

WESTWOOD SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Westwood, Massachusetts

MEETING MINUTES

April 7, 2022

Attendance and Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:01pm by Chair Maya Khuri Plotkin. Also present were: Vice Chair Charles Donahue, Clerk Anthony Mullin, Carol Lewis, and Amanda Phillips. Superintendent Emily Parks and Assistant Superintendent Allison Borchers were present on behalf of the district.

Carol Lewis arrived at 7:09pm.

Student member Ruby Fyffe was absent.

John Cianciarulo recorded the minutes.

Chair Plotkin recognized Westwood Media Center, which provided a live-stream of the meeting and also recorded it for later viewing on their platforms.

Superintendent's Report

Recognition of Massachusetts Alpine State Tournament Winner

High School senior Haley Kutzer was recognized as the Massachusetts State Champion of the Alpine State Tournament.

Equity Audit Update

The district continues to work through the procurement process to secure a vendor for the equity audit with Town Procurement Manager Michelle Miller.

Hiring Updates

Donna Olson, a retired principal from Medfield, will be the Interim Principal at Martha Jones School next fall.

Steven Trask has been hired as the District's Director of Safety and Security. He previously served as Police Chief and Emergency Management Director in Framingham and is currently working as a consultant. Mr. Trask will begin his work in the district next week.

First round interviews for the Middle School Dean of Students position have been completed, with second-round interviews to be scheduled soon.

Q3 Financial Report

Director of Business and Finance Lemma Jn-baptiste provided the Committee with an update on the third quarter financial report.

Due to COVID-19 budget impacts and the hybrid learning model in place last school year, FY'20 is being used as a benchmark.

- Salary expenses are slightly lower than they were in FY'20. Due to the significant turnover in staff, there is an estimated salary savings of \$400k-\$500k.
- Student Services' contracted services line exceeds the budget. Most of the overage, \$607k, is for expenses related to post-COVID labor market shortages and the need to hire contracted staff to fill vacant positions.
- State reimbursement claims for employees eligible for COVID-19 Emergency Paid Sick Leave has amounted to \$100k, helping to defray the cost of substitutes.
- With the resumption of building rentals and school activities, there has been an increase in custodial overtime costs.
- The rising costs of food and paper goods have been manageable due to reimbursement from the Federal Lunch Program. The cost of student lunches may need to be reviewed due to continued inflation. More information will be provided to the Committee for their review.

Superintendent Parks also reported:

- Middle school musical, "Secret Garden" has performances scheduled for tonight, Friday, and Saturday.
- Assistant Superintendent Allison Borchers and the elementary principals are planning a culminating experience for grade 5 students to be held at Hale.
- Students in grade 7 participated in a writers conference this week.
- Students in grade 8 attended an assembly with Aron Greenfield, a 95-year-old Holocaust survivor.
- A list of colleges and universities where high school seniors have been accepted was shown.

Public Comments

Eileen Siegel of Alder Road spoke in support of the district's response to the advertisement published in the *Hometown Weekly*.

Pauline Chaloff of Burgess Avenue spoke in support of the district's letter to the community. She also asked that the Committee closely review recommendations on the social studies curriculum which will be presented next month.

Christina Martin of Brookfield Road expressed concern about teachers and administrators' fatigue and would like to support any work to keep teachers healthy.

School Committee Chair Update/Liaison Reports

Chair's Update

The School Committee will be holding a roundtable on Wednesday, May 18 at 7pm.

School Building Project Update

Maya Plotkin reported that the 90% cost estimates for the building project came in \$2.3M over budget due to market fluctuation. Savings of \$1.5M needs to be realized, as a cost-buffer was previously included in the budget. The School Building Committee discussed where to find savings at its meeting earlier this month. It is hoped that the 90% estimate will hold.

School Start Times Subcommittee

Anthony Mullin reported that a virtual parent forum on adolescent sleep with Dr. Judith Owens, Director of Sleep Medicine at Boston Children's Hospital, was held earlier this week. Video of the forum is posted on the district website.

High-Level Modeling

Initial schedule scenarios were presented:

- Scenario A
 - Elementary 7:45am-2:05pm
 - Middle School: 8:15am-2:52pm
 - High School: 8:50am-3:30pm
- Scenario A2 (Combined High School and Middle School)
 - Elementary: 7:50am-2:10pm
 - Middle School: 8:40am-3:17pm
 - High School: 8:50am-3:30pm
- Scenario B
 - Middle School: 7:45am-2:22pm
 - High School: 8:15am-2:55pm

- Elementary Schools: 9:00am-3:20pm
- Scenario B2 (Combined High School and Middle School)
 - Middle School: 8:00am-2:37pm
 - High School: 8:10am-2:50pm
 - Elementary Schools: 9:00am-3:20pm
- Scenario C
 - Elementary Schools: 7:45am-2:05pm
 - High School: 8:15am-2:55pm
 - Middle School: 8:50am-3:27pm
- Scenario C2 (Combined High School and Middle School)
 - Elementary Schools: 7:45am-2:05pm
 - High School: 8:40am-3:20pm
 - Middle School: 8:50am-3:27pm

Surveys related to school start times will be sent to parents, students, and staff.

Any change would not take effect until the 2023-2024 school year.

Other Liaison Reports

There were no other liaison reports.

Discussion Items

Update from Policy Review Subcommittee

Amanda Phillips reported that the Policy Review Subcommittee held its first meeting last month. They met with Massachusetts Association of School Committees' Field Representative Jim Hardy. His office reviewed the Committee's existing policies for best practices and compliance.

Process for the Policy Review

As the Subcommittee reviews and discusses policy sections, it will be brought to the full Committee for approval. Section A will be reviewed by the Committee this month, and then scheduled for approval at next month's meeting. Once all of the policies in the manual have been approved, the Committee will then vote to adopt.

Section A: Foundations and Basic Commitments

The Committee discussed and reviewed the policies in Section A. Policy ADF – Wellness Policies on Physical Activity and Nutrition was not included for review, as the Subcommittee has recommended that the Wellness Committee review it. Assistant Superintendent Allison Borchers has already contacted Wellness Director Tim Chant about scheduling a meeting.

The Committee will further review the recommendations and report back to Mrs. Phillips.

Action Items

Confirmation of Appointments/Conversions to the Membership of the School Building Committee

Chair Plotkin shared an update on the membership of the School Building Committee and her recommendations:

- Tony Mullin has resigned as a member of the School Building Committee.
- The Select Board has requested that Robert Gotti replace Michael Walsh as the Select Board representative to the School Building Committee.

- The Town Charter stipulates that the Permanent Building Commission “have charge and direction of the construction and reconstruction of all buildings owned, leased, or occupied by the town.” To ensure that the project complies with the Town Charter:
 - Convert Brian Bayer and Emily Parks to non-voting members
 - Appoint members of the Permanent Building Commission to the School Building Committee with voting privileges:
 - Lyle Coghlin
 - Tom Erickson
 - Nancy Hyde
 - Bill Scoble
 - Appoint Permanent Building Commission member Mike Powers to the School Building Committee as a non-voting member
 - Convert some voting members to non-voting members:
 - Josh Baumer
 - Allison Borchers
 - Tom Carey
 - Christopher Coleman
 - Charles Donahue
 - Pam Dukeman
 - Mary Kate Ferreira
 - Jen Flanders
 - Robert Gotti
 - Abigail Hanscom
 - Lemma Jn-baptiste
 - Josepha Jowdy
 - Matt Kuklantz
 - Carol Lewis
 - Michelle Miller
 - Amanda Phillips

MOTION made by Carol Lewis to replace Mike Walsh with Rob Gotti as the Select Board representative to the School Building Committee. Motion seconded by Amanda Phillips.

Result: 5-0-0 – Approved

MOTION made by Carol Lewis for SBC [School Building Committee] members Brian Bayer and Emily Parks to convert from voting to non-voting members. Motion seconded by Anthony Mullin.

Result: 5-0-0 – Approved

MOTION made by Amanda Phillips to appoint Lyle Coghlin, Tom Erickson, Nancy Hyde, and Bill Scoble to the School Building Committee as voting members. Motion seconded by Charles Donahue.

Result: 5-0-0 – Approved

MOTION made by Charles Donahue to appoint Mike Powers to the School Building Committee with non-voting privileges. Motion seconded by Amanda Phillips.

Result: 5-0-0 – Approved

MOTION made by Charles Donahue to change the status of Josh Baumer, Allison Borchers, Tom Carey, Christopher Coleman, Charles Donahue, Pam Dukeman, Mary Kate Ferreira, Jen Flanders, Abigail Hanscom, Lemma Jn-baptiste, Josepha Jowdy, Matt Kuklantz, Carol Lewis, Michelle Miller, Amanda

Phillips, and Rob Gotti from voting to non-voting members of the School Building Committee. Motion seconded by Amanda Phillips.

Result: 5-0-0 – Approved

Acceptance of Community Scholarships

MOTION made by Carol Lewis to accept the Gloria C. Flahive, RN Memorial and Marion E. Healy scholarships. Motion seconded by Charles Donahue.

Result: 5-0-0 – Approved

Acceptance of School Start Times Subcommittee Meeting Minutes

MOTION made by Anthony Mullin to accept the School Start Times Subcommittee meeting minutes of March 2, 2022. Motion seconded by Charles Donahue.

Result: 5-0-0 – Approved

Acceptance of Meeting Minutes

MOTION made by Amanda Phillips to accept the meeting minutes of March 10, 2022. Motion seconded by Charles Donahue.

Result: 5-0-0 – Approved

New Business

Chair Plotkin shared that this is Carol Lewis' last meeting as a member of the School Committee and thanked her for her work. Mrs. Lewis served as a member of the Committee for twelve years.

Adjournment

MOTION made by Carol Lewis to adjourn the meeting. Motion seconded by Anthony Mullin.

Result: 5-0-0 – Approved

The meeting adjourned at 8:12pm.

Documents/Exhibits Used at Meeting

- Draft meeting minutes of March 10, 2022 for the Committee's review and approval
- High-level modeling of school start times
- Memo from J. Cianciarulo dated April 1, 2022, regarding Policy Manual, Section A
 - Draft Policy AA: School District Legal Status
 - Draft Policy AB: The People and Their School District
 - Draft Policy AC: Nondiscrimination Policy Including Harassment and Retaliation
 - Draft Policy AC-R: Nondiscrimination Policy Including Harassment and Retaliation
 - Draft Policy ACA: Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Sex
 - Draft Policy ACAB: Sexual Harassment
 - Draft Policy ACE: Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Disability
 - Draft Policy AD: Vision/Mission/Core Values
 - Draft Policy ADC: Tobacco Products/Vaping on School Premises Prohibited
 - Draft Policy ADD: Safe Schools Policy
 - Draft Policy ADDA: Background Checks
 - Draft Policy ADDA-R: DCJIS Model CORI Policy
 - Draft Policy AE: Commitment to Accomplishment

- Memo from A. Davenport to E. Parks dated April 1, 2022, regarding Scholarships to be Accepted by School Committee
- Memo from L. Jn-baptiste to E. Parks dated April 7, 2022, regarding Operation Budget Report for period ending March 31, 2022
- Memo from M. Khuri Plotkin dated April 4, 2022, regarding School Building Committee Membership Update
- School Start Times Subcommittee meeting minutes of March 2, 2022