

**Westwood School Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
November 18, 2015**

**Present:**

Brian Kelly - Chairperson  
Josepha Jowdy  
John O'Brien, Clerk  
Carol Lewis, Committee member  
Charles Donahue, Committee member

John Antonucci, Superintendent  
Emily Parks, Assistant Superintendent  
Heath Petracca, Director of Finance and Business  
Meredith Brodsky, Student Liaison

**Meeting called to order 7:04 PM by Brian Kelly**

**Pledge of Allegiance**

**Superintendent's report (7:05-7:51)**

Recognition of Irene Buonopane for her many years of volunteer service at the Fisher School.

Dr. Antonucci gave an introduction to Irene.

The Fisher School (part of the Westwood Historical Society), staffed by volunteer retired teachers, provides all Westwood 3<sup>rd</sup> graders with an opportunity to see what a typical school day was like in 1868. Ms. Buonopane took the audience through what a typical day is like for the kids, and took the time to thank other volunteers that were with us at the meeting. Children were in attendance wearing their costumes from their trip to the school.

Karen MacDonald, 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade at MJS, paid her own tribute to Irene, and showed a video of the experience created by her class.

Mr. Kelly presented Ms. Buonopane with a plaque in recognition and in thanks for her work at the Fisher School.

Update on the capital needs study

Dr. Antonucci, Mr. Petraca, and Ms. Parks met with the architects to discuss two things:

1. Traffic Study
  - a. Mr. Petraca gave the architects the OK to go forward with a traffic study. Cost is unknown, but he will get an estimate before it goes forward.
2. The Administration asked the architects for a couple of other options to be considered/presented. Unknown at this time what those would be.

Next steps are to go forward with the Statement of Interest Process (January through April). All agreed it would be good to have one night of public comment (forum, not a debate).

Ms. Lewis asked if it should happen before or after the other options are presented by the Architects, and Dr. Antonucci said he didn't have a preference.

Ms. Lewis asked if the architects should be present at the night of public comment, or should the committee present the concerns they hear? Both Dr. Antonucci and Mr. Petraca thought it might be fine to invite the architects.

#### Request by Town for School Committee comment on proposed mixed-use development in Islington Center

Dr. Antonucci reminded those present that a developer has filed an application with the planning board to do some development in Islington Center area (301-323 Washington St., Westwood, MA) (Also see meeting minutes from 10/15/15 meeting).

The Committee was not sure what needed comment (enrollment or traffic concerns?). As of right now, plan is to have 16 one-bedroom units, which means they probably won't be for families. Mr. Donahue suggested the Town should let the district know when they go on line, and if these plans change to 2-bedroom units. Otherwise there is no anticipation of increased enrollment concerns. It was also suggested that the town let the district know if ANY housing units are in development, so school enrollment effects can be assessed.

#### Update on November 9<sup>th</sup> meeting with the Board of Selectmen

Ms. Jowdy opened this discussion saying the meeting was disappointing. It was not a peer-to-peer meeting, as expected, and the Selectmen were not ready to hear the concerns:

- Given the outlay of money the town is expecting for the police station, the firehouse, a \$400K scout house, and a potential \$1M purchase of land

from the First Parish Church, will there be money for school needs in the future?

- Concern that the money to fund the above projects are coming out of Prop 2.5 (town operating budget), which does not require a public voter approval, thus taking money off the table to help the schools.
- To date the schools have been very fiscally conservative given class sizes and space needs. But now the time has come for major changes.

Dr. Antonucci says he continues to get many resident questions on these very issues, and the town needs to be able to have a say in prioritizations. The Board of Selectmen is not necessarily representing the will of the town people.

The School Committee will continue to push for meetings with the Board of Selectmen to continue the dialogue.

Mr. Donahue felt that the meeting with the Board of Selectmen was reasonable, and was not disappointed. He suggested the committee send a letter to the Board, outlining our needs per current plans, along with a request for a future meeting.

#### Update on Town's fieldwork at Deerfield School and the impact to walkers

The fact that the town closed a walking path to Deerfield school was a surprise. The move affects 36 walkers. Dr. Antonucci announced that that as of Friday 11/20 the kids would be bused to school (stops absorbed by 2 current routes).

#### **Public Participation (7:51-7:52)**

No discussion.

#### **Discussion Items (7:52-8:49)**

#### **Report on 2015 MCAS and PARCC Results**

Emily Parks took us through the 2015 testing results. Westwood schools are doing quite well within the comparable districts and very well compared to the state. There are still some areas of concern, especially grade 8 science.

*(Links to publicly available data are available- see public participation section at the end of these minutes)*

The science curriculum in Westwood (skills based) is not well aligned with the state science curriculum (content knowledge).

We are currently engaged in a science curriculum review process (led by Middle School Principal Alison Borchers). The state is issuing new science standards and we want to make sure our schools align to those standards.

Ms. Jowdy asked if other schools have a science coordinator in Elementary schools. Ms. Parks said they have been looking into this option.

Mr. Donahue asked if there has been an external review of comparable curriculums? Ms. Parks stated that is an interesting idea and may be worth a look.

Dr. Antonucci reiterated that the kids are doing well coming out of High School, regardless of test results. Ms. Parks said maybe we should think about what our district values, what we think is important.

Mr. Donahue said that given the tremendous improvement in math results, the superintendent/commissioner should recognize the math teachers for their hard work.

The Assessment Future:

- MCAS will remain the standard for competency determination through the Class of 2019
- Spring 2016, grades 3-8 will take PARCC
- Spring 2017 and beyond, grades 3-8 will take the new MA assessment
- Through 2018 students can choose from computer-based or paper-based tests; after 2018 the assessment will be computer-based.

### **Report on 2015-16 Superintendent and District Goals**

Due to time, Dr. Antonucci just covered a few high level goals (see agenda for full listing of goals):

- Student Learning goal: Focus on Middle School Science
- Professional Practice: Focus on the capital needs study plan
- Professional Improvement goals: Will present a needs-based budget for FY2017 in January
- Family and community engagement: Update of the school district website was successful to help with community outreach; continue to help facilitate and enhance communication with the Board of Selectmen.

**Second reading: Revision of Policy JKAA: *Physical Restraint of Students Policy*. Revised policy will be *Prevention of Physical Restraint of Students to comply with new state regulations (Abby Hanscom)***

Second official reading of the new policy, though Ms. Hanscom was not present to address questions.

Mr. Kelly asked why we have to do this. Dr. Antonucci responded that we want to do everything in our power to avoid physically restraining students.

Mr. O'Brien thinks that the new policy is very good- it offers protection and structure.

This policy will come up for a vote in the December meeting.

The policy can be found on the School district Website:

<http://www.westwood.k12.ma.us/userfiles/files/School%20Committee/WPS%20restraint%20policy%20-%20First%20Reading.pdf>

### **Action Items (8:49-9:05)**

#### **Approval to accept \$10,000 donation from Needham Bank**

Needham Bank provided the Westwood community with METCO funding (METCO is the country's oldest continuously operating voluntary desegregation program).

Dr. Antonucci wanted to publicly recognize Jack McGeorge, recently retired chairman of Needham Bank.

Motion to approve made by Ms. Jowdy. Seconded by Mr. Donahue

Official vote: Unanimous approval

#### **Approval of High School trip to Spain (April 2016)**

Due to the recent attacks in Paris (which happened the Friday before this School Committee meeting), the Committee asked that the vote be delayed one month so they can make their own assessments about travel safety to Madrid/Barcelona.

Mr. Bevan thought it would be OK, and would make sure the delayed vote would not affect the deposit refund deadlines.

#### **Approval of Grade 8 trip to Washington DC (June 2016)**

The Committee had similar safety concerns for this trip. Mr. O'Brien asked that they look into the cost benefit of insurance for this trip, so parents have an option.

Motion to approve Ms. Lewis. Seconded by Mr. O'Brien.

Official vote: Unanimous approval.

**Last minute submission: Approval of 10 Athletes attending an all-state cross-country meet**

Motion to approve Ms. Jowdy Seconded. by Ms. Lewis.

Official vote: Unanimous approval.

**Approval of Minutes**

Minutes October 15, 2015

Motion to approve Ms. Jowdy. Seconded by Ms. Lewis.

Official vote: Unanimous approval.

**Public Participation (9:05-9:11)**

A resident asked if the information presented on the MCAS and PARCC results would be sent to parents. Ms. Parks said reports would be mailed in December.

Information can also be found on the District Website:

[http://www.westwood.k12.ma.us/district/superintendents-office/curriculum-and-instruction/2015\\_MCAS\\_PARCC.cfm](http://www.westwood.k12.ma.us/district/superintendents-office/curriculum-and-instruction/2015_MCAS_PARCC.cfm)

A resident asked if the noted gender gap (in the PARCC/MCAS Results presentation) is consistent with how students are performing academically overall? Ms. Parks answered that there is no correlation in classroom assessments made at middle of high school levels.

A resident asked if the results presentation will be posted on the website. Ms. Parks said yes (see link above).

A resident asked the Committee to clarify the minutes process. Mr. Kelly said that only approved minutes are posted to the website. He reiterated that they are not verbatim, but a summary of what happened, and the Committee approves them if, to their recollection, the minutes reflect what occurred at the meeting. The minutes are not meant for public comment or debate.

**Adjournment into Executive Session (9:11)**

Motion to adjourn: Mr. O'Brien. Seconded by Mr. Donohue

Official vote: Unanimous approval.