 (scores are from last year, this year's scores will be available next year). 29% took AP courses, 92% of our student received a score of 3 or higher. In general, almost all of our students, close to 100% taking AP courses take the AP exam.

College credit for AP courses.
How school determines college level credit varies. Some schools accept a score of 3, some want a score of 4 or 5, some do not accept AP credit regardless of score, can vary by subject

AP exam. The best course of action for students is to check individual college websites for their policy.

Update: expanded guidance seminars

Freshmen seminar term 1 and 2

Sophomore seminars term 2 - new stress management session, SBIRT will be implemented next year.

Junior seminars term 3

Senior Seminars term 4 second step SOS program will add term 1 this fall

Instructional Technology Update (S. Ouellette) (8:42-9:10)

Mr. Ouellette reported. Westwood 1-1 Chromebook program update:

2013-2014 1-1 at the high school

2018-2019 1-1 high school through 3rd grade.

Benefits of our 1-1 program: shift from teacher-centered to student-centered, authentic learning experience, personalize learning, productivity and organization, availability of online text-books/resources, spontaneity, college/career expectations, readiness of staff and students, inevitability.

Moving to student center learning: fosters student agency independence, much higher retention rates, promotes critical thinking problem solving skills.

Responsible use for all students

2nd grade - internet safety education

5th grade - In development at this time

6th grade - currently part of health and wellness, plan to expand and make part of x-block/advisory next year

9th grade - once per 8 day cycle during the fall seminar

Parent engagement - 1-1 orientation for parents at Thurston Middle School, evening presentations/panel discussions, parent access to Securly, our Chromebook filtering solution. Parents in grade 6 and 7 were engaged this past year in the opt in time with this program. This will be rolled out for all parents in grade 6-12 next year.

Authentic learning experiences: 3rd grade coding special. This has been the first year of implementation. All students in grade 3 attend a coding special once per week, authentic and student centered includes a mix of computer science and robotics, aligned with the Mass Digital Literacy and computer science standards, plan to build on success in year two and evaluate options for other grades.

Policy Amendments to Address Pregnancy Fairness Act - Second Readings (9:10-9:10)

- AC- Nondiscrimination
- GBA- Equal Opportunity Employment
- GCF-Professional Staff Hiring
- JB-Equal Educational Opportunities
- JFBB-School Choice

Ms. Lewis made a motion to wave the third reading. Seconded by Ms. Plotkin.

Official Vote: Unanimous approval

Mr. Mullin made a motion to vote in the policy. Seconded by Ms. Lewis.

Official Vote: Unanimous approval

Action Items (9:10-9:20)

MSBA Initial Compliance Certification

Ms. Lewis made a motion to authorize the School Committee chairperson to sign this document. Seconded by Ms. Plotkin.

Official Vote: Unanimous approval

FY'19 Salary Increases for Non-bargaining employees

Ms. Lewis made a motion to accept the salary increases. Seconded by Mr. Mullin

Official Vote: Unanimous approval

Student Travel 2018-2019

China Exchange
France Exchange

Ms. Plotkin asked how many students: max of 20 kids on each trip. 10 students per 1 chaperone, and there are 2 chaperones.

Mr. Mullin asked if the Committee could talk about their goals for student travel since the Committee has a lot of new members. Ms. Parks was agreeable to this idea.

Ms. Plotkin made a motion to approve the China Exchange. Seconded by Mr. Mullin.

Official Vote: Unanimous approval

Mr. Mullin made a motion to approve the French Exchange. Seconded by Ms. Lewis.

Official Vote: Unanimous approval

2018-2019 meeting calendar

Draft dates for the 2018-2019 year are: September 13, 2018, October 9, 2018, November 15, 2018, December 13, 2018, January 17, 2019, January 31, 2019 (if needed), February 7, 2019, March 7, 2019, April 11, 2019, May 16, 2019, June 13, 2019.

Mr. Mullin made a motion to approve these draft dates. Seconded by Ms. Lewis.

Official Vote: Unanimous approval

Approval of Minutes: May 17, 2018

A motion to approve the May 17, 2018 minutes was made by Mr. Mullin. Seconded by Ms. Plotkin.

Official Vote: Unanimous approval

Executive Session (9:20-9:35)

The School Committee will be in Executive Session to comply with, or act under the authority of, any general or special law or federal grant-in-aid requirements to review executive session minutes and determine whether non-disclosure is warranted. The Committee will not return to public session.

Adjournment

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Ms. Jowdy. Seconded by Mr. Mullin.

Official Vote: Unanimous approval

Meeting Adjourned at 9:35pm