

**Westwood School Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
September 16, 2015**

**Present:**

Brian T. Kelly, Chairperson  
Josepha A. Jowdy, Vice Chairperson  
John J. O'Brien, Clerk  
Carol Lewis, Committee Member

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

**Meeting Called to Order at: 7:01 p.m. by Brian Kelly**

**Pledge of Allegiance**

**Superintendent's Report (7:02–7:05)**

*Introduction of the new student School Committee representative*

Dr. Antonucci introduced Meredith Brodsky as the new student school committee representative. She was unable to attend the meeting, but will be formally introduced at the next meeting.

Dr. Antonucci welcomed the new High School Assistant Principal Nicole Haberman. Ms. Haberman joined the High School from Franklin High School where she was assistant principal for the past four years.

*Enrollment update*

Dr. Antonucci referenced a document that showed the break down of the student population at each elementary school. The major issues have been addressed. There are currently a few classes where there are a high number of students and supports have successfully been put in place to address the issue.

**Public Participation (7:05-7:27)**

Mr. Kelly asked for public participation and reminded those in attendance to state their name and address.

A resident noted that he was disheartened with the lack of communication about the potential changes to the elementary schools. He pointed out that Principal Evans had sent out a clear communication to the Sheehan community and he wished the school committee had done

something similar. He also stated that he was disappointed with the lack of communication he received in regards to a letter he sent to each of the school committee members.

Ms. Lewis explained the process that was put in place to streamline the communication outreach. She noted that one member of the committee responds on behalf of the entire school committee.

Mr. Kelly noted that the Space and Capital Needs Study has been discussed at many of the previous meetings and if plans for changes were to take place it would require a great deal of discussion with the town and is a multi-year process.

The school committee pointed out that the June meeting minutes had not been approved and were in draft form. They need to be changed to more clearly reflect the discussion and decisions made in the June meeting.

Another resident stated this is her third year in the Hanlon School System and feels that the communication regarding the changes to the elementary schools was not clear. She stated that over-communication would have been good and the school committee needs to engage parents better.

Ms. Lewis reminded all in attendance that the members of the school committee are all volunteers and always have the best interest of the school district in mind. She noted that it was great to have so many attending at the meeting.

Another resident wanted clarification on the vote that was taken in June and would the other options from the study be considered.

### **Discussion Items**

#### **Space and Capital Needs Study/Elementary School Consolidation: Next Steps and Timeline- John Antonucci (7:27-7:40)**

Dr. Antonucci refers to the Space and Capital Needs Study and explains the vote taken in June was to start the process to see if Westwood would qualify for the state reimbursement. Historically when the high school was built you received a certain amount of reimbursement for the project. In order to have a seat at the table the district needs to put forth a statement of interest and the state will not allow you to submit a global consolidation plan. The district needs to submit a statement of interest for the highest needs of the school.

The project is in early stages and no official decision has been made regarding which of the proposed actions the district will adopt. It is the communities' project. It will be at least two years before being voted on and then the consolidation proposal has at least a seven-year timeline.

Ms. Lewis noted that this process began because there are many needs with the schools such

as boiler, roof, etc. If the consolidation proposal is not eventually agreed to be the best choice for the community then the dialogue continues as to the best way to spend the money. Dr. Antonucci pointed out that these are all difficult decisions and this is why the project started.

Ms. Jowdy asked if Hanlon is the best location for the school consolidation. Dr. Antonucci pointed out the school owns land there and it is centrally located.

*Update from the town on the Girl Scout House relocation-Mike Jaillet, Town Administrator (7:40--7:55)*

Ms. Nora Loughnane, Community and Economic developer came to discuss two issues: a new bypass road from Westwood Glen Road to Deerfield Avenue and the relocation of the Scout House.

There is a public safety task force that started in Oct 2013 to look at public safety needs of town. With the construction of the new Islington Fire Station now underway, the town is working towards the completion of design and bid documents for the construction of a new police headquarters directly behind the existing police headquarters and town hall.

The proposed site of the new police headquarters will cut off an often-used access route between Westwood Glen Road and Deerfield Avenue, which currently runs through the Town Hall, Police, American Legion and Deerfield parking areas. The roadway goes right in front of the Deerfield school and there is a right-of-way that is not a road. The plan would turn that into an official road, fix parking, and add additional parking near St. John's Church. These plans will require a vote of the school committee to allow this portion of land be incorporated into an expanded right-of-way.

Dr. Antonucci thanked Ms. Loughnane and Mr. Jaillet for being proactive and bringing this to the attention of the school committee.

Ms. Loughnane noted there are some concerns about traffic and the planning board has requested a traffic study. The purpose of the traffic study is to have engineers look closely at the predicted movements and address issues of speed.

The school committee agreed to take a vote at the next meeting after the additional data is provided.

The next issue is the relocation of the Scout House. After several months of discussion and an exhaustive review of possible alternatives, the option is to relocate the Scout House to land in back of the Hanlon School off Laura Lane. The school committee would need to vote to declare a half-acre of land behind the parking area at the Hanlon as no longer needed as School Department land and transfer said land to the control of the board of selectmen.

Mr. Kelly noted that the school committee would wait to get more information and then take a vote at the next meeting.

### **Action items (7:55-8:00)**

*Vote to accept Town's recommendation on discussion items above (Girl Scout House and Deerfield Avenue Extension)*

The vote was postponed until the next meeting.

### **Approval of Minutes-June 23, 2015**

It was noted in the meeting that the minutes need to be updated and will not be approved at this time. There will be a vote to approve them at the next meeting.

### **Public Participation (8:00)**

Mr. Kelly reviews the process when speaking to state your name and address.

A resident stated that she no longer has children at the schools, but would suggest a column in the newspaper where town and school committee decisions are written up.

The resident was happy that the vote on the relocation of the Scout house was delayed. She is concerned that the town was not offering financial resources to help with the building costs after the building is relocated. The resident noted that the building has a great deal of history for the Girl Scouts of Eastern Massachusetts.

Ms. Loughane addressed the residents concerns and stated that no final decisions have been made and they are still in discussions. They have presented options and funding has been discussed to address the cost for the building updates after the relocation.

Another resident asked for better clarity on the space and capital needs process and how the school committee makes recommendations. It was suggested that on important issues there should be more communication outreach.

Dr. Antonucci suggested that he would attend an upcoming meeting at the Sheehan to discuss the space/capital needs study.

Another resident suggested a write-up in the newspaper detailing the options in the study.

A resident pointed out that she does not receive school communications as she has no children in the school system, but is concerned that a lot of development will be taking place. The resident was concerned about the safety in the Islington area. She also pointed out there is an environmental impact noting that the only green space now is behind the Hanlon. This area would be jeopardized if they build on it.

In response to the resident's green space concern, Dr. Antonucci pointed out that this plan is several years away from any decisions and green space would be a consideration when decisions are being made.

A resident inquired about the land at the Deerfield and Sheehan. Mr. Kelly noted that this is all undetermined at this time, but historically the town usually takes it back.

A resident suggested that a general timeline be published for the residents to better understand the process.

A resident asked if there were plans to look at the middle school. Dr. Antonucci pointed out that would need to happen at some point. The plan currently on the table is the most economical and compared to the elementary schools, Thurston Middle School is in pretty good shape.

Mr. Kelly thanked all those in attendance for coming to the meeting.

#### **Adjournment (8:39)**

Mr. Kelly asked for a motion to adjourn. Ms. Jowdy approved the motion and Mr. O'Brien seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved. The meeting ended at 8:39 pm.